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May 25, 2018
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Re: Docket No. FD_36025_0

Date: May 24, 2018

Mission Statement

"Provide safe, clean, reliable, accessible and friendly public transportation services to our region."

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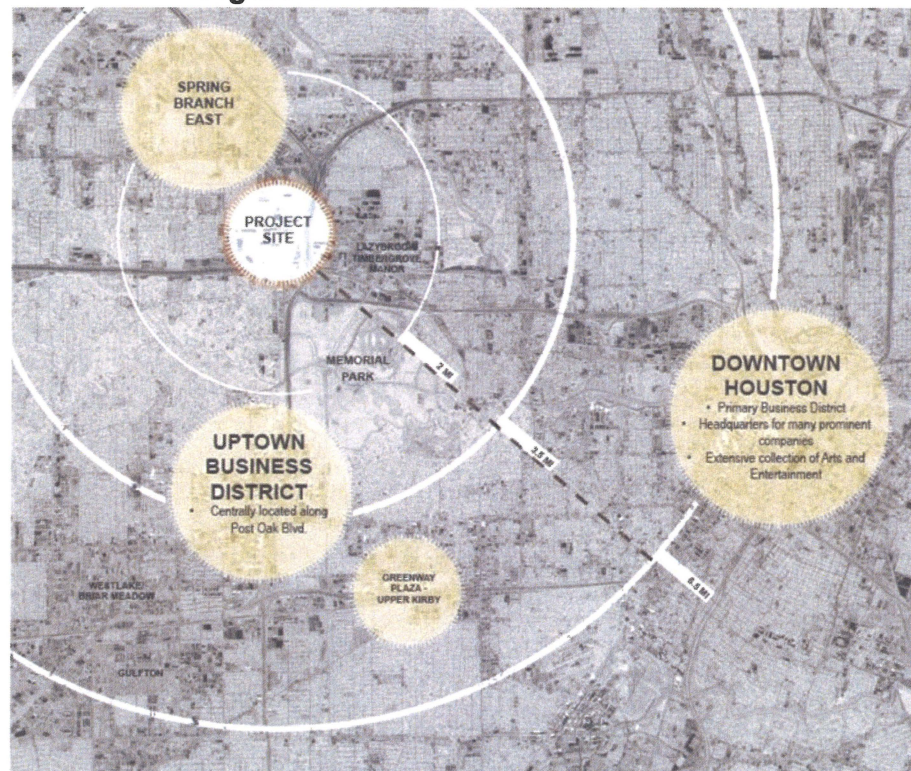
Subject: METRO Letter of Support for Dallas to Houston High Speed Rail

Dear Surface Transportation Board Members:

As the President & CEO of the Metropolitan Transit Authority of Harris County (METRO), I would like to thank you for this invitation to express METRO's support of the high-speed rail (HSR) project between Houston and Dallas. This project has the potential to positively impact transportation between the two largest cities in Texas and benefit the state as a whole.

Currently, METRO is in the process of developing METRONext, a long-range plan to identify the transit services and projects METRO will carry forward for the next 20 years. Connecting METRO's facilities and services to the HSR terminal station in Houston will have positive implications for our overall transit needs. We are examining the opportunities to connect to the Houston HSR station through our Northwest Transit Center (NWTC) located at the junction of the Katy Freeway (1H 10 W) and the West Loop Freeway (1H 610). This junction is a critical transit hub for west and northwest Houston, as well as downtown Houston (**Figure 1**). The NWTC will also be the northern end point to a new bus rapid transit line that connects our busy Uptown District (Galleria) all the way south to Bellaire, scheduled to open next year.

Figure 1: Northwest Transit Center

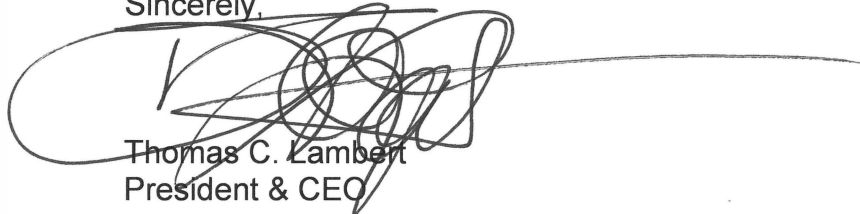


The recent agreement between Texas Central Partners and Amtrak, which integrates the high-speed rail line into the nationwide rail system, is a positive development that further increases the value of the system and brings the project in line with other passenger and freight railroads in the US. This partnership assures that the HSR will be fully integrated into the national rail network and benefit millions of Americans traveling to or through Texas. Texas Central Partners, a private concern, has also agreed to provide a convenient transfer service between its stations and Amtrak, which is a great solution for connecting the two systems. METRO's opportunity to connect into this passenger rail network has the capability to blend local, state, and national investments to expand connectivity and mobility.

For these reasons, we would like to respectfully request the Surface Transportation Board expedite its review of Texas Central Partners' petition to reopen and assert its jurisdiction over the project. This act would help clarify the project's requirements as preparations are made for construction and provide a regulatory path forward that includes appropriate oversight for this innovative new industry in the US.

METRO looks forward to a constructive collaboration on this project to enhance access and mobility for all modes of travel moving forward.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Thomas C. Lambert', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Thomas C. Lambert
President & CEO

cc: Michael J. Moore, Regional Vice President, External Affairs, Texas Central Partners, LLC
Thomas Jasien, Deputy Chief Executive Officer, METRO
Roberto Treviño, PE, EVP, Planning, Engineering & Construction, METRO Clint Harbert, AICP, Vice President, System and Capital Planning, METRO
All Parties of Record