

CHAPTER 6: RAIL FACILITIES

6.1 EXISTING FACILITIES

Two railroad companies serve the Waco Metropolitan Area: Union Pacific Corporation and the Burlington Northern Santa Fe Corporation (BNSF). Union Pacific has two primary lines through Waco. One line provides freight service between Fort Worth and Temple and is the main UP line between Fort Worth and Mexico via Laredo. The other line provides freight service from the Bellmead Yards south through Bryan / College Station and then to Houston. The remaining lines are spurs providing freight service to individual industries within McLennan County. BNSF provides freight service connections to Temple and Fort Worth through Moody, McGregor and Crawford.

TABLE 6.1 RAIL LINE STATISTICS – MCLENNAN COUNTY

Line	Company	Daily Trains	Grade Separated Intersections	At Grade Intersections	Proposed Grade Separations	Percent Grade Separated*
Bellmead to Fort Worth	Union Pacific	24	3	18	0	14.2%
Bellmead to Temple	Union Pacific	14**	10	30	3	25.0%
Bellmead to Hearne	Union Pacific	12	3	14	0	17.6%
Temple to Fort Worth	BNSF	20	1	17	0	5.5%
Waco to Lehigh Cement	Union Pacific	1	3	6	0	33.3%
Lacy-Lakeview to Cargill	Union Pacific	2	2	7	2	22.2%
UP Main Line to Lipsitz	Union Pacific	Less than 1	0	2	0	0.0%
UP Main Line to M&M Mars	Union Pacific	8	0	1	0	0.0%
	Total	15.8***	22	95	5	18.8%

Source: Federal Railroad Administration

*Does not include proposed grade separations.

**Does not include 8 local trains that run between the Bellmead yards and the Texas Central Industrial Park.

***Represents the average number of trains per intersection in McLennan County.

Passenger rail service provided by Amtrak stops at McGregor on the BNSF tracks. The station is located approximately 20 minutes west of Downtown Waco off of SH 317. The Texas Eagle provides daily service to Dallas / Fort Worth, Austin and San Antonio. Passengers may continue to Chicago on the Texas Eagle via Fort Worth. Three times a week the Texas Eagle continues west from San Antonio to Los Angeles. Connections to New Orleans and Florida may be made on the Sunset Limited in San Antonio. Passengers may also continue to Oklahoma City by connecting to the Heartland Flyer in Fort Worth. In 1998, departures and arrivals at the McGregor Station totaled 1,310.

6.2 FUTURE ACTIVITY

The population of the Dallas / Houston / San Antonio triangle is anticipated to nearly double during the MTP planning period putting significant strains on the highway and aviation systems. It is anticipated that even with a wider IH-35, a separate toll road, and larger airplanes that these systems will not be able to accommodate the mobility demands of the triangle. Two proposals have been made to introduce high speed rail into the modal mix in an attempt to meet these mobility needs.

The first proposal comes from the Texas High Speed Rail & Transportation Corporation (THSRTC), a consortium of cities and counties within the triangle. Their proposal is termed the Texas T-Bone due to the proposed alignment resembling a t-bone steak. Their proposal calls for one rail line running between DFW airport and the San Antonio Airport and another line running from Houston / Bush Intercontinental Airport and Fort Hood. Although the type of technology has not been determined, the proposal calls for the train to run at speeds between 150 and 300 miles per hour. Within the Waco Metropolitan Area an alignment for the Texas T-Bone has not been determined, however the preference for a station was identified by the THSRTC as the Waco Regional Airport. The MPO, however, feels that another location closer to the center of the urban area would be a more appropriate location for a proposed station.

The second proposal comes from the Trans-Texas Corridor being developed by TxDOT. This proposal also calls for a high speed rail line, however only one high speed rail line will be constructed. At the time of publication, it was unclear as to which proposal might eventually be constructed.

In addition to high speed rail, the Trans Texas Corridor also proposes to construct a dual track freight rail line to permit through rail traffic to bypass the Waco Urbanized Area. The proposed facility would be completely grade separated and would greatly expedite freight movements through the Metropolitan Area. Currently rail freight on Union Pacific must move through Downtown Waco and slow to 20 miles per hour or less. In order to minimize the expensive grade separations, the freight rail component of the Trans Texas Corridor would likely never enter the Waco Urbanized Area.

6.3 RECOMMENDED RAIL PROJECTS

Since rail expenditures are not required to be included within the MTP, this list is provided for informational purposes. This list may not include all rail related projects and are not listed in order of priority. Rail grade separation projects or railroad grade crossing signal upgrades are identified within section 3.7.

Project R-1

Facility: High Speed Passenger Rail Facility
Scope of Work: Construct 150 to 300 mph rail line through McLennan County connecting Dallas with San Antonio.
Responsibility: Private Corporation
Estimated Cost: \$200,000,000
Funding Source: 50% - US Department of Transportation
50% - Bonds repaid through user fees

Project R-2

Facility: Dallas to Laredo Freight Rail Line
Scope of Work: Construct grade separated dual track freight rail line through McLennan County to relocate through rail traffic outside of the Waco Urban Area.
Responsibility: Texas Turnpike Division TxDOT
Estimated Cost: \$54,000,000
Funding Source: 50% - Texas Turnpike Division TxDOT
50% - Bonds repaid through user fees

Project R-3

Facility: Rail spur within Texas Central Industrial Park
Scope of Work: Construct rail spur from Union Pacific RR into the southern portion of the Texas Central Industrial Park adjacent to Old Temple Rd
Responsibility: Waco Industrial Foundation
Estimated Cost: \$800,000
Funding Source: 100% - Union Pacific RR