



SENATOR WENDY R DAVIS
District 10

The Senate of The State of Texas

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August 4, 2010

The Honorable Ray LaHood
Secretary of Transportation
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Ave, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Secretary LaHood,

As a State Senator who represents more than 700,000 constituents in North Texas, I want to express my full support for consideration of the Texas Department of Transportation's (TxDOT) grant application for the Tower 55 At-Grade Rail Improvement Project in Fort Worth, Texas through two strategic discretionary grant programs being led by the U.S. Department of Transportation: the High Speed Intercity Passenger Rail (HSR) Track 1A Grant Program; and the TIGER Discretionary Grant Program.

TxDOT's application for funding of this vital transportation hub is critical in the movement of goods, improving air quality in our region and to the region's overall transportation plan. Additionally, the alignment of the current Tower 55 rail poses a serious public safety risk to residents of a Fort Worth neighborhood who are often isolated for hours by stopped rail cars (the adjacent neighborhood has one access point at a railroad crossing).

The Tower 55 rail interlocker is one of the busiest and most congested rail intersections in the entire nation. During peak periods, it commonly handles more than 100 trains per day. This project would install new signaling, bridge upgrades, a third north/south mainline, and improved street and pedestrian crossings; furthermore, it can be completed by February 2012 with ARRA stimulus assistance. The project will deliver an immediate and lasting improvement to the efficiency of rail – the most cost-effective, fuel-efficient, and environmentally-sound land transportation mode for moving the nation's freight.

During my tenure as a State Senator, Fort Worth City Councilmember and as chair on the Regional Transportation Council in North Texas, I became acutely aware of the problems associated with Tower 55. Due to its regional and national significance, the Tower 55 project was rated by a TxDOT organized screening panel as the highest-priority TIGER Competitive Grant Program project in the state, compared with more than 90 other proposals.

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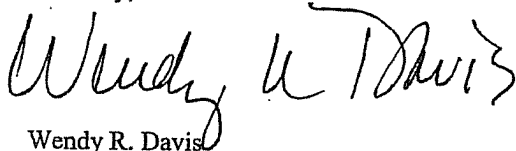
Direct benefits of the project include:

- The ability for the Tower 55 crossing to accommodate at least 40 percent more volume than in 2009 - and to do so with less congestion and delay than the region has experienced in recent years.
- The potential to achieve a double-digit improvement in overall on-time performance for two Amtrak trains that link North Texas with other communities in the region and the nation – The Texas Eagle and The Heartland Flyer.
- Eliminates the need to divert freight to trucks and circuitous rail routes, which without the project, will be required in the near future to avoid Tower 55 gridlock.
- Improved air quality in a non-attainment area by reducing train delay and improving rail's potential to move more freight to relieve overburdened highways.
- Greater safety through improvements to several existing vehicular/pedestrian crossings, reduced vehicle crossing dwell time, and almost 10 percent less life-of-project vehicular emissions at affected crossing locations, compared with the no-build alternative.
- Improved goods movement to and from Texas ports, distribution centers and logistics parks in North Texas, as well as the border gateways of Mexico, to the consumers of the southeast U.S. and U.S. manufacturers along the Gulf Coast – assuring a competitive supply chain that will support regional and national businesses' ability to grow and add sustainable jobs in the future.

With its broad and long-term benefits, I believe the Tower 55 At-Grade Rail Improvement Project is a very strong candidate for both the HSR Track 1A Grant Program and the TIGER Discretionary Grant Program. It achieves -- and in many categories exceeds -- the goals of both programs and would stimulate and sustain both short- and long-term economic recovery.

I appreciate this opportunity to express my support for this project. Please feel free to contact me with any questions.

Sincerely,



Wendy R. Davis
Texas Senator - District 10

Tower 55

Located near downtown Fort Worth, Texas, Tower 55 is one of the busiest and most congested railroad intersections in the United States. More than 100 freight and passenger trains move through the area every day, carrying high priority intermodal goods, agricultural products, industrial and manufactured goods and low-sulfur coal. The result is heavy congestion. Relieving this congestion would positively affect community livability and nationwide economic development while reducing public costs.

Opportunity

Given the high volume of traffic at Tower 55, each train must slow or completely stop prior to passing through the intersection. This creates significant traffic delays, both for railcars and passenger vehicles. Additionally, congestion at Tower 55 can result in lengthy diversion routes, increasing fuel consumption and greenhouse gas emission. A study underway by the North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG) has determined that improvements to Tower 55 would provide significant economic, environmental and safety benefits to the region and state.

Solution

BNSF, Union Pacific, and the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) are working together to secure National Infrastructure Investments Discretionary Grant (TIGER II) funding to make improvements at Tower 55. The improvements that have been proposed will meet freight and passenger rail demand well into the future and are consistent with the NCTCOG study objectives.

Funding would be used to install:

- Additional trackage north, south and through Tower 55 on BNSF and UP
- Improved quadrant connections to promote train movements
- Enhanced signals/interlocker with Positive Train Control (PTC) compatibility
- New and structurally improved bridges and drainage structures
- City arterial street/intersection improvements and grade-crossing closures
- Two new grade-separated pedestrian crossings adjacent to an elementary school and two at-grade road crossing closures in a residential area

Support

The Tower 55 Project was recently rated by a TxDOT organized selection committee as the highest priority TIGER II project in Texas. Other supporters of Tower 55 include the City of Fort Worth, Tarrant County, Dallas and Fort Worth Chambers of Commerce, NCTCOG, Oklahoma DOT, and various other state and federal representatives.

Estimated Funding Needs

Total Cost: \$91.2 million

- Committed Funding:
 - BNSF/UP: \$51.2M
 - TIGER II Request: \$40.0M

Communities and businesses will see benefits from Tower 55 improvements

Community walkability



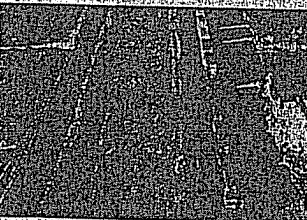
Pedestrian underpasses and closed at-grade crossings near Tower 55 will significantly improve pedestrian safety and mobility in the communities we serve.

Improved rail traffic flow



Train traffic often slows to a stop at Tower 55 as more than 100 trains pass the intersection each day. Improving the intersection would improve air quality and overall mobility in the North Texas region.

Less highway congestion



One intermodal train can carry 280 truck trailers, helping ease highway congestion and improve air quality.

Tower 55 At-Grade Improvement Benefits

Livability

Greater safety and reduced delays (100,000 hours per year) for motorists and pedestrians accessing and crossing

Improved air quality in a non-attainment basin

- Carbon dioxide emissions reduced by over 50,000 tons per year — equivalent to eliminating over 45,000 cars per year
- Nitrogen oxide emissions reduced by 13,000 tons over 20 years
- Fuel consumption reduced by 22,800 gallons per day

Improved emergency vehicle access to local neighborhoods

Improved commuter rail reliability and performance

Economic Development

- 2,000 job years of employment and 700 direct jobs spread over eight Economically Distressed Area counties
- Over \$1 billion in public benefits on \$27.5 per \$1 federal investment
- \$996 million in supply chain costs avoided, benefiting manufacturers, shippers, receivers, and consumers
- Rail volume growth supported for 20 years

Public Affordability

- Faster project implementation than comparable highway projects
- No risk to the public of budget over-runs

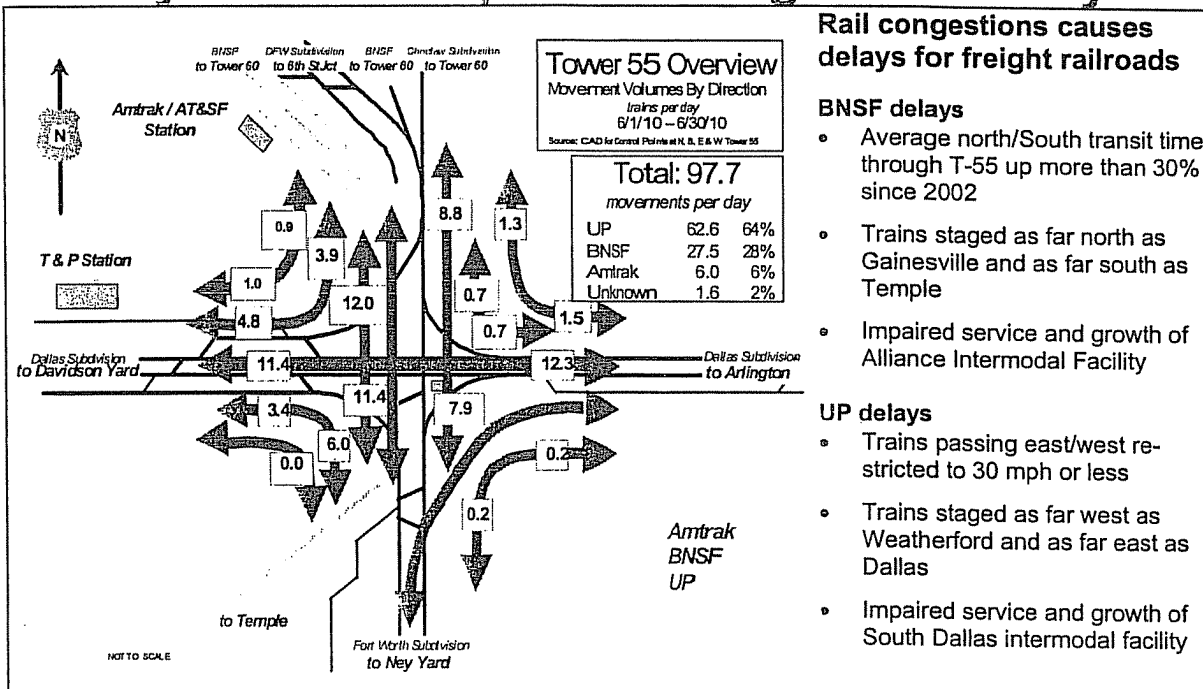
Communities and businesses will see benefits from Tower 55 improvements

Faster service



Chemicals shipped north from Houston, Midwest grain headed to Gulf ports, intermodal containers traveling across country, travelers, and commuters will all benefit from upgraded track and signal systems at Tower 55

Nearly 100 trains pass through T-55 daily



Rail congestions causes delays for freight railroads

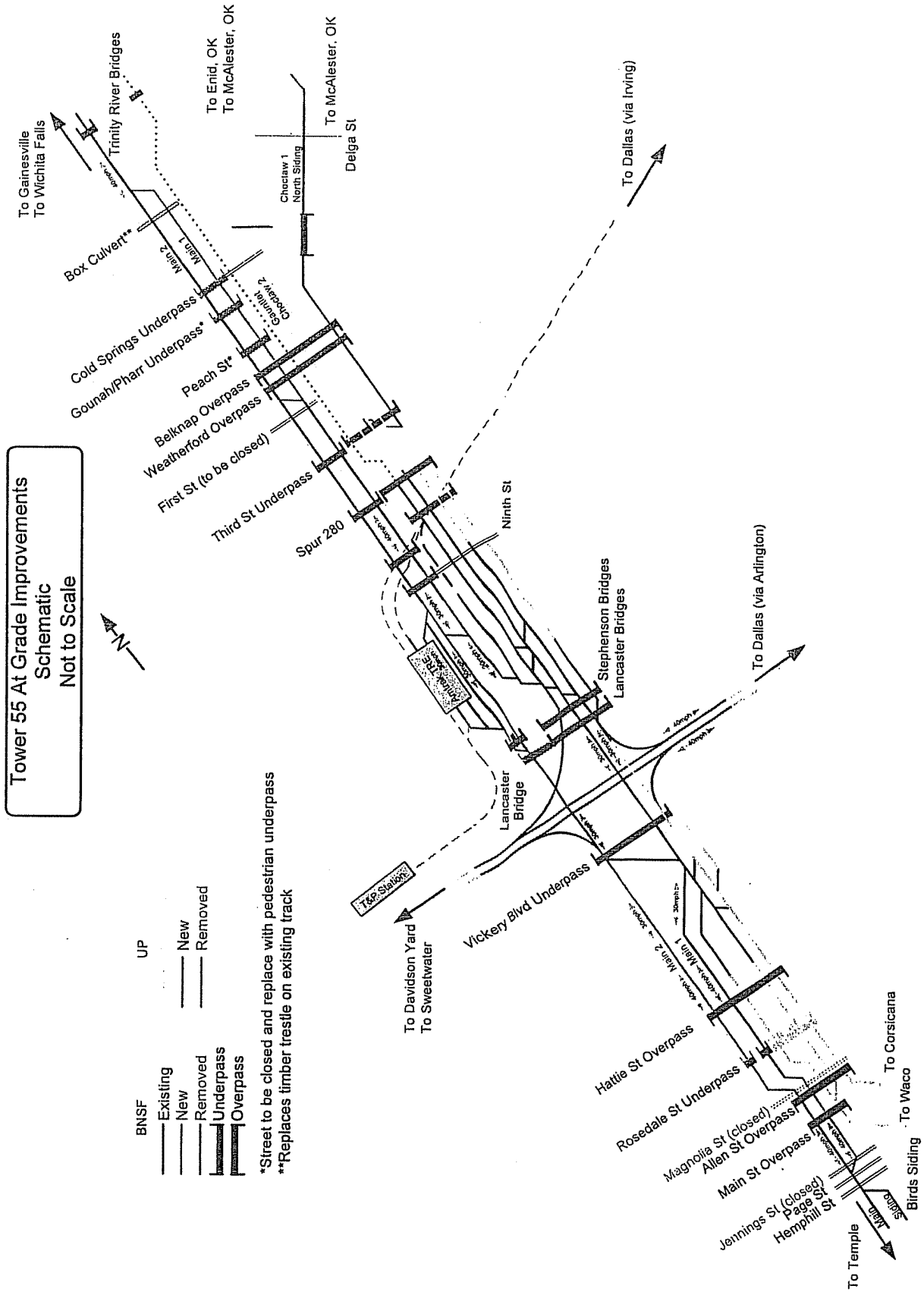
BNSF delays

- Average north/South transit time through T-55 up more than 30% since 2002
- Trains staged as far north as Gainesville and as far south as Temple
- Impaired service and growth of Alliance Intermodal Facility

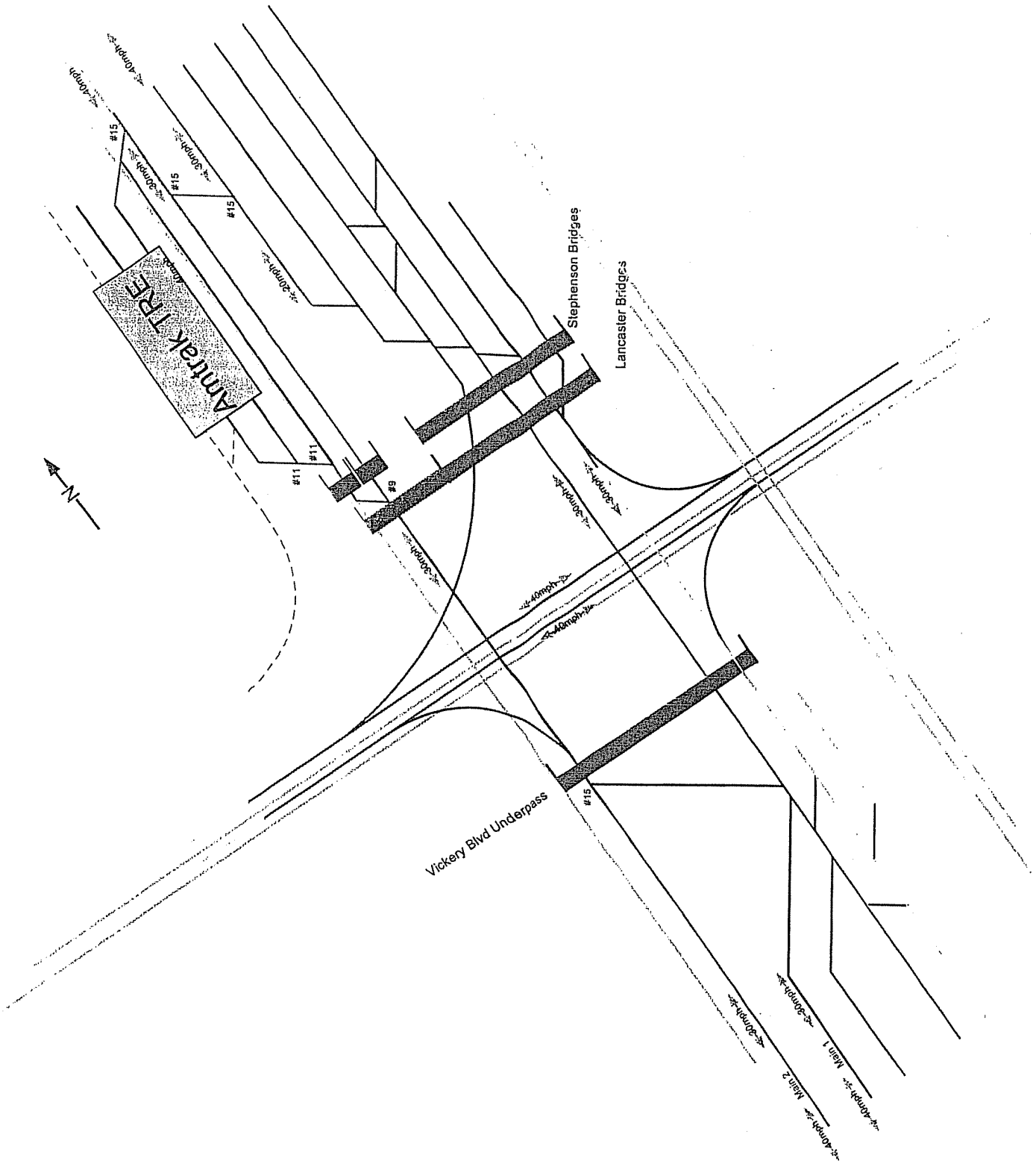
UP delays

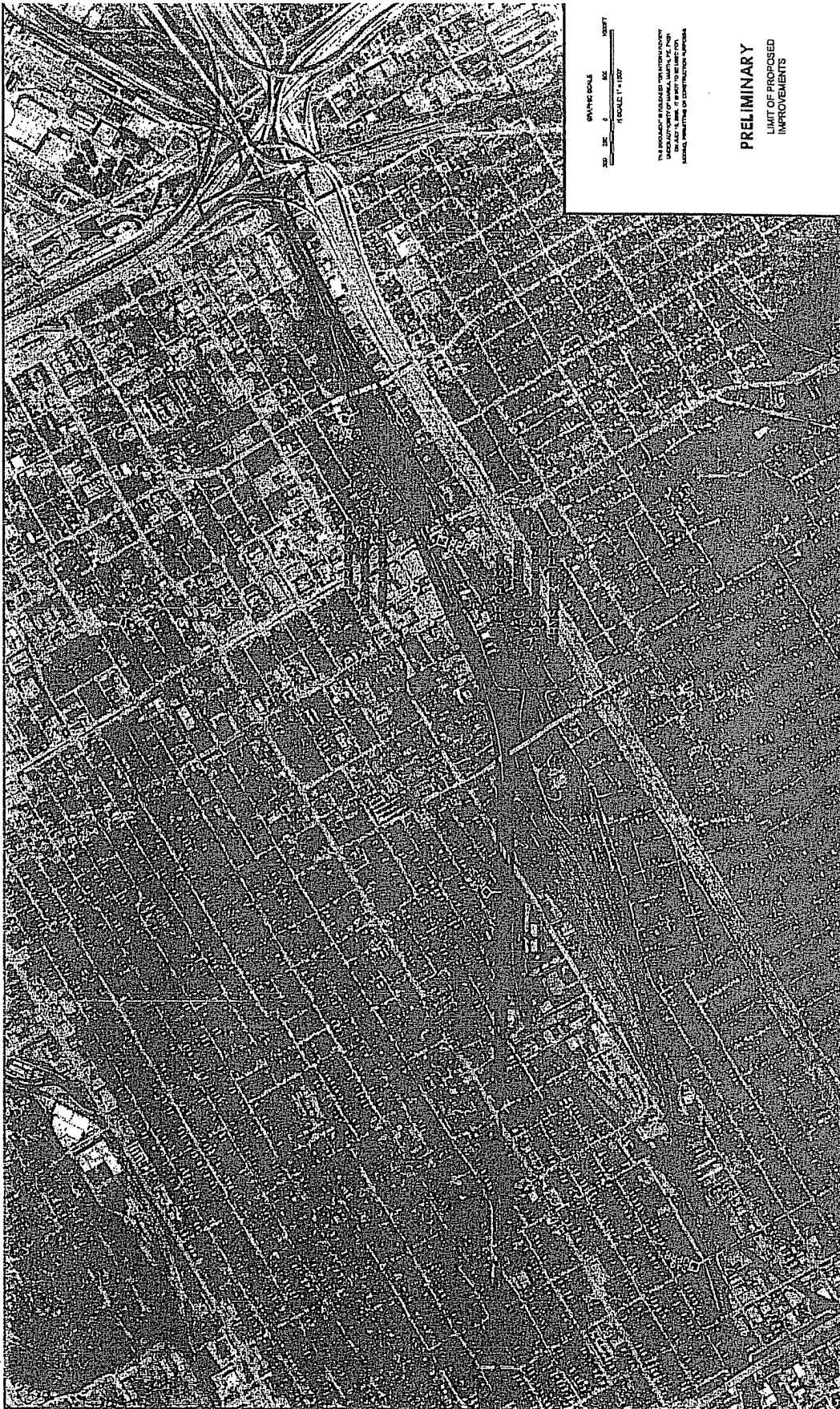
- Trains passing east/west restricted to 30 mph or less
- Trains staged as far west as Weatherford and as far east as Dallas
- Impaired service and growth of South Dallas intermodal facility





Drawn by: BNSF Engineering Services, Saginaw, TX 817-352-2905, September 9, 2009 Not to Scale





GRAPHIC SCALE
 1" = 1000'
 1" = 1000'

THIS PROJECT IS DESIGNED TO BE CONFORMANT WITH THE PROVISIONS OF THE FEDERAL AID TO HIGHWAY ACT OF 1956, AS AMENDED, AND TO BE SUBJECT TO THE FEDERAL AID TO HIGHWAY ACT OF 1956, AS AMENDED, AND TO BE SUBJECT TO THE FEDERAL AID TO HIGHWAY ACT OF 1956, AS AMENDED.

PRELIMINARY
 LIMIT OF PROPOSED
 IMPROVEMENTS

BNSF RAILWAY - FORT WORTH SUBDIVISION - APP 84-146 TO APP 84-147
 BNSF TOWER 55 SURFACE IMPROVEMENTS
 SOUTH EXHIBIT

DATE:	CITY/STATE:
JULY 7 2009	FORT WORTH, TX
DATE:	CITY/STATE:
JULY 10 2009	FORT WORTH, TX
DATE:	CITY/STATE:
JULY 10 2009	FORT WORTH, TX
DATE:	CITY/STATE:
JULY 10 2009	FORT WORTH, TX
DATE:	CITY/STATE:
JULY 10 2009	FORT WORTH, TX

BNSF
 RAILWAY
TOWER 55 SURFACE IMPROVEMENTS
 FORT WORTH, TX

NO.	DATE	DESCRIPTION

DATE:	REVISION:
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HR
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DATE: 8/20/09

THE: 8/20/09