

Union Pacific Railroad Bridge
(Former Texas and Pacific Railroad)
Over the Fort Worth and Western Railroad
Fort Worth
Tarrant County
Texas

PHOTOGRAPHS
AND
WRITTEN HISTORICAL DESCRIPTIVE DATA

MODIFIED HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD

Submitted to:
Texas Historical Commission
1511 Colorado
Austin, Texas 78701

MODIFIED HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD

UNION PACIFIC RAILROAD BRIDGE (FORMER TEXAS AND PACIFIC RAILROAD) OVER FORT WORTH AND WESTERN RAILROAD

Location: Located over the Fort Worth and Western Railroad at W. Vickery Boulevard, 0.14 miles west of Forest Park Boulevard
Fort Worth, Tarrant County, Texas

UTM Coordinates: USGS Quadrangle – Fort Worth
UTM Zone 14S
Northing: 3624081
Easting: 655759

Date(s) of Construction: 1927

Architect/Engineer/ Builder: “General Specifications for Steel Railway Bridges,” The American Railway Engineering Association, Second Edition, May 1923, with noted exceptions.

Original Owner/ Occupant and Use: Texas & Pacific (T&P) Railroad

Present Owner/ Occupant and Use: Union Pacific Railroad (UPRR) – Dallas Subdivision/Trinity Railway Express, Commuter Rail

Significance:

Transportation was an integral part in the development and growth of Tarrant County. As settlers migrated to Texas in the early years of independence and statehood, travel was limited due to the absence of roads, unreliable terrain, and the slow pace of long-distance travel by ox cart or stagecoach lines. The railroad in general is important to Tarrant County for allowing the import and export of manufactured goods, crops, and livestock. With the introduction of the railroad, the City of Fort Worth’s hold on the trade market was assured. Railroads, and the companies who owned them, eventually became the largest industrial force in the economic growth of the city of Fort Worth, as well as the state of Texas. Along these railroad lines bridges, culverts, underpasses, and overpasses were the structures that played a crucial role in allowing for the seamless flow of rail travel across Texas. Additionally, underpasses and overpasses, developed during the “Five Year Plan” for public improvements prior to the onset of the Depression, have added significance (TCHRS 1986).

The T&P bridge at W Vickery Boulevard over the Fort Worth & Western Railroad was recommended eligible for the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) as a contributing resource to the T&P railroad thematic corridor under Criterion A for its association with the railroad industry in Tarrant County and for representing the embodiment of the railroad development and engineering resources within North Texas.

The T&P was the only railroad in Texas and one of the few in the United States that operated under a federal charter. The U.S. Congress granted a charter to the T&P Company on March 3, 1871, to build a southern transcontinental railroad between Marshall, Texas, and San Diego, California. The Texas Legislature

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recognized the federal charter and authorized the company to buy the Southern Trans-Continental Company and the Southern Pacific Railroad Company (both originally chartered by the state of Texas). In 1872, Congress changed the name to the Texas and Pacific Railway Company (Werner 2023). Construction of various lines totaling 125 miles in length between Longview and Dallas, Texas, were completed by 1873. An additional 74 miles between Marshall and Texarkana were completed by December 1873 (Werner 2023). The T&P continued construction, adding 44 miles of line from Dallas (Eagle Ford) to Fort Worth by July 19, 1876 (Reed 1981:363-364).

Livestock brought up from central and southern Texas and from the western Plains to the cattle markets of Fort Worth were now driven to the railhead in Dallas, bypassing Abilene, and other more northern shipping points. Before the rail to Fort Worth had been completed, the cattle drive to the Dallas railhead was difficult as there was no bridge or easy ford across the Trinity River between Dallas and Fort Worth. Owing to these difficulties, the T&P extension of its tracks into Fort Worth became the third railroad to enter the city (Reed 1981:363-364).

Description:

The T&P steel deck plate girder railroad bridge over the Fort Worth & Western Railroad is 148-ft long with four spans, which are supported by three pier pedestals with cross beam bents. The bridge terminates to the west and east with concrete, flared abutments. The span between the west abutment and pier 1 is 40-ft in length, the span between the east abutment and pier 3 is 40-ft in length. Span lengths between piers 1 and 2 and piers 2 and 3 are on average 30-ft in length. The concrete abutments are 42-ft in height and 22-ft in width. The pier pedestals have 13-ft tall concrete supports with crossbeam bents which are 31-ft in height and 9-ft in width. According to the 1927 plans the design was from the "General Specifications for Steel Railway Bridges" of The American Railway Engineering Association, Second Edition, May 1923. The bridge was designed to handle the weight loads for Coopers E-70 trains (T&P 1927).

History:

Railroads in Texas

After the 1836 Battle of San Jacinto when Texas achieved independence, there were only 1,273 miles of railroads within the United States; none were west of the Mississippi, and none were in the southern United States. Roads and canals were thought of as being more reliable than steam locomotives. Within six months after the Battle of San Jacinto, the First Congress of Texas met and decided that an examination should be made of transportation conditions within the state of Texas. It also granted a charter to the Texas Railroad Navigation and Banking Company for a railroad, as well as for the improvement of the waterways, rivers, bays, and canals to connect the railroads to these already established modes of transportation. This charter became the first granted for a railroad west of the Mississippi and was unanimously approved by Senate vote in 1836. However, the charter was viewed as a betrayal to the people, jeopardizing their rights, property, and liberty, and was rescinded (Reed 1981:1-10).

In 1838, another charter was granted to the Brazos and Galveston Railroad Company to improve transportation between Galveston and Houston. The charter specified the use of turnpikes instead of canals, the use of public lands, and that men and munitions for the Army and Navy would be transported for free. This charter failed as well. With the commercial competition between Galveston and Houston at hand, the City of Houston petitioned for their own rail charter for the Houston and Brazos Railroad Company. By 1840, laborers had been hired to start grading for ten miles. With a threatened Mexican invasion, the grading was abandoned and there is no record of the railroad being built (Reed 1981:32-33). Harrisburg resident, Andrew Briscoe, believed strongly in the development in the rail lines between the Brazos and Harrisburg. He secured several lots of land within Harrisburg for the sole purpose of grading for a new rail line. In 1841, he secured a charter under the name of The Harrisburg Railroad and Trading Company. Briscoe and his engineers planned a route for a transcontinental railroad. He was also a pioneer

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in planning the layout of towns in advance of the rail line construction. Even with all of Briscoe's preplanning efforts for construction, the country was still under the threats of a Mexican invasion and all male citizens were expected to be able to report for war duty. With the lack of labor, this charter rail line never began (Reed 1981:36-37). None of the early Republic's chartered railroads were developed, but the efforts and ideas planted seeds for future development.

The third railroad in Texas was chartered in 1847 beginning on Buffalo Bayou between Houston and Lynchburg. It extended to a point on the Brazos River between Richmond and Washington. The lots originally purchased by Andrew Briscoe in Harrisburg would be used, provided that the rail charter could complete and have in operation 20 miles of rail within two years (Reed 1981:56). In 1851 a survey of the area was conducted to find the termini of the route. Harrisburg was selected as the starting point and Richmond as the point crossing the Brazos. Work began in 1852 when the contract for grading was awarded to W.J. Kyle and Frank Terry. In August of 1853, 20 miles was completed from Harrisburg to Stafford's Point. The rail did not officially open until September 7, 1853, and boasted two mixed trains daily, one each way. By the end of December 1855, the railroad to Brazos was completed extending the line to 32 miles.

By March 1859, the rail was extended another 18 miles to the San Bernard River; an additional 15 miles to Eagle River was completed by November 1859; and in the fall of 1860 an additional 15 miles of rail reached Alleyton. Total rail line constructed in the six-year time totaled 80 miles, at which time construction ceased until after the Civil War (Reed 1981:59-61). The total cost to construct the first rail line in Texas amounted to \$1,490,847.02 or \$18,400 per mile. By 1860 the future of railroads in Texas was very promising and plans were made to build northward towards Houston, Austin, and the eastern boundary of Texas along the Red River (Reed 1981:63-65).

Early Railroad Development in Tarrant County

Railroads operating in the Tarrant County area by 1876 included the Texas and Pacific (T&P), Fort Worth and Denver City Railway Company (FW&DC), St. Louis Arkansas and Texas Railway Company of Texas (SLA&T), and the Chicago Rock Island and Texas Railway Company (CRI&T). These railroads served either as a terminus on their respective line or later as a through-point for transcontinental routes. Many of these lines were developed to capture transportation markets from competing roads or to develop an untapped market in advance of other railroads. These railroads share the same routes or are next to the existing rail lines along which the TEX Rail project is located.

The T&P was the only railroad in Texas and one of the few in the United States that operated under a federal charter. The U.S. Congress granted a charter to the T&P Company on March 3, 1871, to build a southern transcontinental railroad between Marshall, Texas and San Diego, California. The Texas Legislature recognized the federal charter and authorized the company to purchase the Southern Trans-Continental Company and the Southern Pacific Railroad Company (both originally chartered by the state of Texas). In 1872, Congress changed the name to the Texas and Pacific Railway Company (Werner 2023). Construction of various lines totaling 125 miles in length between Longview and Dallas, Texas was completed by 1873. An additional 74 miles between Marshall and Texarkana were completed by December 1873 (Werner 2023). The T&P continued construction, adding an additional 44 miles of line from Dallas (Eagle Ford) to Fort Worth by July 19, 1876 (Reed 1981:363-364).

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T&P dissolution

Missouri Pacific (MP) railroad systematically began purchasing T&P stock and owned 77 percent in 1957 (Trains 2020). After a 30-year recapitalization battle, MP, T&P, and Chicago & Eastern Illinois were consolidated under the new Missouri Pacific Corporation in 1976. Union Pacific Railroad (UPRR) acquired MP in 1982. Trinity Metro proposed to utilize existing freight rail right-of-way of the UPRR line for the TEX Rail commuter line.

Fort Worth & Western Railroad (FWRR)

In 1988 FWRR purchased 6.25 miles of track of the former Burlington Northern (BN) Railroad in west Fort Worth (FW&WRR 2025). Prior to Burlington Northern, the track was owned by the St. Louis-San Francisco (Frisco) Railroad Company (Cravens 2025). The Frisco operated between 1876 and 1980. A 1901 map shows the railroad in place, prior to the construction of the 1927 subject bridge (Frisco n.d.).

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Tarrant County Historic Resource Survey (TCHRS)

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Historian(s):

Deborah L. Dobson-Brown, MSc, Architectural Historian
Cherise Bell, MSc, Architectural Historian
AmaTerra Environmental, Inc., an ERG Co.
August, 2023

Project Information:

On behalf of the Fort Worth Transportation Authority and the FTA, URS Inc., conducted a historic resources reconnaissance survey (Survey) in 2008 and in 2012 due to project design changes. The Survey recommended the UPRR eligible for the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) as a thematic corridor with individual contributing resources of which one was the 1927 T&P overpass at West Vickery Boulevard. In consultation with the SHPO (May 2021) it was determined the 1927 T&P overpass would be adversely impacted by the project and a Memorandum of Agreement requiring the preparation of a Historic American Engineering Record (HAER) short form. The report, including digital photographs, map, and historic context, was prepared by AmaTerra Environmental, Inc, an ERG Company, architectural historians.

Trinity Metro, a regional transportation authority of the State of Texas, and The Federal Transportation Authority (FTA) were the sponsor and cooperating organizations.

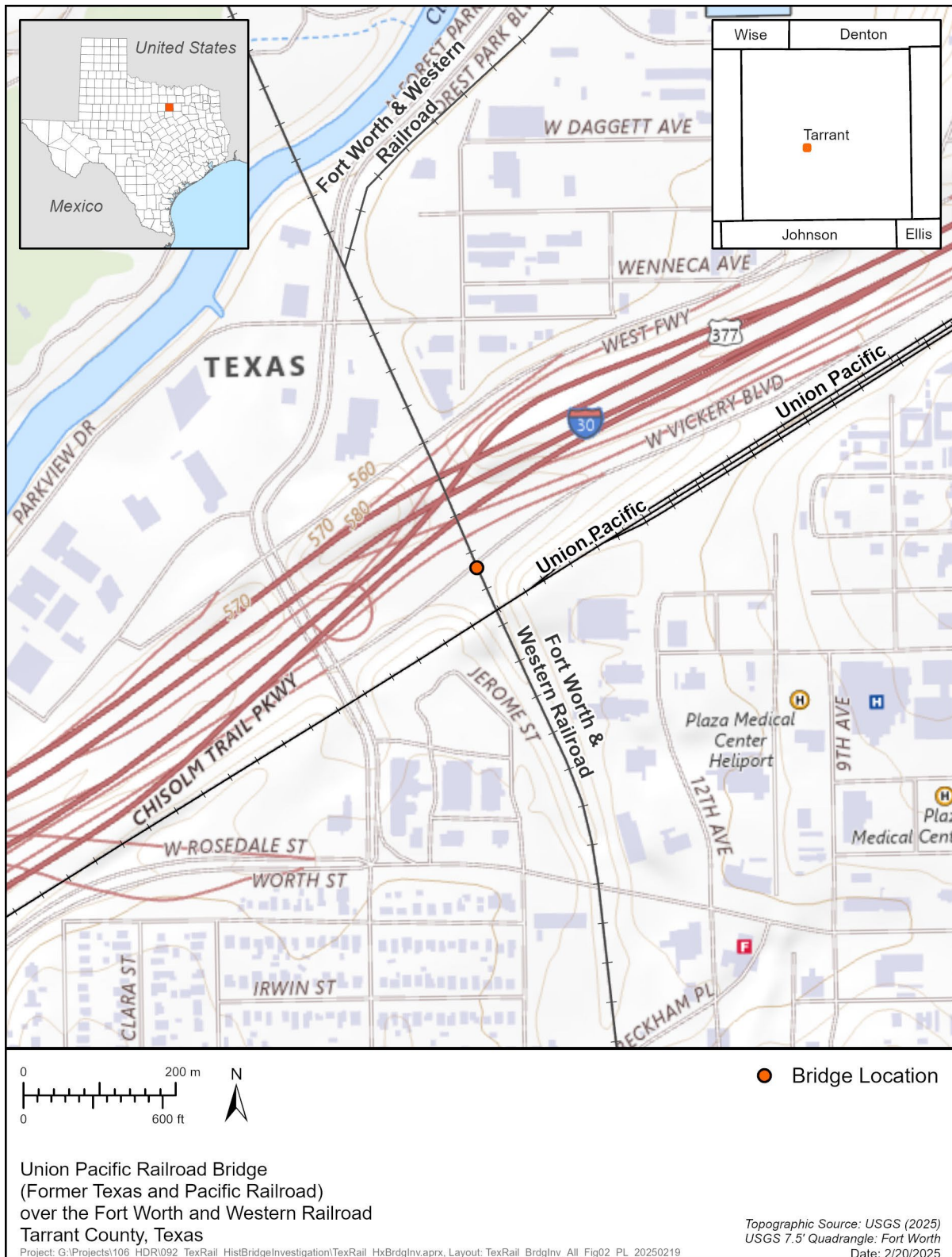
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LOCATION MAP

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Miranda Black, Photographer, June 28, 2023

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