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Minutes of the Gulf Coast Rail District Board Meeting – February 8, 2022

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A meeting of the Gulf Coast Rail District Board of Directors was held on Tuesday, February 8, 2022 at Houston TranStar and via video conference. In attendance at the meeting were Directors Ronald A. Beeson, Trey Duhon, Michael Dyll, Abigail M. Gonzalez, Carol Abel Lewis, Bruce Mann, Richard L. Muller, Jr., Allen Owen, Tina Arias Peterman, Jim Robinson, Jeff E. Ross, and Dennis Winkler. Absent was Director Christopher Lane. Written notices of the meeting including the date, hour, place and agenda for the meeting were posted with Harris County, with the Secretary of State, and at the Gulf Coast Rail District office located at Houston TranStar in accordance with the Texas Open Meetings Act. The inaudible portions of the recording were removed from these minutes.

Chairperson Lewis: Good afternoon everyone. It's 2:00 o'clock, so, we will begin the meeting for the Gulf Coast Rail District. Today is February 8th, and I'm going to call the meeting to order. We'll conduct today's Gulf Coast Rail District meeting with options to participate in person or by video conference due to health and safety concerns related to COVID-19. The meeting is open to the public, but restrictions regarding masks, allowable room capacity, and seating arrangements are in place. The public meeting location is TranStar. 6922 Katy Road, Houston, Texas, Briefing Room 216. I'm Dr. Carol Lewis, the presiding officer of Gulf Coast Rail District, and confirm the following board members are physically present. Physically present are Michael Dyll, Ron Beeson...

Director Dyll: Yes, that's correct. Michael Dyll here.

Director Beeson: Sorry Michael, hold on.

Chairperson Lewis: Hold on Michael. Physically present are Ron Beeson, Carol Lewis, and that's it from the board. Alright, other members participating by video conference in accordance with the provisions of Section 551.127 over Texas government code applicable to governmental bodies that extends into three or more counties include the following board members. Please make sure that you're audible and visible when I call your name.

Chairperson Lewis: Michael Dyll?

Director Dyll: Here.

Chairperson Lewis: Great, thank you.

Director Dyll: You're welcome.

Chairperson Lewis: Director Abigail Gonzalez? She's on the phone and said she couldn't connect. If you would speak up...

Director Gonzalez: I am here.

Chairperson Lewis: Perfect. Director Jeff Ross? Director Tina Peterman?

Director Peterman: Here.

Chairperson Lewis: Director Dennis Winkler?

Director Winkler: Present.

Chairperson Lewis: Director Bruce Mann? Director Allen Owen?

Director Owen: Here.

Chairperson Lewis: Director Judge Trey Duhon?

Director Duhon: Present.

Chairperson Lewis: Director Christopher Lane? Alright, joining us in person is also a Director Jim Robinson coming into the room at this time.

Director Robinson: Hello. How are you doing?

Ms. Lisa Patke: We have Richard Muller joining online.

Chairperson Lewis: Okay. Director Muller?

Director Muller: Hello.

Chairperson Lewis: Alright, so I'll remind you all based on the open meeting requirements that we have to be seen and heard throughout the meeting for attendance and record voting. So therefore, whenever... So, I'll go ahead and read it. Director Gonzalez, we will be happy to hear your comments as we go forward, but we can't count you towards the quorum. I think we're fine so that that works. So that's all on the sheet pertaining to our laws. Alright, with that said, we are called to order. I'm going to ask Director Winkler or if he will officially certify our quorum, please sir.

Director Winkler: Madam Chair, we do have a quorum.

Chairperson Lewis: Alright, thank you. Okay. I confirm that the meeting was posted in compliance with Open Meetings Act last Friday by 2:00 p.m. That was item number 3. Agenda item number 4, discussion and possible action on minutes for the December 14th meeting. Director Winkler, please.

Director Winkler: Okay. Yes, chair, I'm going to first ask for a couple corrections on page 7 under Director Winkler. The expert use should be expertise. And these are very minor changes.

And I've there's a three-dot blank space that should be focus. Does anyone else have any changes to the minutes to make?

Director Winkler: Hearing none, I'll ask for a motion please.

Director Owen: Director Owen, so moved.

Director Duhon: Second, Judge Duhon.

Director Winkler: Having a motion and a second, I'll ask the chair for a vote to approve the minutes.

Chairperson Lewis: Alright. All in favor please?

Board: Aye.

Chairperson Lewis: Opposed?

Chairperson Lewis: Thank you very much for that.

Chairperson Lewis: A report from the Treasurer, Director Owen please.

Director Owen: Yes, Madam Chair, I would ask Cory Booker to give us a report on our financials for us.

Mr. Cory Burton: You got it.

Chairperson Lewis: Mr. Burton is going to do that for us. I totally take responsibility for that.

Mr. Cory Burton: It carries. No problem. Alright everyone, good afternoon. You should each have a copy of our report there. If you can turn to page 2 there, you see your operating fund checking account. You received your annual dues from Galveston County. Ms. Parker just handed me a check from Fort Bend County for their annual dues, which is \$35,000 to help fund your annual operational expenses. Expenses total just over \$10,500. The bulk of that being your annual insurance premium. Other than that, everything else is pretty typical in your check stack this month. Page 3 is the detail of your investments. We did purchase one new CD in your behalf since your last board meeting. Following that is your budget showing the detail for January. This is the first month of your new fiscal year, so no real surprises there. And then after that you have your normal grant status report, and we haven't had any changes on that in over a year. Pretty short and sweet today, but I'll be happy to answer any questions you might have.

Director Peterman: Cory.

Mr. Cory Burton: Yes.

Director Peterman: Hi. This is Tina Peterman. I do have a couple questions for you on Page 3. It looks like we've got a ladder portfolio of CDs, and I know... I mean, I'm just looking... I know that rates have been low, but I also know that they've popped up in the last month. So, what is the strategy going forward as these CDs start maturing?

Mr. Cory Burton: Our strategy is to continue renewing them as they mature is our investment philosophy, but if you all want us to take a different course of action, you all are in charge. You're the decision maker.

Director Peterman: Okay. So, you're just renewing them for a year going out?

Mr. Cory Burton: Yes, that's correct.

Director Peterman: And I see we've got a pretty significant amount of our cash in the Texas Class. That's only at 5 basis points right now. Did we decide that's how much we needed to keep kind of "liquid" or what is the thinking around that?

Mr. Cory Burton: Good question. So, the amount of CDs that we have in place now was how much I was authorized to do a few years back based on kind of the temperament of the board at that point. Honestly, you don't need that much. You don't need \$663,000 liquid in my opinion, based on your normal routine operations, so I'm happy to expand upon our existing CD strategy if you want me to proceed that way.

Director Peterman: I would suggest you... sorry.

Chairperson Lewis: Yes, I was going to ask that exactly. I was going to say as you're leading our finance group, I sure would appreciate what your thinking is here.

Director Peterman: So, I'd like I'd like a better understanding of our monthly cash flows, but I mean... Cory seems to think that we don't need that much in what I would consider daily liquidity. So maybe if Cory and I could work together at trying to figure out a dollar amount that we may want to move into the CD type investment. You know, I don't think it mattered very much when rates were on their way down. But now as rates are starting to tick up, I think it's worth our consideration.

Mr. Cory Burton: Sure, and I would say just from looking at your annual budget and your routine expenses. While we don't have projects going on, you probably don't need more than \$100,000 liquid in any given month. Once you do start taking on projects, then we can readdress it, but that we can get together Tina outside and come up with a solution and we will go from there.

Director Peterman: Okay, great. Thank you.

Chairperson Lewis: Yes, I think we would appreciate that. So, thank you very much Director Peterman for those questions and Mr. Burton for continuing to work with us in that regard and keeping an eye on that. So, thank you. Anything else on that treasury report, Director Owen? I think he's on mute.

Director Owen: Yes, Mr. Burton, thank you for your report. So, with that I would ask if there's any possible action on Resolution 22-01 ratifying our payments. Is there a motion?

Director Winkler: So moved by Winkler.

Director Duhon: Second, Duhon.

Chairperson Lewis: Thank you. All in favor?

Board: Aye.

Chairperson Lewis: Any opposed?

Chairperson Lewis: Alright, thank you.

Chairperson Lewis: That takes us to item number seven, public comments. Mr. Dominic is here. Did you sign and would like to comment?

Mr. Dominic Mazoch: Yes, I did.

Chairperson Lewis: Please... Dominic Mazoch, please go ahead.

Mr. Dominic Mazoch: Okay, my concern is, and I think Jim said it at the METRO meeting the other day about rail crossing elimination to try to help everybody's rail, railroad traffic, METRO, and so on and safety. My question is... We don't have an Alameda trench. We have the heavy rains here that prevent an Alameda-type trench. We do have the Hardy Toll Road corridor, which I think is ideal of what could be done here. We missed the opportunity on the 90 alternate corridor when TxDOT widened that corridor because we could have had grade crossing separation there and preserved for transit later. We blew it there. We won't even talk about the Katy Freeway. My thing is though I realize railroads are private property, but my thing is... in lieu of a trench or some other high-cost value thing, is to work with the railroads. I'll give you an example. You have Lloyd Yard on Union Pacific/Hardy Corridor. On the Sunset Corridor, you have Glidden. On the KCF, you have Kendleton, where you would have a yard long enough to hold trains in. I know holding trains is not the ideal, but maybe the thing is in lieu of the constraints of the Houston Terminal. And I discussed it two months ago, it's going to get worse, and my thing is maybe working with the railroads or encourage the railroads to have places where you have 3, 4, 5, 6 main tracks where you can hold trains so that we don't overtax the Houston Terminal. I think that might be a short-term solution until we can get some other things involved.

Secondly, the railroad needs to start looking at... you probably understand this concept, the roadtrailer approach where you know a trailer can go from railroad wheels to truck wheels without using a flat car. I think that might work. You were talking about shuttle trains a couple months ago. I think that might be the thing and they make a version... Walmart actually does have a version of it where you can put a container, where you could basically build a tray like Lego blocks. My only suggestion is instead of a regular box car truck or railroad truck, that truck would be heavier like what used to be used on REA express box... what Amtrak would use on their express box cars. They give a little bit more stability on the track. I think that's something that definitely needs to be looked at. Other than that, I have no other comment. Sending it back to you Dr.

Chairperson Lewis: Alright, thank you Mr. Mazoch. Is there anyone who's on with us virtually who would like to make comment to the board?

Mr. Tyson Moeller: Dr. Lewis, I always comment. This is Tyson Moeller with Union Pacific.

Chairperson Lewis: Yes.

Mr. Tyson Moeller: Union Pacific to continues make substantial investments within our yards as well as the sightings. Englewood Yard, which I think was possibly mentioned there. We're putting probably over \$100 million worth of improvements in that yard. Part of that is, you know what the gentleman just mentioned is so that we can receive trains into that yard more effectively. We're also looking at a bypass past track that will also allow trains the bypass the Englewood Yard. That would benefit UP, BNSF, and KCS through there, so that those are active. Some are currently active, some are future projects that are already funded that that we're working on, but we can always dig in deeper as far as some of the improvements. We've been actively talking to the City as far as what some of those capacity improvements have been there. So, it's something that we've definitely focused on and obviously working with your group for,

you know, future projects, whether those be some grade separations and/or double tracking maybe some future rail bridges that help with some of the bottlenecks through the complex.

Chairperson Lewis: Alright, thank you. Thank you very much Mr. Moeller for those comments and additional and additional insight. Is there anyone else virtually who would wish to make a comment? Alright, thank you very much.

So now, we're on to item 8, highlights from our committee meetings last month. You'll recall that we did not meet in person last month as a board, but the committees were very active. I have heard from Ms. Parker and from some of you individually that quite a bit of progress was made, so we're going to look forward to hearing those committee reports. If we could start first with Bylaws, Director Muller, please.

Director Muller: Yes, can you hear me?

Chairperson Lewis: Yes.

Director Muller: Yes, so this might be a committee where we've not made a whole lot of progress. Judge Duhon and I are supposed to meet this Friday to go over some things. I don't have much more to report than that.

Chairperson Lewis: Alright, thank you. Ms. Parker just said that Bylaws is going to meet next month. Something is upcoming. Alright, the next one we've got is Legislative and Funding, Director Peterman and Director Robinson, please.

Director Robinson: Tina, do you want to give part of this? Would you want me to start off with? How would you like to do it?

Director Peterman: If you'll start off and if I have anything to add, I'll be happy to do that.

Director Robinson: Okay. We had a really lengthy meeting, and I think some very good discussion. The first topic of discussion was on the implementation of the legislation that basically expands our authority to include passenger traffic. The City of Houston is working on this through their Legal Department and will be presented as an ordinance to change their idea of participation. We still have not heard back from Harris County, Fort Bend. There are some meetings that have been scheduled. The resolution has been received from Waller. Galveston has voted to join. There's still nothing on Montgomery, but I think Judge Duhon is going to try to have a discussion at some point with the county judge in Montgomery to see if they want to continue to participate or whether they are out of the picture.

In reference to SB 1988, implementation of that using CenterPoint's right-of-way. They've indicated pretty strongly that they are not in favor of rail running on their right-of-way for various reasons. They may not have that objection to BRT, but we need to determine who would meet with senior leadership down there to see what their position might be.

We also talked about the Infrastructure Bill opportunities that may arise for funding under that. There was a discussion about would it be possible maybe to get us some funding through the establishment TRZs, a transportation TRZ, though there was no action taken on that.

Probably the most extensive discussion was about how the annual contribution amounts are determined. It ranges from \$75,000 for Harris County to \$35,000 for Fort Bend, \$5,000 for Waller, \$5,000 for Galveston. Waller, Fort Bend, and Galveston have paid. Harris County is in progress. However, the Port of Houston indicated that it will not contribute this year. They intend to use their money for channel improvements. That does perhaps create some legal issues. We don't know about Montgomery County. We discussed... I had noted that METRO is willing to become a full member entity and contribute to the budget, but the resolutions adopted by the City of Houston and by the counties would need to be amended to indicate that METRO was a full member rather than an ex officio member. METRO is agreeable to making contribution to the budget, were that to be done. Tina, you may wish to expand on some of these.

Director Peterman: Thank you, Director Robinson. I think the only other thing I would add, and I think you were probably getting there. We talked... In the Infrastructure Bill opportunities and the TRZs, we talked about really the need to prioritize most likely projects that might qualify for some of this funding so we can start working on ways of identifying the local share. I think Director Muller rightly pointed out that that's probably going to be our biggest challenge with any federal type funding and the fact that we are red state with a blue federal government. So, that was the only thing to add.

Ms. Katherine Parker: I had one other note after our meeting. Director Duhon did make contact with Montgomery County, so he gave me the chief of staff. I made contact with him—Jason Millsaps, so I'm waiting to hear back from him. They are interested in participating, so we will have hopefully by next month have more information for Montgomery County. So, thank you. Judge Duhon.

Director Robinson: We do need to work up some basis for how the financial contributions would be structured going forward. For example, the City of Houston doesn't make a direct contribution, but it pays executive director's salary. So, their contribution is rather extensive. A question was raised. Fort Bend, for example, and Harris pay a lot more than the others and may not necessarily get any more than the others in terms of good. What I would suggest that the structure looking at the payment of participation dues would be maybe be a population type arrangement. Something that would give the appearance that it was allocated on some reasonable basis, rather than just because it's always been that way.

Chairperson Lewis: So, I will say that I asked Maureen Crocker, who was the previous GCRD Director, how the rates were set originally. There was not a lot of rationale to it, quite frankly. I do agree with you. I took some stabs at trying to figure out some sort of correlations... Can you all hear me?

Director Owen: Yes.

Chairperson Lewis: I tried to figure out some correlations between population and amount of money. That ends up sort of not working particularly well because the gaps between our amounts of population are so vast. So, you've got Waller, which Judge Duhon is here so correct me, so roughly 45,000 people, and then you've got Fort Bend which has about 850,000 people and you've got Harris County at 4.8 million people. So, it's really hard to do it on a population basis. So, what I was thinking about, and I'd love to throw this back to Legislative and Funding is to look at is there a way to categorize. So, counties with up to X number of people. You know, I don't know. What do you all think? Whether it's 250,000 or 500,000, something like that, there's

an amount for those counties. For counties between a half a million and a million, there's an amount for those counties. Then, the amount for the counties over 2.5 million or something like that. So, you know, again, I don't want to make that up in my head right now, but I would love to toss that back to Legislative and Funding sort of as at least one thought as to how we might be able to set the rates and have it make some sense while still recognizing we've got these sort of quantum degree differences between our sizes. Okay, someone is up to speak. Go ahead. Director Muller, go ahead, please.

Director Muller: Yes, I was just going to say a lot of times when we're doing cost share agreements like that, we use just assessed value because somebody else calculates it for us every year and it's easy to ascertain, you don't have to try to guess population and adjust for population or stuff like that. I don't know what the members would think about doing it that way, but that would be a very simple way to calculate that each year.

Chairperson Lewis: So, I don't know what that means exactly. So, would you explain what's assessed value?

Director Muller: Property values. Yes, so you take our budget. If our budget was \$100,000—just making that up, and you look at the relative assessed values in each jurisdiction. You might say Waller County share is 2% and you know Harris County share is 20%. You know, however, that would work out. I say that only because those jurisdictions are probably used to cost allocations based on that, and it is very simple to calculate.

Director Robinson: That data is readily available.

Chairperson Lewis: I'm sorry.

Director Robinson: The Harris County Appraisal District has it for all of the entities in Harris County, and we can get it from the Appraisal District for the others just with a phone call. Of course, I'm a director for the Harris County Appraisal District, so I'll have the Harris County stuff sent over to Katherine.

Director Owen: Would you have it for METRO as well?

Director Robinson: I have it for the Port, yes. And for all of the cities, for every entity in Harris County, I've got it.

Chairperson Lewis: So, I would... go ahead.

Director Muller: Yes, so we will do that in our Bylaws Committee. We will undertake that and perhaps we'll do a quick review of what those allocations might look like and see if everybody thinks that's reasonable and appropriate or not.

Chairperson Lewis: Okay, I would like that. That makes sense, if you would do that as part of that committee.

Director Muller: Okay.

Director Ross: It seems to me, though, that using property tax valuation... METRO really doesn't use property taxes at all, so they're a sales tax entity. And the Port of Houston gets a share of Harris County's property tax, but you know, are you going to charge the Port of Houston as though they're Harris County.

Director Muller: Yes, we would need to look at that, Jeff.

Director Robinson: Well, the Port of Houston is carried as a taxing unit. The chief appraiser does certify a taxable value to the Port. But you're correct, METRO goes up, which METRO doesn't pay anything now because METRO is an ex officio member.

Director Muller: Yes, there's probably a couple ways to do that. Maybe Judge Duhon and I can talk about that on Friday. Judge, are you okay with that? And we'll come up with some different ways. And you know, at the end of the day you just looking for, when you present it to everybody, they look at it and they go, yes, that's...

Chairperson Lewis: Right.

Director Muller: ... There's probably five ways to skin the cat. That's as fair and reasonable as any other way. That's what you're looking for.

Chairperson Lewis: Right exactly. Judge Duhon?

Director Duhon: No, that's fine. Rich and I can definitely look at that. I would just, I mean, my perspective as a county judge, I think the tax base is a good way to approach it, because I mean that generally also indicates what your ability, what kind of resources you have to pay. You know a smaller tax base, you're going to have smaller revenues, you know, makes a little harder to pay the same amount of money that Fort Bend County or Harris County, if everything was just done equal across the board. So, I see it all the time. I think I would be fine with that approach. I mean, our tax base is increasing substantially right now, so...

Chairperson Lewis: Ms. Peterman?

Director Muller: Yes.

Chairperson Lewis: Okay, that sounds good.

Director Muller: Yes, we would adjust it. It gets adjusted each year. So, as you know, as the outlying counties grow their share of the fees grow.

Chairperson Lewis: That makes sense.

Director Peterman: So that's actually...

Chairperson Lewis: Yes, Director Peterman?

Director Peterman: Yes, pardon me. That's a question I had is it... I couldn't tell if we were locked or if the payments were fixed and therefore we had to create a budget around our fixed

payments if that's how it worked historically. And then going forward since we're revisiting this question, are we creating a budget and then backing into the revenue based on the budget?

Chairperson Lewis: That's a good question because I was going to ask that too, when the comment was made was as a percent of budget. I mean... I would like to hear more about it, and we will. We don't really have a budget now like I hope we will have a budget. You know because we're about to hopefully roll out a lot of projects by the time we get to January 2023 that we don't have now. So, we would hope our budget would increase quite a bit, if everything we're thinking about can... some of the things can get consummated. So yes, that is a question, and I guess that's something that you all would consider in Bylaws, as you know, sort of contemplate this. As Director Muller was saying there is probably about five ways that we could skin this. So, what we might want to do is if there's something that you think should be considered when we're looking at this if you would, you know, maybe make or jot a little note and email it to Ms. Parker, so that when it goes to Bylaws, so they can have sort of a long list of ideas and thoughts that should be rolled into the deliberation. Alright, anything else on that in terms of what our members pay.

So, the next thing I want us to kind of, you know, volley around a little bit because I'm not really sure how this is, and it's probably going to get volleyed right back to Director Muller... How do we go about getting METRO in? I mean I don't know that anybody knows what the process is, do we?

Director Robinson: Yes, all it would take is for the resolutions adopted by the counties and the City of Houston to specify that METRO would be a member.

Chairperson Lewis: So, each of our member entities would create a resolution?

Director Robinson: Correct. They would say the members are, so list them and have METRO on that list. Then, METRO is automatically a member.

Chairperson Lewis: So just a letter from each of the member entities is what it would take to have METRO?

Director Robinson: Yes, and that's what the Statute originally said is that the membership would be determined by other members.

Ms. Katherine Parker: So, it's the concurrent resolutions that have been done in the past. So, like when Waller and Montgomery came on, that's basically what we did, but I think one of the questions that Bylaws had was I guess in the beginning why METRO wasn't a part and where they eligible to be a part. That was one of the things that Bylaws was going to consider when they met, so that there may still be the case, but if that's not, then yes, it's just a matter of us doing a concurrent resolution to add METRO.

Chairperson Lewis: Okay, so when Bylaws meet, they will be addressing it.

Ms. Katherine Parker: That's one of the things they were considering. Yes, yes.

Chairperson Lewis: Alright, exactly. Alright, are there any other thoughts about the potential of METRO becoming an invoice paying member?

Director Robinson: Madam Chair, let me make a comment on that. It's obvious to me that the METRO of old would have never considered being a member because the culture over there when METRO was setup was not to work with anybody. And it was not a good culture. That has totally changed. It's obvious that you know both the Gulf Coast Rail District operates something that would run outside the service area that's got to run on METRO's right-of-way within Harris County. Therefore, it's imperative that METRO and the Gulf Coast Rail District be in close sync with one another.

Chairperson Lewis: Yes, so this would be something that obviously would be for the entire board to, you know, consider as we go forward, but from I guess my thought process as we talk about the corridors 90A and Westpark, which honestly our lowest hanging fruit right now, it makes sense that we, Gulf Coast Rail District, do our part for the capital, but that we would figure out how to contribute to METRO's operations that they would operate because they're in the best position, probably one of the only positions in the region to actually operate. We don't want to be in the business of trying to operate, so we would always probably contract that out. So, with METRO being the largest, most reasonable entity because they do know how to operate service at this point. So, I understand that Mr. Moeller has his hand up... Tyson Moeller. Pronounce your last name?

Mr. Tyson Moeller: Good afternoon, I was just going to... Good afternoon, thank you.

Chairperson Lewis: I never really know exactly how to say it.

Mr. Tyson Moeller: It's Moeller, like your teeth.

Chairperson Lewis: Okay.

Ms. Katherine Parker: Moeller, like m-o-l-a-r.

Mr. Tyson Moeller: Yes.

Chairperson Lewis: Alright, Mr. Moeller.

Mr. Tyson Moeller: Yes, so I just want to reinforce what the board is saying. I think METRO is very approachable. They're working directly with us as well. We're working directly with the City you know with their university ambitions with that corridor, the inner Katy. There's a lot of asks that they have both from the City as well as from the freight railroad side. So, to everybody's point, the timing is right from a federal grant standpoint that we're trying to do is lineup emergency access routes with the City, how those overlay with METRO, and then you know what we're looking to do for improvements overall, right, for mobility within the Houston complex. So, there's an opportunity to bring all of these agencies together. And you know Gulf Coast Rail District continues to come up in the conversation that we want you to be included there, right? That you have an opportunity to kind of lead maybe some of the funding efforts there in organizing some of the major stakeholders here. So, completely aligned with what you guys are looking out there.

Chairperson Lewis: Perfect, thank you. Any other thoughts, comments on the report from Legislative and Funding? Directors Peterman and Robinson, anything else from their report? Alright, thank you Legislative and Funding Committee. All of you who participated and gave

opinion and advisement to that committee, thank you very much. Marketing and Outreach, Director Gonzalez please.

Director Gonzalez: Yes, thank you. The Marketing and Outreach Committee met to discuss three proposals for an update to the GCRD website. That update would be to refresh the website, modernize it, and give it a more appealing look. As we look to get new partners and gather new insights, we wanted to make sure that that looks good. Now, the proposals included Gilbreath Communications, TTI, and Sara Tristan. Their proposals ranged from anywhere from \$800 to \$14,000, and that includes the website refresh and website maintenance. So, the committee determined that we will look to Sara Tristan Services. She was the most affordable and she comes highly recommended by Andrea French, who has worked with her in the past. She has the best price range for our purposes, so we'll be looking to move forward with working with her on this project and we do have those prices if anyone is interested... those proposal prices if you are interested in hearing about them. We have a couple of questions for Sara, including clarification related to her maintenance fees, but again, she was the most affordable, lowest cost, and as we mentioned, Ms. French has seen her work and she comes highly recommended. So, that is what we will be moving forward with and will be looking to you all for feedback as we begin to gather information for the website refresh as it comes together.

Chairperson Lewis: Any comments from the committee? So, hearing not necessarily feedback, but we want you to please, please feed in, but I guess as a bottom line, we're looking to really refresh our website and it's going to be...

Director Dyll: Carol, if I can interject, I'm sorry

Chairperson Lewis: Yes, please.

Director Dyll: How much was the cost again?

Chairperson Lewis: Director Gonzales. go ahead and repeat the costs for us on the cost on the selected individual.

Director Gonzalez: The selected individual, the refresh starts at \$800 and we're looking to get clarification from her belated to the maintenance fee that would be to maintain the website and make any necessary changes each month.

Director Dyll: Sounds like a good deal to me.

Director Robinson: Quite reasonable.

Chairperson Lewis: Yes, very reasonable. And her work...

Director Gonzalez: I agree, and that is compared to some that quoted \$14,000, so it seems very reasonable.

Chairperson Lewis: And her work is very solid. Ms. French that directly Gonzalez mentioned for those who may not be fully aware, is the executive director of the Transportation Advocacy Group (TAG), and so this is the person who had done the TAG website at first. Now, I think that TAG has shifted because it's gone very interactive with being able to click the map and all the

things we're not trying to do right. But in terms, you know, a very well-developed site that pulls you in and it's got you know the colors that we want. is able to reflect our messaging as we want our messaging reflected, and looks like it was developed in 2022, that's what we were working toward. Any other comments? Alright. Alright, Director Gonzalez, thank you very much.

Director Gonzalez: Thank you.

Chairperson Lewis: Passenger Rail, Directors Duhon and Ross.

Director Duhon: I will defer to Director Ross, if he wants to lead.

Director Ross: Well, gosh. Thank you, Judge.

Director Duhon: You're welcome.

Director Ross: We focused on our discussion around the four corridors that we've been looking at for quite some time: the 90A corridor, the Westpark corridor, which is the METRONext corridor, US 290 which is tied in with the conversations about the high-speed rail, and one that was added was Galveston. Particularly with the Galveston County joining us, we figured we needed to be looking at least catching up on the history of what had been done relative to the Galveston County situation. Katherine had sent some follow up information to the committee as well to give us some updates on some of this information.

The Fort Bend County 90A is going to be under study by H-GAC, and there was a presentation at their January meeting, I guess as that's the date of what Katherine sent me. And it's an update of the prior studies they've done, except it will also consider the BRT options that we've gained permission to do through the Legislative session. And then there may be situations where they'll look at the CenterPoint right-of-way as a potential alternative just to be able to assess whether that's really viable or not. And if that's not viable, then it begs the question about whether we want to go to Legislature and try and get the right to get in CenterPoint right-of-way. That conversation might be easier with CenterPoint, if we've already been shown that there's viable use of their easement for transit purposes, and we can actually go talk to him about what kind of disruption, how we can minimize disruption, and how we could be sure not to impede their use of that right-of-way. So, the thing that has me concerned, though we don't control it, is Katherine reported that H-GAC is going to not do this work inhouse now but hire a consultant to do the work. I know I was a consultant for 30 years, but I thought we had a nine-month study that they were going to do in 18 months, which is now going to stretch out to two years or something, and that just seems to me for an update to be... It's just very frustrating, but I'm not sure that we can do anything about that at all, because they're following federal guidelines and their interpretation of those guidelines.

On the Westpark, we were talking about the extension from the end of the METRO system, which is going to be out at the Wilcrest Park and Ride. That's their proposed western terminus right now. And so, once that project becomes more of a reality, I think is then the time to start looking at how can you extend it further. We can certainly start talking to people about the concept and see if there's opportunities to start lining up some money. But until there's an operating system in place to connect to, seems like a we're going to... all we can do is educate at this point.

Then, I'd say on 290 and Galveston that we just need to again do some education for ourselves this year and see what we can start to line up on those on any projects to serve any of those areas.

Director Owen: Director Ross?

Director Ross: Yes, sir.

Director Owen: Director Owen here. And I don't know if Katherine is going to talk about this later, but we did prepare a letter that I sent to Congressman Green for him to send H-GAC to light a fire under them about that study to try to speed it up other than what it is. And let me just say that and I don't know if Katherine is going to talk about the meeting that we had with the Fort Bend Mayor and Council, my suggestion based on that meeting as it we totally ignore the CenterPoint right-of-way because the City of Sugar Land is going to oppose it. They do not want that going through any of that... And you got to bear in mind that that right-of-way is totally different through Sugar Land as it goes through a Country Club and it goes through subdivisions. It's not like the one that comes from Hiram Clarke into Missouri City and maybe through Stafford so I think it's probably fruitless for us to even think about CenterPoint because they are going to fight that tooth and toenail, so I think we need to put all of our eggs in one basket and look at the 90A corridor period and that may help us speed that study up because that corridor was looked at previously. CenterPoint wasn't. And so, we will see what happens to the letter that the congressman is sending on his letterhead to H-GAC to speed up the study and so I don't know if Katherine wants to talk about that, but I think it was very clear the other night that the mayors of Fort Bend County will support... 100% support anything down 90A all the way to Rosenberg. And for them to have that, I think is very important for us to consider when we look at this corridor because we don't want to get in a fight with any of those cities that don't want that going through there because it's just going to cloud the deal. We want 100% participation and 100%, you know, approval and they will approve one down 90A.

Chairperson Lewis: So, Director Owen, if I could just for point of information, Congressman Al Green asked you for that letter?

Director Owen: Yes, he did. Yes.

Chairperson Lewis: We didn't volunteer to sending that letter. He's...

Director Owen: No, I was. He and I were visiting this past what two weeks ago and obviously this is number one on his radar is trying to get something done there. I told him that we had had the meeting and that H-GAC was going to do this study and they're telling us that it could be two or three years and that's going to be. You know, we've already been in this for 25 years. We don't need another three years and so he said, tell me what I need to do. I said that I think a letter from the congressman might help, and he said send it to me. So, we prepared it, sent it to him. He will put it on his letterhead. I'm sure it's already gone.

Chairperson Lewis: Okay. Alright. And so, the other.. and we're all with kind of stealing Executive Director Parker's thunder here, but just piggybacking on the enthusiastic response of that Fort Bend Mayors and Council Members. They also like Westpark. So, we had always been talking about to Fulshear, and so they approached us and said Fulshear is not enough—they want past Fulshear, two cities past on the other side of Fulshear. Approached us as to why we would

talk about stopping at Fulshear. So, that was very encouraging. So, Ms. Parker probably would say all that too.

Director Owen: And the Commissioner was there, who said whatever I can do, let me know.

Chairperson Lewis: Right, that's correct.

Director Ross: So, is two cities west of Fulshear officially San Antonio?

Chairperson Lewis: Right? So, any other comments or thoughts on the Passenger Rail Committee report?

Director Robinson: Well, it's really good intelligence to know that Sugar Land would oppose to coming in on that right-of-way. Given that extreme reluctance of CenterPoint to even talk about it. I think the mayor is right. Let's put our eggs in the 90A basket.

Chairperson Lewis: Concurrence from me.

Director Ross: That's good by me. Hey, you know, maybe TxDOT will listen if all the cities are lined up that way?

Director Robinson: Surely help.

Director Ross: Yes.

Director Owen: Yes, I think so Jeff. I mean, that's what it's going to take. It's going to take... It's going to take the whole, you know... there's 16 cities in Fort Bend County even though this doesn't serve them all. Somehow they can all get to 90A from where they are and I think it'll be important to have them all on board and one letter endorsing the 90A corridor when it goes through their cities all the way to Kendleton, which is in one of those cities. So, you could take this 90A corridor all the way to Kendleton.

Chairperson Lewis: I'm sure that when we start talking about it, Kendleton will probably walk up to us and ask why we talked about stopping had Rosenberg too.

Director Owen: Well and you've got that huge rail yard in Kendleton that's going to really be a boon for them. But again, you know Jim, what we've got to do before we do that is, as I've said before, Missouri City is in METRO. We got to figure out a way to form a transit district to get Sugar Land, Richmond, Rosenberg, Kendleton, all those cities involved in it wanting to pay their fair share of the operations without getting in METRO.

Director Ross: Right?

Director Owen: Which they won't.

Chairperson Lewis: Alright. So, that's something that we put on one of our lists to pursue while we're talking about 90A. I mean, once we kind of get the ball really started with this study, we need to talk about a lot of things, including the TRZs—the T-R-Z-S, because that going to, you know, come really quickly. And I understand that there is conversation out of the state

proposition that passed about actually how it's rolled out, how it's implemented—the guidelines, so we'll keep everyone apprised when we know more. But I think as soon as we know enough to begin talking to folks about it, I think we'd like to. And I think it would make sense to talk about on the corridors that we're talking about now, 90A and Westpark. And then we can see what happens beyond there. Alright, anything else on Passenger? Okay, Roadway/Railway. I don't think Director Mann is with us so Director Dyll...

Director Beeson: I think he's on now.

Chairperson Lewis: Okay. Director Mann and Director Dyll, Roadway/Railway please.

Director Dyll: Yes. I'll go ahead and start. Bruce might be getting ready. We talked about the grade crossings and how to look at them. The conditions that you look at when you figure out which ones you want, and you can take into account all matter of conditions. And I'm sorry as I've got some background noise here. We're moving freight today. But the three main... The three main things you look at are incidences. And the next one would be congestion, because just because there's not incidences at grade crossings doesn't mean it's not something that we need to look at. It may just be so slow that there's no opportunity for their even to be incidences. And of course, the last one and may be the most important one... is the viability. We need to make sure we can actually get them done. We've been talking about the Griggs/Mykawa, the grade crossing, for a long time now. And I think it's Bruce and I's consensus or agreement that that's probably the best one to look at. We can get METRO's support, City of Houston, TxDOT. I don't think the railroads are not against it. Let me know Bruce if I'm glossing over anything too quickly or anyone else.

Director Dyll: Alright, and then we talked...

Mr. Tyson Moeller: Hey Michael. You have the railroad support on Griggs/Long/Mykawa. That is one project that is good for everybody. So absolutely, BNSF and UP are absolutely behind that one. We think it's a great candidate for a future federal funding for match there so.

Director Dyll: Thank you.

Director Muller: I'm sorry, which one is that?

Director Dyll: Griggs/Mykawa.

Mr. Tyson Moeller: Griggs and Mykawa. So, there are separate roads. Yes, there are separate roads there. It comes... It's actually the Mykawa sub for BNSF. It has the HBT Westbelt that's included there. And then UP's Harrisburg sub. But it would be, I would say it's just kind of the South... It's almost South Central Houston.

Chairperson Lewis: It's right inside the 610 Loop at that you know where right before 610 sort of curves from south to north. It's right there in that little intersection.

Mr. Tyson Moeller: But what's also of interest there, too, is that TxDOT has an active project they're designing for SH 35, and that's part of what spurred this discussion. And so, you've got the local district that has a CRISI grant that's currently identify and design concepts, and they

have, I think, close to 20 of them, but the intent is to grade separate all of those at grade crossings. It's very challenging down through there.

Chairperson Lewis: Yes, because you've got the number of railroad lines and then the 610 Loop is right there. And then, and as you mentioned, TxDOT is going to start working on the interchange between 610 and the Alvin Freeway... guess it's 35. I think that's the right number, 35, right at that intersection as well, but it is a location. For the longest, it was number one identified in the state of Texas as the great separation needing attention, and this year it fell to eight... To nine I think actually, eight or nine, so it fell quite a bit. As we talked about it with the individuals who did the study, they measure traffic and so we think it's sort of, you know, an oxymoron that you know people realize that it's not a good place to drive, so they don't come that way. So, overtime the traffic decreases and then, you know, it falls. But you know if it were to be properly design, then the traffic would increase and who knows where the relief would be. It might take traffic off 610 or you know other arteries, because now we can use that one once it's fixed.

Mr. Tyson Moeller: Yes. And Michael, to your point, part of the METRO support of this as well is that they need to protect an envelope for their future passenger service that they want to be able to offer, which is maybe years out, but these are conversations you know that UP is actively having with METRO and the City on as well.

Chairperson Lewis: Yes, exactly.

Director Muller: Is there a way that... It sounds like there was a study that's already been done on that? I mean this, is there something that shows what it would look like and what it would cost?

Mr. Tyson Moeller: Yes, so Bridgefarmer is taking the lead. And Dr. Lewis, I apologize. I don't remember the agency that's doing this study, but that's down in that regional area. But it is Bridgefarmer...

Ms. Katherine Parker: It's Southeast Management District.

Chairperson Lewis: Southeast Management District.

Ms. Katherine Parker: Yes, Southeast Management District. Yes, I can check into the study for you. We have met extensively at the City almost monthly to talk about these projects and how each of the layers can be put into place and there are a lot of issues and obstacles that you know we've got to agree upon—height restrictions is a major one. So, it's almost detailed, you know, at our meetings that we talked... We're actually going street by street, location by location. So, it is something that is high on everyone's radar because it is an issue for not only that area, but you know for the region since it comes up on the priority index each year. Even though it's dropped to 8, it's still you know... it's still an intersection that's hard to navigate unless you are familiar with the area. So, yes, definitely we can.

Director Muller: Do we know what the cost is? Do you have a rough idea the cost, Tyson?

Ms. Katherine Parker: It started at \$25 million. I don't know what it is now, but that's where we started for the grade separations for that location.

Mr. Tyson Moeller: That was the last quote that I heard was in that \$25 million, which is fairly inexpensive if that's truly the cost because you know the other two grade separations that we're looking at are in that \$40 to \$50 million so relatively inexpensive. And for those grade separations, you know UP and BNSF would be in for some of the match on those as well.

Director Mann: And I think that's the point of maybe using this as a project is we need to find something that people are supportive of that are willing to pay the cost... Need to get a win as an entity and get something funded and built. This gets us probably down that road because you've got the railroads and others that are willing to put some money into this project so I think that's why you know we talked about it and said, hey, this may be the best one.

Mr. Tyson Moeller: I think it'll score.

Director Muller: Yes, this is a great.

Mr. Tyson Moeller: I think with the new funding, too, with the socioeconomic portion component that adds into the competitiveness that that should score high as well. I think everybody agrees with that.

Director Muller: Well, if somebody could make available whatever studies we've got on it, yes, I agree with Director Mann. This sounds like the project we were looking for, right? I mean and 25 million in terms of transportation projects is really not a lot of money. I mean, it's just not. I mean, if we can't solve this one for that price tag even \$35 million... This is the one we've been looking for. Let's go get this one done.

Mr. Tyson Moeller: And I'd say part of what we're doing is the City is actively working on, Katherine, you know prioritizing what projects they would want to go after with the different grants. Right? They have a number of different grants that they want to go after, so that's something they're actively putting together that they should have I think in the next couple of weeks that they should be able to share with Katherine and UP here shortly.

Director Peterman: Yes, I was going to ask a question. So, who takes the lead as quarterback in this situation?

Chairperson Lewis: So, I'm not answering. I'll see if Ms. Parker knows. That's one reason that I haven't been saying anything.

Ms. Katherine Parker: Well, right now I would say it is the City of Houston and, in particular, it's in Houston Public Works. We kind of have been given the charge to go through, of course, the Houston-Beaumont study but also other locations just from incidents, you know, because we have records of investigations of calls from whether it's the east end or anywhere across the City of Houston that has issues that are rail related. So, it's the charge now specifically for the managing engineer in that section to come up with the priority list and he's working on that, you know, as we speak. And I guess deciding what would be on the City's list it as far as what they want to use as a justification to apply for these grants when they are made available. So once that list is made, you know published, I can get that to the board. No issue, but they are working on it now, so it is within Public Works basically.

Director Peterman: So, follow up question. Does that... When they're when they're putting that list together will they be aware of all these other parties who are supporting this particular project? And if not, how do we make sure that they are aware because I mean this one has got all the pieces?

Mr. Tyson Moeller: Yes, they are. This is something that UP has been actively talking to the City for the last two years. Now that we're kind of breaking out of COVID... Katherine's been part of those conversations as well. You know, we've been beating to get the drum about making sure METRO is at the table as well. UP has been having individual discussions with METRO. So that's part of what we need to do to your point, Tina, right, is to make sure everybody at the same table and that's actually... In order to find the right design instead of Bridgfarmer having separate siloed conversations, they really need to have all of us in the same room to make sure that we're meeting all of the stakeholders needs for the project there. So, that's kind of one of the next steps as they're finalizing some of their concepts. So, I would say it's really, I think the ownership falls with Katherine and like myself, as far as making sure that we have that right and that this is something we've been actively working on since the first of the year with the City, so they come up with a prioritization. They've been looking at the same study that Katherine just mentioned there.

Director Ross: Has the council member, the district council member been engaged? Do you know?

Ms. Katherine Parker: Yes. I'm sure because the Southeast Management District is pretty active. Yes.

Chairperson Lewis: That would... It's probably D or I. Do you know?

Ms. Katherine Parker: Over there, I'm not sure. I'm thinking it's D.

Chairperson Lewis: Yes. If it's D, then I would say yes. The answer is, if it's D, then yes, we know that would be Carolyn Evans Shabazz and that she would be, as Ms. Parker was saying, really linked with that Southeast Management District.

Director Ross: Who chairs the Southeast District, Management District?

Chairperson Lewis: Is it Teddy McDavid?

Ms. Katherine Parker: I'm not sure. In the past, she was but I'm not sure of the current.

Chairperson Lewis: In the past, it was Teddy McDavid, but I'm not sure who is the chair at this moment.

Ms. Katherine Parker: I can find out for you. They have a pretty big publicity campaign. They send out information quite often.

Chairperson Lewis: Alright, anymore on that? Okay, Roadway/Railway are there other topics of conversation at your committee meeting?

Director Dyll: We talked a bit about Commerce and Navigation. Again, that's Tyson. You might have a lot to add about that.

Mr. Tyson Moeller: It's just a reminder that we do have, you know, two grade separations that are partially funded. You have the Commerce/Navigation, and you have the York/Sampson that have been, you know, the design has already been started. It's just that we're at a shortfall from a funding standpoint there, so it's just making sure that we're engaged with the City. This goes back to what the City's prioritizations are on their various projects and what they want to move forward then ultimately there.

And then, Michael, the only other items that came to mind where we did talk about the... there's a couple of single mainline bridges. Dr. Lewis, we had talked a little bit about this in DC, but like the East Belt is a good example where we have a single mainline bridge. It comes down to a bottleneck, right? There's a potential project that you could make that double track and that actually has some similar benefits to a great separation that allows the trains not to be staged on one end or the other of the bridge and it gets the trains out of the at grade crossings. So, that's something we're actively talking to the City about and to see if something like a CRISI grant would apply and if that's something that the City would be interested in sponsoring.

Chairperson Lewis: So, on Commerce/Navigation, I feel like... Of course, we talk about it a lot and I've probably said this before, but Ms. Parker is sitting here, I think we're this close to the lip of the cup of getting the gap funded—like this close. So, I would really like to be able to tell you, honestly, at the March meeting, but because I know things go slowly... at the April meeting that we have fully got the stakeholders lined up and all of the, you know, "I's" dotted and "T's" crossed about moving forward. So, I hate to say it, but it would be three years after Katherine, and I started on this.

Ms. Katherine Parker: Yes, yes.

Chairperson Lewis: You know, as we say, government projects sometimes take a long time, which is why we start on them and just keep pedaling, keep pedaling, keep pedaling and do not get weary.

Mr. Tyson Moeller: Yes.

Chairperson Lewis: Alright, anything else you all? Did you all talk about the freight shuttle?

Ms. Katherine Parker: Yes.

Director Dyll: No, we did not get time to talk much about the freight shuttle.

Chairperson Lewis: Alright.

Director Dyll: From my recollection.

Chairperson Lewis: Okay. Alright.

Director Mann: No. I'll probably just give a quick update on that, which is that we (the Port) met with Maersk and Freight FSX, Freight Shuttle in December. They're really excited about the

technology and the potential for it. We're meeting with Walmart later this month. It looks like a lot of things are kind of aligning for this to potentially happen, so it continues to move forward. I had a conversation yesterday with Commissioner Ryan from the Texas Transportation Commission about it so, I think it's just a question of when more than anything. So, hopefully we can be the first project, not the second, third, or fourth.

Chairperson Lewis: So, when you say... yes.

Director Dyll: Bruce?

Chairperson Lewis: So, when you say we, is TxDOT talking about taking lead on it? Or are we still talking about Gulf Coast Rail District being a lead partner there?

Director Mann: So, there's some moving parts to this. Part of it may be dictated by what happens this Fall in elections, but one of the conversations that we've started to have is the potential for... And this is just a conversation, so please don't anybody run down the road with this and get it in a newspaper or anything like that... is potentially HCTRA getting involved with it because crossing the channel is the public/private partnership piece of it. I think they think there's interest in it. It's just how do we cross the channel, and that may be a toll thing where, you know, where HCTRA could pay for it and then get toll back from the containers as they go back and forth across... It's one of the potentials for funding. Otherwise, it's a grant opportunity. I think the meeting with Walmart coming up at the end of this month is going to be a big deal. If you look at Walmart, Amazon, and Exxon, between those three entities, there's about a thousand trucks a day. They're moving back and forth between the port and those facilities. If you could capture 60 percent of what those three companies with freight shuttle, it becomes economical to do it. So, this conversation with Walmart. So anyway, it's continuing to move forward, and it's closer to reality than it's ever been so...

Chairperson Lewis: Alright, great. Thank you for that update. Alright, anything else for Roadway/Railway?

Director Dyll: Hey Bruce, I've got a quick question for you. Where's Maersk looking to take the containers? What's its interest in the shuttle?

Director Mann: So, Maersk, like other major multinational companies, is interested in the green aspect of it. So, for that environmental project, more than it is anything else, they're looking at their whole supply chain and saying, you know, if we could get freight shuttle as part of our offer from, you know, China to Exxon or Exxon to China, you know, we reduced our emissions in this supply chain move by X percent. So, it's...

Director Dyll: Okay, so it's part of... freight? Walmart's freight?

Director Mann: Yes, it's Maersk's involvement in it is really from a ESG perspective. They get to claim ESG, and they don't have to pay anything for it. But when the ship lines say, hey, we're supportive of it, that's important.

Director Dyll: Got it, thanks.

Chairperson Lewis: Alright, thank you all. So, I think from everyone's perspective that our committee meetings last month were very productive, and I think did exactly what we wanted them to do in taking us another step forward as we proceed in 2022. So, as we round out #8, any closing comments, remarks, thoughts before we go on to #9? Anything from any of the directors? Alright, we will be on to #9, report from the Executive Director, Ms. Parker.

Ms. Katherine Parker: Thank you. I first want to say thank you to each of you all for taking all the emails, Doodle polls, and everything to try to get everyone scheduled. We so appreciate it. And thank you to Lisa for coordinating all those efforts. I think the meetings were, like Dr. Lewis said, very successful.

This past January/February, I met with the City of Houston East End District concerning UP's requests to the City of Houston about the East End blocked crossing concerns. And so, all of these requests are kind of intertwined with what we talk about each meeting. We are hoping that we will be able to put some of these projects into place, so that people can actually, you know, feel the difference. So that was one of the meetings I participated in.

I also helped to coordinate a meeting with Council Member Cisneros and various council members to talk about opportunities to collaborate rail. UP and BNSF were part of those conversations. This is kind of the... Council Member Cisneros' first, I guess, jump out of the gate to talk about the infrastructure money and how the City can be posed to apply for that.

We also talked... I also participated with TAC, TPC, and of course the RTP meetings. Also, the Greater Houston Freight Committee met during this time frame, and this meeting was specifically about port and roadway resiliency. We talked about regional goods movement and also the supply chain crisis, so more that freight side that we are talking about growing as part of our District. I'm hoping that I'll be able to get one of these speakers., maybe Mr. Fielkow or Dr. Zane, to come and present to the board about their recent findings.

I also presented to the Joint Transportation and Infrastructure, Quality of Life, and Regulatory Neighborhood Affairs meeting, which is basically the City of Houston Council members, but there's three committees that had a joint meeting to talk about rail concerns. In that meeting, GCRD was asked to talk about our history, our participation. I talked about the board structure, who are member entities were, and some of the past projects that we have been a part of. The fire chief, Chief Pena was there, Jack Hanagriff, and also there were representatives from UP, who all had the opportunity to present and also answer questions as well. Out of that meeting, in years... When I first started doing this, we had a monthly meeting where all of the railroads and the City of Houston met to talk about operations and issues that happen in crossings within that past month. In the past, maybe four years, that meeting has not happened. As a result of this Council Committee meeting, the railroads have agreed to start that again. So actually, on February 15<sup>th</sup>, we will have our first meeting at UP's location in Spring to start those conversations again. And what we found in the past is that it allows the railroads to give an account of what's happening at the locations, and it also gives us an opportunity to explain to the public what's happening, but also identify those areas where they may not know what's going on at locations, whether it's trespassing, whether it's cars blocking, or whatever the case may be. It gives us that opportunity. So, those meetings will begin again, like I said on February 15<sup>th</sup>, and the Gulf Coast Rail District will be a part of those monthly meetings.

That evening we met with a Fort Bend Mayor's Council and... Mayors and Council Association committee that night. So, that morning, we had the Council meeting, and then, that night, we went to Fort Bend. And as Mayor Owen said, we talked about US 90A and also basically resolution support from that group. It was a very positive meeting. They were happy to hear of what we were thinking of, and as Dr. Lewis said, each city along that route provided positive feedback. I think that will be a plus for us now.

As far as the study is concerned, I'm in contact with Thomas Gray from H-GAC, who is over this study that we've requested. He is asking that members of the committee, and we're proposing it, of course, that Mayor Owen be a part of this 90A study, but there may be others who want to be a part of, you know, the steering committee or the focus group that will talk about the scope, that will talk about the costs, even what we talked about today the alignment and the route. So, if we went originally and said that we wanted them study, you know the CenterPoint route, then this would be an opportunity to say, okay, we've changed what we want to do, this is what we would like to look at. So, we have that opportunity on the front end to be able to express those desires. So, I would definitely say that to him in my conversations with him. But just so that you know, we will be asking board members to be a part of that, and to, you know, be vocal about what the committees have come up with as far as their stance.

Yesterday I was a part of a Livable Centers meeting that has done some work along the 90A corridor, which is a different type of study, but I think it gives you the base for transportation. So, you're looking at a pedestrian access. You're looking at areas that are maybe gathering spots for communities along that stretch. And so, they met with Thomas and I yesterday to give us data or even to offer what they could provide to our study. So, I think that all of those elements combined will make for a great planning effort for the Rail District.

And lastly, as I said, Montgomery County did agree to consider coming on. This was after we had our committee meeting, so I'm waiting to hear back from Jason Millsaps, who is the chief of staff for the judge of Montgomery County.

So that will... I think that concludes everything. We kind of touched on a lot of things throughout the meeting, so I didn't want to repeat some of the conversations. That's all I think I have on my docket. Thank you.

Chairperson Lewis: Questions for Ms. Parker? Comments?

Ms. Katherine Parker: We did receive Fort Bend's \$35,000. I actually gave that paper check to Mr. Burton today.

Chairperson Lewis: Alright. Excellent, thank you. Next thing, announcements by chair. I think we've covered pretty much everything that we wanted to talk about today. The only other point that I would add is that I did have the opportunity to speak with Christopher Lane, our director from Galveston, and he was, you know, very engaged, very happy to be a part. We talked about some of the things that we're doing in terms of the passenger. And you know, from just my history and background, what I know about and what we've done in terms of looking at commuter transport down to Galveston. Just so folks know, Galveston and 90A were the two highest ridership corridors out of the 2010 study. And although there's, just like 90A... We have the same problems on the I-45/State Highway 3 side that we have on 90A, there's no space. But if we could find a place to put a facility, the ridership would be very high. We talked about that.

We also talked a little bit about grade separations and any that might be of an advantage for folks down in Galveston County. So those are the two things that we talked about. And I will look forward to seeing him here perhaps next month joining us either virtually or in person.

So that would be what I think kind of rounds us out for today. We will continue working on making sure that we get all of our ratification for SB 1990. We need to start thinking about how we follow up with our member institutions about adding METRO, so that's going to be a second tier of conversations with the same member entities that were going around with SB 1990. My sense is to ask for one thing at a time. Let's get past this round, then we'll start with the second item. So that would cover the agenda for today, unless there are any parting thoughts as they say for the good of the order.

Director Peterman: Dr. Lewis?

Chairperson Lewis: Tina?

Director Peterman: Yes, this is Tina. Sorry just one last comment. I wanted to congratulate you. I think you were recently named to a special board or something that I don't know the specifics. I just saw it on my LinkedIn feed, and I was hoping maybe you could maybe just share a tiny bit about that. You probably don't like to toot your own horn, so I'm going to toot it for you.

Chairperson Lewis: Thank you Director Peterman, that's very kind. I really don't toot my own horn. My daughter says to me, "Mom, you didn't tell us that" and I said, "I never do." But I am honored that I was, in January, appointed by the National Academies of Science, Engineering, and Medicine to the Transportation Research Board's Executive Committee. And so, as part of that, I'll also be appointed to their Strategic Policy and Planning Committee, so that's doing policy and planning for the whole... really for the research that goes on in the whole United States of America, so it's a pretty big to do quite frankly. Thank you, Director Peterman. I mean, I'm honored. I'm, you know, it's like I'm honored, you know to be there and to be part of that committee and to be working to that end so. Anyway, if you're interested...

Ms. Katherine Parker: Congratulations.

Chairperson Lewis: Pardon?

Ms. Katherine Parker: Congratulations.

Chairperson Lewis: Thank you, thank you.

Director Peterman: Congratulations.

Chairperson Lewis: Thank you, thank you so much.

Director Robinson: That indeed is a great honor.

Chairperson Lewis: It's a great honor. It's an incredible honor.

Director Robinson: But you said you don't want to ever toot your own horn, but I've got an ending thought here. For about a dozen years after my first life, I was the administrative assistant to the director of the Texas Department of Public Safety. And he had an old saying that he lived by that he who tooteth not his own horn shall not have his horn tootethed.

Chairperson Lewis: Look, that's the first thing my husband said to me when I met him 41 years ago. My husband toots his own horn. Thank you. So, thank you, Director Peterman, I appreciate it. Alright, so with that and with everyone's concurrence, we will stand adjourned (3:26 p.m.).

ATTEST:

DocuSigned by:  
*Dennis Winkler*  
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Dennis Winkler, Secretary  
Trey Duhon, Vice Secretary  
Gulf Coast Rail District

The disruption of normal business due to the COVID-19 prompted the use of electronic signatures.