

2021 YEAR IN REVIEW



The Gulf Coast Rail District (GCRD) is a political subdivision of the State of Texas created to enhance the economic benefits of rail while improving regional quality of life. Harris County, the City of Houston, and Fort Bend County created the Gulf Coast Rail District (GCRD) under authority granted by the State of Texas in Section 171 of the Transportation Code. The Port of Houston was also instrumental in the creation of the District. The District held its first meeting in August of 2007.



GCRD Chairperson Carol Abel Lewis, Ph.D.
House Transportation Committee Testimony S.B. 1990
April 13, 2021. Austin, TX.

GCRD's Mission and Vision include improving safety and security at rail crossings to include grade separations and increasing mobility, access, and quality of life. The District promotes multimodal mobility leading to commuter rail, bus rapid transit, and advanced technologies to improve regional passenger transport.



GCRD Chairperson Carol Abel Lewis, Ph.D., Director Jeff Ross,
and Executive Director Katherine Parker
87th State Legislative hearings April 20, 2021. Austin, TX

The District is governed by a board of directors consisting of fourteen appointees, one Ex Officio member appointed by the Texas Transportation Commission, one Ex Officio member appointed by Galveston Transit District, and one Ex Officio member appointed by the Metropolitan Transit Authority of Harris County. The District Chairman is jointly appointed by the Mayor of the City of Houston and the Harris County Commissioners Court. Other members include appointments by the Chairman of the Port of Houston Authority and appointments by the City of Houston, Harris County, Fort Bend County, Galveston County, Montgomery County, and Waller County, as well as the Harris County Mayors and Council Association and Fort Bend Mayors and Council Association.



GCRD Director and Passenger Rail Committee Chair, Jeff Ross
Senate Transportation Committee Testimony S.B. 1990
April 20, 2021. Austin, TX

2021-2022 PRIORITIES

US 90A Corridor Study Update - Updating the 2010 study to include a Bus Rapid Transit option and potential to utilize CenterPoint Energy right-of-way as part of HGAC's Unified Planning Work Program.

Houston-Beaumont Region Freight Study Update- Partnering with Class I railroads and other stakeholders on rail and potential grade separation projects and at grade crossing closures.

West Belt Project - Recommended in the TxDOT Houston Region Freight Study, establishing this "sealed corridor" would provide significant public and private benefits, including enhanced rail and vehicle mobility, reduced vehicular and pedestrian conflict as well as reduced emissions.

Houston Blocked Crossing Taskforce - Ongoing collaborative effort with City of Houston to identify, gather and analyze data at historical rail crossings of concern. The project's goal is to improve safety and mobility, reduce traffic congestion and reduce delays for emergency responders on roads surrounding rail crossings.

Freight Mobility - Exploring opportunities to implement effective metropolitan freight transportation strategies for the GCRD region through continuous assessment.

Commuter Transportation - Evaluating previous work along WestPark which indicates Bus Rapid Transit as the preferred option into Fort Bend County and the growing Fulshear community. Considering options in the US 290 Corridor where GCRD has an MOU with Texas Central High-Speed Rail to share right-of-way between IH 610 and Beltway 8.

LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

Gulf Coast Rail District championed legislation that expanded our transportation toolbox modal opportunities to include Advanced Technologies, including Bus Rapid Transit. The bill was a follow-on to Texas Transportation Code Section 171 which authorizes GCRD to implement commuter rail. With the passage of S.B.1990, the Gulf Coast Rail District's goal of expansion of the "eligible transportation projects" definition to include freight, commuter rail, advanced technologies, and other forms of high capacity transit was realized.

NEW APPOINTEES



City of Houston
Abigail Gonzalez
Position 4



City of Houston
Tina Arias Peterman
Position 6



Fort Bend County
Richard Muller
Position 10



Fort Bend Mayors and
Council Association
Allen Owen
Position 11

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Carol Abel Lewis, Ph.D. (Chairperson) • Ronald A. Beeson • Michael Dyll
Abigail Gonzalez • Tina Arias Peterman • Dennis Winkler • Bruce Mann
Richard L. Muller, Jr. • Allen Owen • Judge Trey Duhon • Christopher Lane
Jim Robinson, Ph.D. • Jeff Ross • Katherine Parker (Executive Director)