



Minutes of the Gulf Coast Rail District Board Meeting – September 13, 2022

A meeting of the Gulf Coast Rail District Board of Directors was held on Tuesday, September 13, 2022 at Houston TranStar and via video conference. In attendance at the meeting were Directors Ronald A. Beeson, Trey Duhon, Michael Dyll, Robert A. Fry, Jr., Abigail M. Gonzalez, Veronica Chapa Gorczynski, Jon Keeney, Carol Abel Lewis, Bruce Mann, Richard L. Muller, Jr., Allen Owen, Tina Arias Peterman, Jeff E. Ross, and Dennis Winker. 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: Alright, everyone. I think we're ready to get started. I'm Dr. Carol Lewis, presiding officer of Gulf Coast Rail District. I'm going to call our meeting to order (2:00 p.m.). Today's Gulf Coast Rail District meeting is being conducted 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. The video conference will be conducted through Microsoft Teams. Invites and links were sent to GCRD board members to participate in the meeting. Other attendees or the public can join the meeting by clicking on the link that was provided on the agenda. If your device has both audio and video, you will be able to speak and be seen during the conference. Based on Open Meeting Act requirements, GCRD board members participating in the Microsoft Teams video conference will need to be seen and heard throughout the meeting for attendance and to record voting; therefore, members calling in by telephone will not count toward the quorum or voting. The public will have an opportunity to address the board with a limit of three minutes per speaker.

I'm confirming that the following board members are physically present. We have Mayor Fry, Mayor Keeney, Bruce Mann, and myself. Other members participating by video conference in accordance with the provisions of section 551.127 of the Texas Government Code applicable to governmental bodies that extends into three or more counties include the following: Please audibly reply when I call your name, and to make us just do this once, I'm going to go through the attendance list. Is Mayor Duhon on? Yes, he is. Mayor Duhon?

Director Duhon: Yes.

Chairperson Lewis: Would you do us the privilege, Judge Duhon? I've got these mayors around me, so I did the wrong sort of title. Judge Duhon, would you do us the pleasure, please, of certifying our quorum?

Director Duhon: Absolutely. Ronald Beeson? Michael Dyll?
Director Beeson: Present.
Director Duhon: Okay, I'm sorry, there you go.

Director Duhon: Alright. Michael Dyll?
Director Dyll: Here.

Director Duhon: Veronica, I do not want to mispronounce your last name. Veronica Gorczynski?
Not on? Alright. Abigail?
Chairperson Lewis: Yes. It's green. Oh, okay, alright. We had another VG, sorry.

Director Duhon: Abigail Gonzalez? Jeff Ross?
Director Ross: Here.

Director Duhon: Tina Peterman?
Director Peterman: Here.

Director Duhon: Alright. Dr. Lewis?
Chairperson Lewis: I am present.

Director Duhon: You're here. Now, for Director Winkler, we have Mayor Jon Keeney?
Director Keeney: Here.
Director Duhon: Alright. Thank you, Mayor.
Director Winkler: And Director Winkler is also here.
Director Duhon: Okay. Very good.

Director Duhon: Bruce Mann?
Director Mann: Yes, here.

Director Duhon: Very good. Rich Muller?
Director Muller: I'm here.
Director Duhon: Thank you, Rich.

Director Duhon: Allen Owen?
Director Owen: I'm here.

Director Duhon: Thank you. I am present. And Christopher Lane? Alright. We definitely have a quorum, Madam Chairman.
Chairperson Lewis: Okay, thank you.

Director Mann: Veronica joined.
Chairperson Lewis: Okay, great, great.
Director Duhon: Okay.
Chairperson Lewis: Okay, Veronica, we now have you here.

Chairperson Lewis: Yes, thank you. And we want to recognize our ex officio director, Mayor Robert Fry, joining us representing the METRO Board of Directors. So, you all will recall last month Director Robinson was term limited from METRO, so our METRO appointee is now here, and we're going to acknowledge him and welcome you being here.

Director Fry: Thank you.

Chairperson Lewis: I think we'll do it again in a minute. Alright. Thank you so much. We do have a quorum.

Chairperson Lewis: I want to confirm, Ms. Patke, that our meeting posting compliance was in accord with the Open Meetings Act, please, ma'am?

Ms. Lisa Patke: Yes, it was.

Chairperson Lewis: Alright. Thank you. Director Winkler, our first item that we're going to consider is a resolution letter presented in honor of your service. If you would allow me to read this. Mr. Director Winkler, at the top of the inside address, in recognition and appreciation of distinguished service, Gulf Coast Rail District presents this resolution in honor of Mr. Director Winkler. Whereas Mr. Director Winkler served as Harris County Mayors and Councils Association appointee for position eight on the Gulf Coast Rail District Board since September 14th, 2010, as recognized by Resolution 10-11. And whereas in furtherance of this organization, Mr. Winkler graciously contributed his time and expertise and provided invaluable insight, perspective, and guidance to the Board of Directors to assist the District in fulfilling its mission. And whereas throughout his Gulf Coast Rail District Board appointment, he served in several positions and on several committees including Vice Treasurer, September 2011 to February 2012; Treasurer, February 2012 to June 2017; Secretary, June 2017 to September 2022; Committeeman, Planning Committee, April 2015 to November 2019; Committeeman, Legislative and Funding Committee, March 2016 to November 2019; Committeeman, Railroad and Roadway Passenger Committee, November 2019 to December 2021; Committeeman, Passenger Rail Transit Committee, September 2020 to December 2021; and Committeeman, Marketing and Outreach Committee, November 2020 to September 2022. Therefore, be it resolved that the Gulf Coast Rail District acknowledges and extends its gratitude to Mr. Director Winkler for his distinguished service to the Gulf Coast Rail District Board of Directors and expresses its deepest appreciation for the outstanding contributions during his tenure. Signed this 12th day of September 2022. So, we signed it yesterday. Mr. Winkler, what can we say? You have been an original board member, correct?

Director Winkler: I did not. I was active in getting the organization started when we first founded, but I did not serve for the first.

Chairperson Lewis: Yes, for the first... because it might have been three. I think we're 2007, so you started in 2010. But you've been here and have provided the foundation for all of us, so we thank you. And your service record is outstanding. So, we thank you so very much and recognize you for that.

Director Fry: I would like to point out that I was president of the Harris County Mayors and Councils Association that appointed him, so Dennis and I are joined at the hip.

Chairperson Lewis: Alright, alright. So, he's got continuity there as well. Well, we don't get to shake your hand and get our photo, but sort of in absentia doing that...

Director Keeney: Well Dennis, this is Jon Keeney. You've given me a hard act to follow, so I'll work on it.

Director Winkler: Mayor, you will do well. One of the reasons I feel very comfortable in leaving the board, and I've mentioned this when I asked to have someone replace me, this is the strongest board we have had since the beginning. Mayor Fry, thank you for your initial vote of confidence in me. But we have some really good members now, all the skillsets we need to move this organization forward. And Mayor Keeney fits that bill perfectly with his background of having worked in industry, his work with accounting as well as working in the transportation field as well. So, it's time for me to leave. Yes, I was engaged at the beginning. I remember meeting with Maureen Crocker and Port Chair Jim Edmonds at the time, saying, "How can we get this done?" And Ron Beeson's been there at the beginning as well. He was one of the industry people that made us know that we needed something to help us with the freight rail. So, again, thanks for allowing me to serve, it's been my honor. And I will roll off knowing that you are in much better hands than I left you in, so thank you.

Chairperson Lewis: Thank you so much. Thank you. Thank you for all your comments.

Director Duhon: Madam Chairman, may I make a short statement?

Chairperson Lewis: Yes, Judge, go ahead.

Director Duhon: Thank you. You know, Dennis, with your departure, it's kind of funny, I just had an epiphany. I'm actually looking at the names on the board, and I realized that I've been on the board now I guess eight years... seven, eight years, and you've been there I think the duration I was there. And now I look at it, I'm like, "Holy Crap, I'm one of the senior members on the board." And now that you're gone, I'm really one of the senior members left on the board. There's only a few names on here that were here when I first started. But I just want to say over the years, it really has been an honor to serve with you on this board and appreciate all your service to the board. Thank you so much.

Director Winkler: Appreciate that.

Chairperson Lewis: Alright. Well, thank you. Thank you very much, everyone. Our next item... I don't know if you'll decide you want to stay, Mr. Winkler, just for the fun of it, or you want to go ahead and address other things, but either way you're welcome. Anytime, as a matter of fact.

Ms. Katherine Parker: He's on mute, I think.

Director Winkler: I was just saying I will stay on for a bit. Thank you.

Chairperson Lewis: Okay, great. Alright. We are on to item five, discussion and possible action on Resolution 22-14 nominating and approving officers for the Gulf Coast Rail District Board of Directors. So, you all know, with Mr. Winkler moving from that Secretary position, it required us to do some shuffling. So, what you'll see here is a resolution before you. I won't read that, but it does have as Vice Chair/Director Ronald Beeson, who Ms. Parker just said has been on the entire time. Yes?

Ms. Katherine Parker: Yes.

Director Beeson: Yes.

Chairperson Lewis: Okay. So, he is our Vice Chair. We'll reconfirm that today. Moving into the Secretary position, Judge Duhon is going to do that. Director Owen remains the Treasurer, moving Director Michael Dyll into the Vice Secretary position, and Vice Treasurer remains Ms. Tina Peterman.

Chairperson Lewis: Is there a motion?

Director Mann: I make a motion to approve.

Chairperson Lewis: Okay, Mann. Is there a second?

Director Keeney: I'll second.

Chairperson Lewis: Thank you, Mayor Keeney. Alright. Moved and seconded. All in favor?

Board: Aye.

Chairperson Lewis: Any opposed? Alright. Thank you, we have that passed.

Chairperson Lewis: Item number six, discussion and possible action on Resolution 22-15 recognizing Harris County Mayors and Councils Association appointment of Mayor Jon Keeney to position number eight on the Gulf Coast Rail District Board of Directors. Your Resolution 22-15 is here. Because this is a board appointment, I will go ahead and read it just to make sure that everyone is on exactly the same page, and we'll have it as a record in our minutes.

Resolution number 22-15, recognizing the Harris County Mayors and Councils Association appointment of Mayor Jon Keeney to position number eight on the Gulf Coast Rail District Board of Directors. Whereas pursuant to written notice from the Harris County Mayors and Councils Association, Mayor Jon Keeney has been appointed to serve as Director of the Gulf Coast Rail District in position eight, and whereas a copy of such notice is attached to this resolution as exhibit A. And whereas the Board of Directors of the Gulf Coast Rail District hereby desires to formally recognize such appointment. And now therefore be resolved that the Board of Directors of the Gulf Coast Rail District by this resolution formally recognizes and confirms that Mayor Jon Keeney has been appointed to serve as a member of the Board of Directors of the Gulf Coast Rail District for a term ending January 2023.

Chairperson Lewis: Is there a motion?

Director Mann: So moved, Director Mann.

Chairperson Lewis: Okay, Mann.

Director Duhon: Second.

Chairperson Lewis: Mann and Duhon. All in favor?

Board: Aye.

Chairperson Lewis: Any opposition? Thank you. I do want to point out that all of our terms are until January 2023, so letters of reappointment go out at that point for the entirety of the board. We all are on the same schedule.

Chairperson Lewis: Next Resolution 22-16, discussion and possible action on Resolution 22-16 recognizing Metropolitan Transit Authority of Harris County Board of Directors' appointment of Mr. Robert A. Fry, Jr., to ex officio position number two on the Gulf Coast Rail District Board. Same thing. Recognizing Metropolitan Transit Authority of Harris County Board of Directors' appointment of Mr. Robert A. Fry, Jr., to ex officio position number two on the Gulf Coast Rail District Board of Directors. Whereas pursuant to written notice, Metropolitan Transit Authority of Harris County Board of Directors, Mr. Robert A. Fry, Jr., has been appointed to serve as director of the Gulf Coast Rail District in ex officio position number two. And whereas a copy of such notice is attached to this resolution as exhibit A. And whereas the Board of Directors of

Gulf Coast Rail District hereby desires to formally recognize such appointment. And now therefore be it resolved that the Board of Directors of the Gulf Coast Rail District by this resolution formally recognize and confirm Mr. Robert A. Fry, Jr., has been appointed to serve as an ex officio member of the Board of Directors of the Gulf Coast Rail District for a term ending January 2023.

Chairperson Lewis: What is your pleasure?

Director Owen: Madam Chair?

Chairperson Lewis: Yes.

Director Owen: It's my pleasure to nominate my good friend Bob Fry to this board. Hi, Mayor.

Chairperson Lewis: Alright. Director Owen.

Director Fry: Thank you.

Director Beeson: Director Beeson will second that.

Director Fry: Thank you.

Chairperson Lewis: Beeson second. All in favor?

Board: Aye.

Chairperson Lewis: Any opposition? Alright. That is approved and confirmed. Thank you all very much.

Chairperson Lewis: Our next item, discussion and possible action, Resolution Ratifying Committees for our Gulf Coast Rail District Board of Directors. Let me pause a minute and ask if either of our new Board of Directors' members would like to make a comment.

Director Keeney: Well, it's a pleasure to join this board. It has a long and distinguished future. I look forward to us, as Mr. Winkler said, moving forward with lots of gusto and doing some good things.

Chairperson Lewis: Thank you.

Director Fry: Well, I follow a very tough act. I can't imagine trying to follow Jim Robinson in anything. And he encouraged me to do this, so I'm here basically because he asked me to be here. It's my privilege. It's my privilege both to honor him in his place and to be here and do what I can. I'm here to be sure that I take back the message that you have here to the METRO, and I'm here to make sure that you hear what METRO has to offer. And beyond that, anything I can do on these committees, I'll be there to do it. Thank you.

Chairperson Lewis: Perfect. Thank you so much. Wonderful. Alright. So, we're on to Resolution number 22-17. This is the one where we're reconstituting and confirming our committees. So, under the whereas section, the Bylaws Committee: Director Muller; Judge Duhon; Michael Dyll; and Director Christopher Lane. Under Marketing and Outreach Committee: Director Gonzalez; myself; Director Peterman; and Andrea French who's no longer with TAG but is with Scenic Houston at this point, so we'll need to make that adjustment. Railroad and Roadway Projects Committee: Director Dyll; Director Mann; Director Beeson: Director Fry—asking you to serve on that committee. Legislative and Funding: Director Peterman; Director Beeson; Director Keeney—we're asking you to serve on that committee; Director Mann; Director Muller: and Director Owen. For Passenger Transit: Judge Duhon; Director Ross; Director Fry—we're asking you to serve there as well; Director Gonzalez; Director Chapa Gorczynski; Mayor Keeney; Director Owen; and then we have David Abraham from HCTRA on that committee as well.

Chairperson Lewis: What is your pleasure?

Director Mann: Motion to approve.

Chairperson Lewis: Okay, Mann. Is there a second?

Director Chapa Gorczynski: Second, Chapa Gorczynski.

Chairperson Lewis: Okay, thank you. I'm going to pause and ask is there any discussion this time because I think there might be—just to offer that opportunity for discussion.

Director Ross: Madam Chair?

Chairperson Lewis: Yes.

Director Ross: This is Director Ross.

Chairperson Lewis: Yes.

Director Ross: We had a discussion the last time that we did this about having too many members on a committee that creates a quorum issue.

Chairperson Lewis: Right.

Director Ross: I just want to be sure that we're not going to be in violation of that. Particularly the Passenger Transit has eight members on it now.

Chairperson Lewis: Yes, it does. Well, it does. At this moment, David Abraham doesn't actually count. I mean, he counts as a member, but he doesn't count toward the quorum. So, we did talk about that with Roadway/Railway.

Director Fry: I don't either, do I? As an ex officio member?

Ms. Katherine Parker: Currently, you don't. Right.

Chairperson Lewis: Yes, right. I was about to sort of make that point too, as we talked about that. Because the METRO position right now is ex officio, it doesn't count against the quorum.

Although as Ms. Parker will talk about later, that may be changing. So, the other thing that we talked about, Director Ross, just FYI. Both Mayor Fry and Mayor Keeney are keenly interested in Roadway/Railway, and I could not get both of them on that committee. So, we talked about when those committees meet, just going ahead and posting. And then I can't remember, one of the two I was talking to, I don't remember which one of you, I was saying that on some other boards you're on where that came up, there's just an agreement of who would come and who would not come in order to make sure that the quorum was not exceeded. So, I think we've gotten to the point, Director Ross, where we have a spread of individuals who really have something to offer on multiple issues, and I think we want to take advantage of that, so we'll think about posting. Had the same conversation with Ms. Peterman. She's going to talk later about Legislative and Funding and a meeting upcoming, and we've decided that we will post that. So, that's sort of the conversation around the quorum issue right now. And that's my conversation, so I'm open to other thoughts and ideas about it as well.

Director Mann: What is quorum, eight or nine?

Chairperson Lewis: It is seven.

Director Mann: Seven.

Chairperson Lewis: It's actually seven.

Director Mann: One, two, three, four, five. So, Tyson and Megan don't count?

Chairperson Lewis: No. They're not board members.

Director Mann: Until such point in time that HCTRA is a voting member, we're still okay.

Chairperson Lewis: Right. The only committee that's at risk right now is Passenger Transit, and it's not even at risk because the METRO position is ex officio. So, it actually is six also. But as you know, we've been talking for months about METRO becoming a full board, voting member, so when that happens, we'll have to revisit the question and conversation. So, this is kind of for when that will very likely happen over the next three months.

Director Mann: Does that change the quorum to eight then if they add?

Chairperson Lewis: We will have to see because I think we were at six and a half, so it was rounded to seven. So, we'll have to go back and revisit that question.

Ms. Katherine Parker: Because we currently have 14 voting board members, all slots aren't full. We'll go to 15 with METRO adding on. Then still just two ex officios versus three.

Director Mann: Yes. So, that would be eight.

Chairperson Lewis: Yes, that would go to eight.

Director Mann: Yes.

Director Keeney: Well, when I was chair of the board at The Harris Center, we just arbitrarily posted all of the committee members, period and didn't even worry about quorum because we had random directors show up. So, it just eliminated that as an issue, and it made it much easier for actually the person leading the meeting. That's an easy way to handle it. It's a bit more administrative trouble. I understand that.

Chairperson Lewis: Right.

Ms. Katherine Parker: That's okay, yes.

Director Keeney: But it keeps the law...

Ms. Katherine Parker: So, we'll be in compliance. Yes.

Chairperson Lewis: Yes.

Director Keeney: ...where it needs to be.

Chairperson Lewis: Yes, exactly. Okay, anyone else?

Director Chapa Gorczynski: This is Director Chapa Gorczynski. I just want to say I'm really grateful that Dr. Abraham is considering on being appointed on behalf of HCTRA. Next to you, Madam Chairwoman, he's my favorite planner. And brilliant. It's really a great opportunity to have him join us.

Chairperson Lewis: Right, thank you. It is indeed. He pushes me. I'm telling you, if you've ever met someone who pushes you, you're like, "Okay, wait a minute." That's him for me.

Ms. Katherine Parker: He was definitely excited when I spoke with him.

Chairperson Lewis: Yes, he's definitely that.

Dr. David Abraham: Thank you, ladies, for calling me out. Very nice of you. It is an honor to join you.

Chairperson Lewis: Perfect.

Ms. Katherine Parker: Good.

Chairperson Lewis: Mayor Owen, were you wanting to say something?

Director Owen: No, ma'am.

Chairperson Lewis: Alright. If there's no other discussion, I'll call the vote. All in favor?

Board: Aye.

Chairperson Lewis: Any opposed? Great, thank you.

Chairperson Lewis: So, we are now on to minutes, item number nine, discussion and possible action on the minutes. Mayor Duhon?

Ms. Katherine Parker: Judge.

Chairperson Lewis: Oh.

Director Duhon: Thank you.

Chairperson Lewis: I don't know what I'm going to do about that. I've got all these mayors around me. I've got Owen, I've got Keeney...

Director Duhon: I'm the only judge left on the board.

Chairperson Lewis: I know you're the only judge left. I don't know why I would be confused about that, but it's the roll of the tongue—Judge Duhon. I'm going to have to particularly attentive to my language, Judge.

Director Duhon: Not a problem, Madam Chair. Alright, folks. We have the proposed minutes in front of you, August 9th, 2022. Hopefully, everybody's had an opportunity to review those.

Director Duhon: At this time, would entertain a motion to approve the minutes.

Director Peterman: So moved, Director Peterman.

Director Duhon: Alright. We have a motion by Director Peterman. Second?

Director Beeson: Director Beeson will second.

Director Duhon: Thank you, Director Beeson. We have a motion and second. Any discussion on that motion? Hearing none, then everybody in favor, please say aye.

Board: Aye.

Director Duhon: Anybody opposed? Alright, very good. The minutes are approved. I will throw it back to you, Madam Chair.

Chairperson Lewis: Thank you. On to item 10, report from the treasurer, Director Owen, please.

Director Owen: Madam Chair, I'd ask Chris Palis to give us our financial report.

Mr. Chris Palis: Good afternoon, everybody. In front of you, you should see your bookkeeper's report for September 13th, 2022. If you go to page 2, you can see you start with a balance in the checking account as of August 10th of \$95,612, zero receipt activity, and then disbursements totally \$1,077 for this month, so with an ending balance of \$94,534. Page 3 is your account balances showing a listing of the CDs and money market and checking account with a grand total for Gulf Coast Rail \$1.4 million there. Page 4 is your actual versus budget comparison. We're showing here interest on temporary investments of around \$1,396, and then total of expenses for the budget of August for \$1,083. And then page 5 is the pro bono amounts you can see here with the total income and then total expense there, leaving an excess revenue of \$313 for the month of August. And then pages 6, 7, 8, 9, this hasn't changed since last month, so nothing new to report there. Also, I've included the Quarterly Investment Report ending June 30th, 2022. So, you can see here on page 2, the summary of money market funds, the interest earned for the quarter, \$1,421. And then on the next page, your total interest with the CDs and with money market at the bottom right there, total interest earned \$2,065.74. And that is it for the bookkeeper's report and the quarterly investment report.

Chairperson Lewis: Director Owen, are you ready to go on to number 11?

Director Owen: Yes, Madam Chairman. I'll entertain a motion to take action on Resolution 22-18 Ratifying Payments for this past month. Is there a motion?

Director Beeson: Director Beeson will motion to approve.

Director Mann: Second, Mann.

Director Owen: We have a motion and a second, all those in favor?

Board: Aye.

Director Owen: Madam Chairman, it passes.

Chairperson Lewis: Alright, thank you.

Chairperson Lewis: Item 12, Public Comments. Is there anyone who is on our Teams public participation group who would like to address the GCRD Board? So, Dr. Abraham, why don't you go ahead and introduce yourself? You're on the committee and so a couple of us know you, but everyone doesn't. Thank you, Mr. Palis. So, maybe tell us a little bit about yourself and your interest.

Mr. David Abraham: You got my name. I'm the Assistant Director for Strategic Planning at HCTRA. I'm a proud graduate of Texas Southern University where I did my Ph.D. in urban planning and environmental policy. My specialization is sustainability and resilience planning, and it's my hope that I can help in any small way that I can with this work of the Gulf Coast District.

Chairperson Lewis: Great. Thank you so much. Anyone else? Alright. Hearing no one else, we'll move on to item 14, reports from our committees. So, Director Peterman, would you like to begin for us?

Director Peterman: Yes. Thank you, Madam Chair. So, we talked about convening a workshop to discuss an update on funding alternatives, specifically an update on the current status of the litigation surrounding the TRZs, the county TIRZs. And then also what prompted this conversation is we're seeing a lot of not necessarily movement but there've been a lot of alternative funding programs, federally funded, that are talked about in the infrastructure bill. But then also one of the things that prompted this next workshop is this concept of a regional infrastructure accelerator. It's not something that I necessarily was familiar with, so Dr. Lewis and I did a little bit of research. And so, this is a federal grant program. It's relatively new, coming out of the Bureau... I forget what federal program. But they recently awarded additional dollars to five different regional accelerators, one of them was in the Texas Panhandle. And so, my question for Dr. Lewis and Ms. Parker was are we... And when I say we, I mean collectively the region, right, because these are going to be large regional type projects. So, the question was are we familiar with this? Are we doing anything along these avenues? Are we coordinating with H-GAC or TAC or any of these other more regional planning organizations? So, that is the purpose of the workshop. We're still putting together the agenda, if anybody has any suggestions on a potential presenter or speaker. We plan on having an attorney from Orrick, a transportation... James Hernandez, transportation attorney, come and present to us. But if anybody has any other ideas, we'd certainly appreciate any suggestions.

Chairperson Lewis: Alright. Thank you, Ms. Peterman. I'm excited about this. You all know our biggest challenge is that we need to find a dedicated source of funding, so we really want to get thinking caps on and look for opportunities. The TRZ that was mentioned, I don't know if either of the two of you had sort of antenna up about it, but during the November 2021 set of voting, the TRZs were approved by Texas voters. And so, what it does is it allows counties to set up what's called Transportation Reinvestment Zones that mimic the city TIRZs. But there was a lawsuit filed, and so it had not sort of been allowed to take effect and flourish and whatever. So, we're trying to find out about that because at the point that we find out that we are eligible, we want to start talking to all of our counties, Judge Duhon... all of our member counties about that opportunity. So, basically, they would set up corridors around transportation facilities that we would consider, and then they would be allowed... It's just like the TIRZ. You get the current tax rate and then the increment of the tax rate would go to whomever's designated. So, we could share, right? It doesn't have to just be GCRD, but once we find out that we are able to pursue

that, we really want to be able to see that as one avenue for us to begin to pursue some additional dollars.

Director Keeney: Those corridors would be for either passenger or rail or roads or doesn't make any difference?

Chairperson Lewis: Doesn't matter.

Director Keeney: Okay.

Chairperson Lewis: Just transportation, that's correct.

Director Keeney: Okay. Good.

Chairperson Lewis: That's correct.

Director Fry: You say we're looking for money. What do you need the money for?

Chairperson Lewis: Well, if you would, listen to Ms. Parker's report.

Director Fry: Okay.

Chairperson Lewis: And then you'll hear some of the ideas and concepts that we've got forthcoming. That's a great question.

Director Fry: Well, that basically tells you where you go and what your pitch is when you go there.

Chairperson Lewis: Yes, right. Any other questions for Director Peterman on that? Alright. We'll go ahead to Roadway/Railway. Director Mann is outside. Director Dyll, are you able to lead that conversation?

Director Dyll: Only say one-tenth of what Director Mann could have because he led the discussion. He knows so much more about it. But just from a 20,000-foot overview, we discussed getting something like the CREATE Plan that Chicago has, renaming it and sort of just copying it. It's a recipe for getting funding for roadway and rail. Bruce, I was just giving them a broad stroke overview of your very detailed analysis of the CREATE Plan.

Director Mann: Chicago has the largest footprint in the country. Houston is the second largest. In Chicago, they have commuter rail and freight rail and a bunch of railroads all in the same place. They created a programmatic approach to really solving those issues in Chicago—they call it CREATE. There's a whole lot of stakeholders that are involved in it, but the entire region there is behind that program. And basically, when they submit a grant proposal, they see the name CREATE on it, and they already know all the stakeholders in the region support it.

So, Veronica Davis with the City of Houston and myself and Katherine had a phone call with FRA about two weeks ago, and we pitched the idea of coming up with our own CREATE Program for the region, which is something Tyson and I have been talking about for like five years. And FRA is onboard with doing it, the UP is onboard with doing it, the City, the Rail

District. So, H-GAC is going to be the facilitator for the group, and we're going to go forward. I think this sets the stage for probably some of those grant applications to come through the Rail District and really be the tool through which we do that. So, that's what Tyson and I have been talking about for really five or six years is using the Rail District for that reason. That's why it was created in the beginning. So, we're finally maybe getting to the purpose that we were created for 15 years later. But, hey, better late than never. So, everything's aligning and we're heading in the right direction. I think when we have the joint meeting with the Legislative and Funding, we need to talk about Texas has \$27 billion or whatever it is extra. There's no better time for us to go to the legislature and say, "We want funding for grade separations for our region." I think the City would be behind that, the County would be behind it. I don't know that there's anybody in the region that wouldn't be behind it. And if you look at Dallas and Austin and San Antonio, they all have the same issues. We ought to try to get all of the legislative folks in our metro areas behind this and try to get funding out of the legislature for a Grade Elimination Program.

Chairperson Lewis: Alright. Questions, comments for Director Mann?

Director Keeney: What sort of a strategy do we have in place for people actually communicating with our state legislative folks and also with the federal?

Director Mann: I think that's what we got to... create that.

Chairperson Lewis: So, what we can do is tell you what we did the last legislative session. So, the last legislative session, we had two items that we took to the legislature. One was to get our enabling legislation revised to allow us to do bus rapid transit because the regional legislation only allowed us to do commuter rail. So, with all the advanced technologies, we wanted to be able to do BRT as well. So, we went to the legislature and got our nomenclature revised to include BRT and advanced technologies.

Director Keeney: Yes, you shared that.

Chairperson Lewis: Right. So, when we did that, we actually hired an individual to assist us with that process, and so that was how we got that done. We had another item that wasn't successful too, but we hired someone to help us with that. Well, let me say this too. Because I think it's also important to mention that the Transportation Advocacy Group, TAG, was real instrumental in helping us just pulsing out information to their mailing base about what GCRD was doing. So, you end up with legislators having at least positive things being said, that nobody's opposed to this in the region, so that was helpful too. So, I think the point that Director Mann is making about us being able to create a coalition that stands behind what you're advancing, our projects and our ideas, is real important. So, the thing about going to the legislature, I have to tell you right now just from knowing it, is September's late to start. We'll have to kind of think that through. We started late before. That's not ideal, right? But just to have that in mind, that we are late to go, we really have to get program together. But I think we've got enough going on that in theory, we could perhaps do that. So, I think it's something for us to continue conversation about.

Director Keeney: Well, we do have a mayors group for south of Houston. In addition to Mayor and Council, this is another group. We're planning on meeting with our state reps and also senators, and one of the issues that we always talk about is transportation and regional transportation because it is such a big, huge issue. It's a parallel effort to this organization, but it

comes from a totally different direction with the legislative folks. And I've initiated conversations with two people on the Federal Transportation Committee—Congressmen Weber and Babin, and they both have a will to listen. We might at some point in time have them come in and talk with us about some possibilities and so they get a better sense of what we're about and what our goals are for this region. It would fit right where you're going, Director Mann.

Director Mann: Yes. We should probably, so we don't have to recreate the wheel on our own... There's a group called Texas Rail Advocates. They're already working on this.

Chairperson Lewis: On what?

Director Mann: Trying to get funding for grade separations throughout the state.

Chairperson Lewis: Oh, okay.

Director Mann: So, they've done a lot of work on this already.

Chairperson Lewis: And the reason I asked the question the way I did is we've got these two ideas on the table. The one is pursuing the CREATE idea, and the other one is going to the legislature about money about grade separations. And we can talk about this more off the meeting, but I think one of the things that the... When Maureen was here, we had the person from CREATE. I can't remember if they presented to the entire board. Do you remember, Directors Dyll or Robinson? When Maureen was here, the person who was affiliated with CREATE? Because I know we had conversations with one of them, and I can't remember if he presented to the entire board or not.

Director Mann: I don't remember.

Chairperson Lewis: You don't remember that.

Director Mann: And I go back to Janiece, I mean, I've been here a while.

Chairperson Lewis: Yes. And Janiece might have been on the board when this happened.

Director Mann: Yes, and I don't remember it.

Chairperson Lewis: It was a while back. But anyway, what's in my mind is that we would really need to pull up a prospectus of what we're even talking about with CREATE. It has to get beyond, the verbalization has to get to words on a piece of paper, so that would be almost a step one. So, we'll have to talk about that with Roadway/Railway and Ms. Parker to start that.

Director Fry: That was my question. What's the next step? I didn't hear our next step.

Director Mann: So, we're trying to use H-GAC to be the facilitator for this because they can bring different parts of the region together. Really, the first thing is figuring out who are the stakeholders that are going to be part of it. That's the first step.

Director Fry: Okay. So, we don't even have that yet.

Director Mann: No, we don't even have that yet. Inherently, you kind of know who they are. An example came up today, I was talking to somebody about it. Is Port of Freeport in it or not? From my perspective, they're probably a little bit too far removed from where we are and what we're trying to do. But Fort Bend County, Montgomery County, Liberty County, Chambers County, Harris County are all, Galveston may be. But TxDOT just did a Houston-Beaumont Region Rail Study, so anybody that had a project that was recommended on that list are probably the counties that should be part of this group. I can't remember who all had projects that were recommended. Because we're really looking at the priority projects, right? So, if somebody didn't have priority projects in the list...

Director Keeney: Have you put together a scope document that begins to define what you're looking for?

Director Mann: No, this is...

Ms. Katherine Parker: This committee meeting will be kind of that first blush at that, even before H-GAC meets. We had talked about having this committee along with Legislative.

Director Keeney: Something firm to go to H-GAC with.

Director Mann: In CREATE, they have guiding principles for what they're doing and what the projects are. So, Tyson Moeller from UP is pulling that because UP is part of CREATE. So, he's collecting some information so when we meet, we can talk about what they used and what the priorities are and kind of the direction that CREATE follows.

Mr. David Abraham: Hi, this is Dr. Abraham.

Chairperson Lewis: So, Dr. Abraham, I have to do a little point of order for you. Unfortunately, the public isn't able to comment during the board meetings.

Mr. David Abraham: Okay.

Chairperson Lewis: So, if you could put it in the chat, maybe one of the board members might pick it up. We kind of had to do that, as you can kind of understand. You have to set up your parameters of how you operate, so that's one that we needed to do. I can talk to you more about it later.

Director Mann: Yes. And certainly, TxDOT's a part of that conversation, the Toll Road Authority's probably part of that conversation. The railroads, for sure. We just came out of the womb. We got to figure out what we're doing.

Chairperson Lewis: Alright. So, there's plenty of opportunity to put a little more specificity on what we're talking about and organize things as was said, sort of step by step. Any other questions for Director Mann or Director Dyll?

Director Chapa Gorczynski: This is Director Chapa Gorczynski. Madam Chair, while we've not talked about it, I want to put on the list. I think we need to give Katherine some freedom to do

some research on federal opportunities. And by federal opportunities, I know in talking to other friends in the space, we're not the only organization that's having this kind of issue. Specifically, are there other rail districts that are also looking for dedicated revenue and what does that look like. And I'm not saying that we pursue it aggressively with a lobbyist, but I think that looking at a national landscape scan, understanding how this looks for other colleagues like ours that are trying to get this funding and seeing if there's an opportunity with the feds is something that we should continue to research and see. With the understanding at this point, we're probably late to really deploy a full strategy, but I don't want us to forget that there's an opportunity for us on the federal side as well.

Chairperson Lewis: Absolutely. Alright, thank you. Anyone else? Alright. With that noted, let's go back to 13, Director Mann, and you're on to sort of give us an update of our last month's discussion that we were all excited about that didn't quite pan out this time, but that doesn't mean that we can't have something like it in the future. So, Director Mann is going to give us an update on our grade separation from last month.

Director Mann: Yes. Just from a timing perspective, being able to get it through this board, through...

Chairperson Lewis: Would you do me a favor? Go back because a couple people are new and do a stage set for us.

Director Mann: Okay. So, DOT came out with a... What do they call it? A notice of funding, something?

Chairperson Lewis: Notice of Funding Opportunity.

Director Mann: Opportunity, thank you, for a Rail Crossing Elimination Program. For those familiar with Bayport Container Terminal, if you come down State Highway 146, you come off the flyover and before you get too far, there's a rail line that crosses Port Road to go over to BayStar and Ineos. It crosses from the north side to the south side. BayStar just spent about a billion dollars to build some new facilities on their property. Ineos is doing an expansion. There's some other expansions happening. It's basically going to double the rail volume going across Port Road. And it's not grade separated, we're moving 5,000 trucks a day across Port Road to get to Bayport.

So, what we're asking for is a little over \$2 million to design and do the environmental clearance for doing a grade separation at that rail crossing, and then we'll follow that up with a construction grant after that. So, this is really a planning grant. We're working with the City actually. That's why we were on the phone call with FRA with the City, just talking about our projects. So, we're supporting each other's projects, we're not competing against each other. The City's project is our project. The West Belt separation, it's a construction project. Ours is a planning project. So, we're supporting each other's projects. But with the timing and everything of our Port Commission, of the Rail District's Board, and a submission date of October 4th, there just wasn't enough time to coordinate everything, get agreements in place. But we've clearly set the stage for what we could do the next time. So, for now, we're going to go ahead with our grant proposal. We'll submit it. And I won't even put this in the public minutes, so forget what I was going to say. But it looks good.

For those of you who don't know, at the end of 2016, the Port handled about 2 million 20-foot equivalent unit boxes. At the end of this year, we're probably going to be close to 3.7 million. That's an 85% growth in six years including COVID. That's 1.7 million TEUs. That's about a million more trucks a year today than it was at the end of 2016. It doesn't take a rocket scientist to figure out you don't want trains getting in the middle of that, so that's why we're doing this. I think the FRA looks at it favorably because it's multimodal, and everybody's excited about trying to fix port problems right now. So, this isn't a port problem today, but it will be in the future as soon as they start blocking that crossing.

So, anyway, we're moving forward, just without the Rail District at this point. We'll circle back at the end of this and see what we can do for the construction project. Hopefully by then, we'll have a CREATE program in Houston of our own and the Rail District will be so busy that we'll just have to do our own. But we'll see what happens between now and then.

Chairperson Lewis: Alright. Any questions for Director Mann about that?

Director Keeney: I will comment that this is all totally on the radar of all the mayors who live down there. That's where I live, and it's already a problem. The port is geared for growth. The larger vessels are coming in. There's going to be more TEUs. I know Mr. Guenther has all sorts of issues and solutions on his mind relative to rail and trucks. So, the more we're tuned in to them and where they're going, the better off we're going to be as far as I'm concerned.

Director Mann: Yes. And I guess in the same vein, it's not about a grant, but it is about the Port of Houston. I met with Eliza last month maybe. So, at the other container terminal, Barbours Cut, today, every truck that goes into that facility and comes out of that facility stops at stoplights on the way in and out because there is no flyover or direct connector to get to that facility. That was part of the PEL for State Highway 225. TxDOT's agreed to pull that ahead of the PEL because there is so much traffic moving through there. But there is a rail crossing just to the east of Broadway Street, and we're talking about how we might get over that and land it and get into our gate facility. Because it doesn't make any sense to have a flyover, stop at Broadway at a red light, and then have a rail track right after that. So, we could potentially in the next few years be fixing both of these issues, hopefully.

Director Keeney: That's excellent. You might make Mayor Rigby happy.

Director Mann: Maybe.

Director Keeney: Maybe.

Director Mann: It's a start.

Chairperson Lewis: Alright. Anyone else? That takes us on to item 15, report from Executive Director. Ms. Parker, please.

Ms. Katherine Parker: Thank you. I saw that five-minute warning, so I'll do this quickly. I want to thank Director Winkler for your service. Thank you for answering calls and emails and all the questions I had when I first began here. I appreciate all of your help on marketing and outreach as well. So, just thank you, and it's been great working with you.

Thanks to the committees who met kind of on last minute notice. Legislative and Funding, and Roadway Railway came together. We will circle back around for Passenger Transport (Passenger Transit) to meet, but we are definitely preparing for this October 7th meeting which will be posted. And I'm writing down notes now for our agenda, so there'll be quite a few things that we'll discuss during that two-hour time that we have together. It will be here at TranStar, and you'll receive a notice as well.

Bruce talked about a grant opportunity that we all know, the West Belt is a part of the Railroad Crossing Elimination, the City of Houston grant submission. I have met with the FRA, Union Pacific, the City, constituents, pretty much everybody on the list who has any issue with it. I've worked on it from the standpoint of kind of the broad picture down to the weeds of reading the narrative, which we will get Thursday for the actual application. So, we are moving forward. The deadline is October 4th. The City's plan is to have it done well in advance of that timeframe for submittal. So, we're meeting weekly with TEI and Gunda, who are the consultants that are doing that work for the City of Houston. GCRD because we have all the historical kind of knowledge has had the opportunity to present all of the documents, all of the information that you all knew about and worked with in years past, and so that's helped them not to really have to begin again. They're just updating information and looking at what may have happened as far as land use changes in that area. So, I really think that we'll have a very competitive application, and we're hoping for a successful outcome and a win.

Next, Harris County Boards and Commissions is putting a new spin I guess on Boards and Commissions. They're asking for a survey, which they hadn't done in years past, but it's a good thing. So, we will update all of our bios and resumes. So, except for our two new people, if you get an email from me asking for updated bios and resumes, please send that in so that we can provide that to Harris County. We are moving forward with the third amendment to the concurrent ordinance. I sent that letter or email over to the City today to say basically, "Let's pull the trigger." So, all of the changes that we wanted to update that ordinance, which includes METRO becoming a full board member, also having Port Houston be able to designate versus just the Chair of Port Houston be a part of this board. Also, the name change from Galveston Transit to Gulf Coast Transit District. And I think that's it. So, all those changes will be updated and sent over to our member entities for action for their particular courts or councils, so that went off on today. I will, of course, keep the board updated. I've been in conversations with METRO, the County, so that no one is surprised. They know that this document is coming, and we have not been met with any opposition, so I'd be surprised for us to have some now. We've talked to pretty much everyone about that, about the benefits of METRO becoming a full board member.

Director Mann: Can I ask one question really quick?

Ms. Katherine Parker: Yes.

Director Mann: So, the Port, is that a legislative thing? Because I think...

Ms. Katherine Parker: The Port is a navigation district, and so when the District was started, that was the position. So, it required that only the Chair be the appointed person. So, in 2017, at that time I think it was Janiece Longoria, it was a letter appointing you as the designee.

Director Mann: For her, yes.

Ms. Katherine Parker: And so, we were just making sure that everything lines up.

Director Mann: No, what I'm asking is it's the legislature...

Ms. Katherine Parker: It's a statutory, yes.

Director Mann: ...said it's a defined position, right?

Ms. Katherine Parker: Right.

Director Mann: So, do we have to go back and change the legislation?

Ms. Katherine Parker: No. I actually have the code that allowed the designee to be used in there. I don't have the letter with me.

Director Mann: No, it's fine. Yes.

Ms. Katherine Parker: That was the basis for making this change, which really happened at the time that you were put on the board, but we had not made an update to the ordinance since 2009, I think. So, this is an opportunity kind of to do a cleanup of that ordinance for us. It represents the third amendment to the current ordinance since the creation of the district.

Chairperson Lewis: So, would you like for Ms. Parker to get that to you so that you have it in your records? That letter that she's talking about?

Director Mann: Yes, that would be good. Yes, just so I can share it with Roger and say, "Hey, we're fixing it."

Ms. Katherine Parker: Okay.

Chairperson Lewis: Legally fixing it.

Ms. Katherine Parker: Yes, exactly.

Ms. Katherine Parker: Lastly, our website update. Today we have a little run-through that I'd like for us to be able to look through. We started a few months ago with this change kind of wanting to bring us into 2022. So, you have an opportunity here if you all can see the screen. Lisa will share it with you, will be our updated website. We are going to connect it and publish it live, and I'll send that link out to all of the board members. Right now, this is kind of we're working through it with our last-minute changes, but she'll click through.

Director Mann: I'm going to point out the same thing that I point out every time, which is at the top, the interaction of the Port to create the Rail District. We keep leaving that out.

Ms. Katherine Parker: No, that's in here. Port of Houston was also instrumental in the early stages of GCRD.

Director Mann: Okay, because I was looking at the top.

Ms. Katherine Parker: Yes. We've done quite a few edits from what is currently on there.

Director Mann: I'm trying to see where it says it.

Ms. Katherine Parker: It's in the first paragraph. That last sentence, first paragraph.

Director Mann: Okay.

Ms. Katherine Parker: Before I don't know that it was in there at all.

Director Mann: It wasn't in there at all.

Ms. Katherine Parker: Right. I've taken notes and heard you.

Director Mann: Actually, I would probably put it the Port, Harris County, the City of Houston, Fort Bend County created because the Port was the impetus behind the legislature.

Chairperson Lewis: We understand your passion about that, but I don't know in 2022 that that honestly is a point that carries us to a place of criticalness about where we are right now, right? I mean, we could go back with every entity. We could go back with METRO and say, "Well, who were the people who actually was the energy behind starting METRO?" I mean, I don't know that later on as an organization grows that... It is there, right? So, I think that it was important, like you say, that it wasn't there before. So, I think now that it's there, that's an important recognition that the Port was there at the beginning. I mean, at this point, like you were saying, you were there at the beginning, but I mean, there were a lot of people at the table at the beginning. So, we don't have Harris County Mayors on the list, so I think we just kind of need to be sensitive about it, right?

Director Mann: I get that. But if it wasn't for Edmonds, it wouldn't exist.

Chairperson Lewis: Pardon?

Director Mann: If it wasn't for the chairman of the Port, it probably wouldn't exist.

Chairperson Lewis: That may be. I mean, that may be, right? But does it need to be here is the question.

Director Mann: Well, it's fine.

Chairperson Lewis: Right. I think it's fine. I understand your energy and rationale for saying it, but I think we've taken care of it by getting the sentence there.

Director Keeney: Well, just an observation. I think alignment with the Port as a huge economic engine for this area does nothing but help us. And whatever facilitates that in terms of wording, and I'm sorry, I don't like wordsmithing at all, but I would support the notion of creating as much alignment with the Port as we possibly can, without getting up our identity in any shape, form, or fashion, and that's not my intent.

Chairperson Lewis: Right.

Ms. Katherine Parker: Okay. So, click through under the Board, you'll see pictures. And before I think we just had a list, so we definitely are trying to update as we go along.

Director Ross: This is Director Ross.

Ms. Katherine Parker: Yes, sir.

Director Ross: As long as we're talking about the importance of the Port, which I think is vital, I'd like to know where they are on their dues.

Director Mann: That's a conversation.

Chairperson Lewis: They are exactly on their dues where they were the last time that was reported, Director Ross, so nothing has changed.

Ms. Katherine Parker: So, this space records all of our meetings. We do audio as well as transcription. Lisa and I are going through to probably just capture the last I think we said two years because we have archives back to many years, so we'll adjust that as needed for our meeting minutes. So that anybody that comes to the website is able to pull up what has happened when we met. Some of the other pulldowns are Projects—Ongoing and Completed. So, we have them here. Of course, US 90A, West Belt, the Westpark Corridor. And those are right now blurbs as we add to those projects and have progress updates. We can update pretty easily. And then our list of Completed. And just as the projects are easy to update, all of the photos, everything associated with that as well. So, Lisa and I are working with the creator on some of those changes, and Lisa has gotten really good at it, so I appreciate all the help that she's come in and helped me with as we're getting ready to... She's going to basically turn that over to us. Our Resources are basically our past studies, some of our archived proposals. We have such a wealth of information, we didn't want to not make that available, and that was very evident with the West Belt submission's questions that I got about past studies. So, we still have those but just as resources available on the website. Of course, this will be the spot when we go out for those contracting opportunities, posting there and then our contact information. And then we also have the brochure and our 2021 in review. We'll update 2022 for next year. So, I want to thank the Marketing Outreach Committee, Chair Gonzalez, Winkler, Andrea French, and Dr. Lewis were very instrumental in helping, giving comments about the website, what should be on there, what image are we trying to portray our branding and all of that. And of course, as we send the link out to the directors, give your comments as well.

Chairperson Lewis: So, Director Mann, I would think that you might be excited because the images are all very heavily freight, right?

Ms. Katherine Parker: Yes.

Director Mann: Can you go back to the home page one time?

Chairperson Lewis: Provide a little credit.

Director Mann: I just wanted to...

Ms. Katherine Parker: And one of the reasons is that we say passenger transport, we talk about grade separations, but we want to have a greater focus on freight, and so it's an opportunity.

Director Mann: Alright, there it is. Not to change it after you guys have already done it, but do we want to have a tab that says About Us and then that's where the Mission and Vision are, under the About Us, instead of scrolling all the way down the home page? Like it would be a tab off of the top so you can see it.

Chairperson Lewis: So, in other words, in order to get to the Mission and Vision, you don't have to scroll past the first paragraph?

Director Mann: Right.

Chairperson Lewis: I think that's a good suggestion.

Ms. Katherine Parker: So, you actually would have to change the pulldown.

Director Mann: You could just put another thing that says About Us, and it's got where we came from, the Mission, the Vision.

Chairperson Lewis: Right. Okay. Alright. So, we have that suggestion, right, Ms. Parker?

Ms. Katherine Parker: Yes. Like I said, I will send out the current link that I have, not the published link. And if there are other comments or thoughts that you have, please let me know.

Chairperson Lewis: So, in other words, don't click GCRD right now because you won't get that, you'll get the other one, right?

Ms. Katherine Parker: Right, the old one. Yes, we're updating the old GCRD but once we are ready to publish, then that will replace what we have out there now.

Director Chapa Gorczynski: Well done.

Chairperson Lewis: Exactly.

Director Mann: It's great.

Chairperson Lewis: Thank you. Thank you, Director Peterman, Director Winkler. Thank you. Most appreciate it, Ms. Parker. Really appreciate your work on it because I know you all have been working on this for a series of months. You see the end and you see it but all the time that went into it doesn't quite show but thank you.

Ms. Katherine Parker: Appreciate it.

Director Mann: It looks great. It's a definite upgrade.

Chairperson Lewis: It's a definite upgrade.

Ms. Katherine Parker: Yes. That was our focus—an upgrade. That’s all I have.

Chairperson Lewis: That’s all you have?

Ms. Katherine Parker: Yes.

Chairperson Lewis: Alright. Thank you. Alright. So, announcements by me, I’ll just make a couple of points. And I want to help a question asked by Director Fry earlier, “What in the world would we use money for?” So, we had our mission, and so we basically kind of do these two things—we do grade separations and then we do passenger transport. So, as an update to all of us on the call. Ms. Parker and I met with H-GAC. Because you know, time goes so fast, I was thinking what’s happened since the last meeting, so this has been since the last meeting. We met with H-GAC. They are at the point where the contracting is in their contracting department, and so they’ve sent something for Ms. Parker to sign to send over for us.

Ms. Katherine Parker: Right. So, they can begin the agreements between the Rail District and H-GAC for funding of US 90A.

Chairperson Lewis: So, we’re talking about US 90A right now. So, H-GAC is hiring a consultant for the 90A study. We’ll have an overall Executive Committee that H-GAC is going to pull together. We’ll be on it. Probably we’ll talk to the Passenger Transport Committee (Passenger Transit Committee) about it. Director Owen, it probably makes a lot of sense for you to be the designee, if that’s something that you would think you’d want to participate in, that Executive Committee. Then there’ll be a Stakeholder Committee level that’ll pull in more community-oriented folks to guide the examination of the 90A corridor. H-GAC is real reluctant to give you timing, but I say probably the call—request for proposals... We’re going to ask for proposals—request for proposals should be going out within 30 days. I hope by the next time we meet it will have gone out. So, we’re looking at having passenger transport on 90A.

The other thing that’s happened is that we needed to talk with all of our member entities about the Westpark Corridor. METRO is doing the BRT, the L shape (L turned 90 degrees counterclockwise), from Lockwood out to roughly West Belt on that side. And then we’ve been working with Fort Bend and others to extend it all the way really to Simonton. So, one of the things we wanted to do was to meet with everybody—literally everybody—so the last group of meetings we had was Judge Hidalgo’s staff, Commissioner Cagle. Those were our last two meetings, right?

Ms. Katherine Parker: Harris County.

Chairperson Lewis: And Harris County. So, at this point, we’ve met with everyone that would be... So, we met with everybody. So, we’re at the point now. And Passenger Transport (Passenger Transit) will discuss this at their upcoming meeting. We’re at the point now where we talk about how we do the next step, which is really to hire a consultant. And we’ve talked to everybody about getting the study to the point where we clear the environmental, so when METRO gets to Westpark, we’re ready to keep going. So, what we need money for is our match for federal share on both of those corridors.

The other thing is that we’ve got the grade separations ongoing. We’ve got this corridor, that we’re trying to seal a corridor on the east side of town, which is grade separation, some street

closures, and so forth. And that's what Ms. Parker referred to that in the grant that's being submitted along with the City to do grade separation. It will do two grade separations on the east side of town. We don't have to worry about the match for that, the City is going to provide the match for that.

Director Fry: The City of Houston?

Chairperson Lewis: The City of Houston, yes. So, basically, those are the things and what Director Mann was just talking about. If we try to get a more robust grade separation program, which we want to do, then we would indeed sometimes want to be able to have our part of a match for those kind of grant applications. So, that would be one thing. I kind of wanted to do a round for everybody to kind of let you know where we are on at least those two corridors.

Director Mann: Can I ask a question really quick about the West Belt?

Chairperson Lewis: Sure.

Director Mann: So, we have almost \$4 million still for that, right? \$3.9 million or something?

Chairperson Lewis: Yes. She's talking about in the study.

Director Mann: No, I'm talking about the West Belt.

Ms. Katherine Parker: For design?

Chairperson Lewis: Yes, for the design.

Director Mann: For the design, right? And that was grant money, right?

Ms. Katherine Parker: Right. So, we're working to get the design finished with the remainder of that money. The City is talking to TxDOT about finishing that piece so that we can be on point when we get the grant money is the mindset. But yes. Yes, right at a little less than \$5 million is left. Yes.

Director Mann: Okay. And that would finish the design?

Ms. Katherine Parker: We're hoping. Just like all these estimates, they were so many years ago. But at least we do still have that, and it's still on the books there with TxDOT.

Director Mann: Okay.

Chairperson Lewis: Alright. Anything else before we close out? Alright. Our next meeting is October 11th. Look forward to seeing you all then. Thank you for your time today, most appreciate it. And welcome, our two new folks. Director Winkler, join us anytime. We told Director Robinson the same thing. Come anytime, come to committee meetings, be on anytime. Love to have you.

Director Winkler: Thank you.

Director Beeson: Thank you, Dennis.

Director Winkler: Thank you, Ron.

Director Mann: Thanks, Dennis. I appreciate you.

Director Winkler: I feel the same here. Thank you. Let me know how I can continue to help.

Chairperson Lewis: Most appreciated. Alright. Thanks, everyone. We are adjourned (3:17 p.m.).

ATTEST:

DocuSigned by:

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Trey Duhon, Secretary
Michael Dyll, Vice Secretary
Gulf Coast Rail District

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