



Minutes of the Gulf Coast Rail District Board Meeting – October 10, 2023

A meeting of the Gulf Coast Rail District Board of Directors was held on Tuesday, October 10, 2023 at Houston TranStar and via video conference. In attendance at the meeting were Directors Angelique Bartholomew, Ronald A. Beeson, Stephen Gilbreath, Veronica Chapa Gorczynski, Kendrick Jones, Carol Abel Lewis, Bruce Mann, Jean Mann, Allen Owen, and Jeff E. Ross. Absent were Directors Robert A. Fry, Jr., Jon Keeney, and Robert Maldonado, Jr. 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 Carol Lewis: Alright. We're ready to start. Hello, everyone. Thank you all for waiting the additional seven minutes. We're going to impose upon Jeff Ross to not leave before this meeting is over. But I am Dr. Carol Lewis, the presiding officer of Gulf Coast Rail District. I'm going to call our meeting to order. It's 2:08 p.m. on October 10th, 2023. We are a bit late because we had a bit of technical issues going on in our other room but we're happy to be here and thankful for the TranStar staff who helped us get set up here, very grateful for his working to get us set up in this room.

Today's meeting is being conducted with options to participate in person or by video conference. The public meeting location is Houston TranStar, 6922 Katy Road, Houston, Texas. We are in the executive boardroom right now. The video conference is conducted through Microsoft Teams and that link can be found in the meeting invites, the agenda, and the public postings. The meeting is open to the public. The public will have the opportunity to address the board during public comments with the limit of three minutes per speaker. If you wish to address the board, please approach the podium or raise your hand online during the public comments period. Board members may participate by video conference in accordance with provisions of Section 551.127 of the Texas Government Code applicable to governmental bodies that extend into three or more counties. Based on the Open Meetings Act requirement, Gulf Coast Rail District board members participating in the Microsoft Teams will need to be seen and heard throughout the meeting for attendance and to record our voting. Therefore members calling in via telephone will not count for the quorum or for voting. As required, I am physically present for the board meeting and ask that the secretary conduct the roll call, although Director Keeney is not here, and the assistant secretary is...?

Ms. Lisa Patke: We don't have one.

Chairperson Carol Lewis: We don't have one? Okay. Well, I'm going to ask if Director Mann will do it since he's sitting here. If you'll do that for us, please.

Director Bruce Mann: Mr. Beeson?
Director Jeff Ross: Yes, he's there.
Director Bruce Mann: Here.
Director Ronald Beeson: I'm here.

Director Bruce Mann: Mr. Maldonado. Not here. Ms. Chapa Gorczynski?
Director Veronica Chapa Gorczynski: Present. Hi, y'all.

Director Bruce Mann: Mr. Gilbreath?
Director Stephen Gilbreath: Here.

Director Bruce Mann: Mr. Ross?
Director Jeff Ross: Here.

Director Bruce Mann: Chair Lewis?
Chairperson Carol Lewis: I'm here.

Director Bruce Mann: Mayor Keeney, not here. Ms. Bartholomew?
Director Angelique Bartholomew: Present. I'm here.

Director Bruce Mann: Mr. Owen?
Director Bruce Mann: He's there.
Director Allen Owen: I'm here, yes.

Director Bruce Mann: Ms. Mann? There she is. And Mr. Fry?
Director Jean Mann: Here.

Director Bruce Mann: That would give us quorum.

Chairperson Carol Lewis: Okay. Thank you very much. The next item we have is that we did get the meetings posted in compliance with our Act on Friday.

Ms. Lisa Patke: Yes.

Chairperson Carol Lewis: Thank you very much, Ms. Patke. The next item is discussion and possible action on the minutes for September 12th. Again, Director Mann, if you would handle that for us.

Director Bruce Mann: The minutes were provided to everyone beforehand. Just giving everybody a second and as soon as somebody wants to make a motion to approve, we would take it.

Director Jeff Ross: Motion, Ross.

Director Kendric Jones: Second.

Director Bruce Mann: Motion, Director Ross. Second, Director Jones. All in favor?

Board: Aye.

Director Bruce Mann: Anyone opposed? Motion passes.

Chairperson Carol Lewis: Alright, thank you.

Chairperson Carol Lewis: Items five and six, Director Owen, please.

Director Allen Owen: Madam Chairman, I would ask Chris Palis to give us our financial reports. I assume he's there.

Mr. David Banos: Actually, David Banos here.

Director Allen Owen: Who's there?

Chairperson Carol Lewis: David Banos.

Director Allen Owen: Okay.

Mr. David Banos: Alright, bookkeeping report dated for today. Past the cover page we have the cash flow for your operating checking account. Beginning balance of \$122,181.55. We had one check, 2677, that was approved at the last meeting. And for your approval today, checks 2678 and 2679. Total disbursements is \$1,699. Ending balance of this account is \$120,481.63. Next page, the account balances for the District shows that your total for the District is \$1,516,140.67.

Director Jeff Ross: Question.

Mr. David Banos: Yes.

Director Jeff Ross: We got two CDs coming up?

Mr. David Banos: Yes.

Jeff Ross: What interest rate are you thinking we'll be getting?

Mr. David Banos: I'm not sure what interest. We do have an investment team that takes care of that.

Director Jeff Ross: Okay.

Mr. David Banos: They look for your best options and the number one thing that we look for is preservation of capital first, so principal. So, then from then on, do you want to diversify it, and then we look for the yield. But for the most part, if it doesn't seem like a CD will give you the best yield, then we'll leave it in your Texas CLASS account, which right now you're earning 5.54%.

Director Jeff Ross: Okay, great. Thank you.

Director Veronica Chapa Gorczynski: I had a question regarding the Texas CLASS account.

Mr. David Banos: Yes.

Director Veronica Chapa Gorczynski: Can you detail what it is and why the interest rate is higher?

Mr. David Banos: So, the Texas CLASS, it's a pool from all public funds, and it's guaranteed by the State of Texas. And because it's guaranteed, they're able to give you the better rate.

Director Jeff Ross: All MUDs and stuff use it.

Mr. David Banos: Yes.

Director Jeff Ross: So, lots of municipal agencies use it.

Mr. David Banos: And they have different ones – TexPool, Texas CLASS, and TexSTAR.

Director Veronica Chapa Gorczynski: Understood. We're in TexPool, which is why I asked. I didn't know the nature of our organization, if it was a different group. Thank you.

Mr. David Banos: Okay, no problem. Next page is an actual versus budget comparison and this is for the month of September 2023. If you look at the middle column, that's the activity from January to September. Following that, page five, that's the same report and this is for your grants and professional services and also your in-kind and pro bono items.

Chairperson Carol Lewis: I kind of have a question for Katherine. It may be something that we have to investigate and discern over time, but since the West Belt grade separation is being transferred to the City of Houston, what happens about the money that we show here?

Director Bruce Mann: The grant money? That's the question I've been asking.

Ms. Katherine Parker: Right. Well, actually I'll be meeting with Chris to talk about how it's displayed on our report and then also the City of Houston, their finance group, about basically those agreements to come out of the Rail District being in the agreement with HBT and transferring that agreement and that small piece of money that's still left to go to the City of Houston.

Chairperson Carol Lewis: Okay.

Ms. Katherine Parker: So, those conversations will be happening this month. It'll be a part of my report, but yes, all that has to transfer over so that we show where we began, where we ended as far as the grant was concerned, and that they took it from that point forward.

Chairperson Carol Lewis: Okay. So, let me do the follow-up, which is that we expect to see that on next month's report.

Ms. Katherine Parker: Yes. I'm asking actually the City of Houston to provide an update for the West Belt project in general for November.

Chairperson Carol Lewis: Okay.

Mr. David Banos: Yes, we'll update that.

Chairperson Carol Lewis: Wonderful.

Mr. David Banos: As soon as we get the information.

Chairperson Carol Lewis: Okay, thank you.

Mr. David Banos: Yes.

Director Jeff Ross: A few meetings ago, we adopted a relationship on what the agencies should be contributing to maintain us, but this budget reflects nothing but zeros.

Mr. David Banos: Okay.

Director Jeff Ross: So, at what point, is that a 2024 when that kicks in or is that a 2023 when that kicks in?

Mr. David Banos: I'll have to get back on that.

Ms. Katherine Parker: Our letters will go out probably November. Our requests for annual payment.

Mr. David Banos: So, then they're 2024?

Ms. Katherine Parker: Yes.

Mr. David Banos: Is that a budget item that was approved?

Ms. Katherine Parker: Yes, the fee structure. It's called fee structure now, but in the past, it's been annual county payments.

Mr. David Banos: Or entity payments.

Ms. Katherine Parker: Yes. So, each member entity is given a particular amount and so this time around it'll be more formalized than it has been in years past.

Mr. David Banos: Okay.

Ms. Katherine Parker: But we'll provide that as well.

Mr. David Banos: Okay, sounds good. And the balance of my report is the grant status report, which has not changed since the last meeting. If you have any additional questions, let me know and I'll be happy to answer.

Director Allen Owen: Are there any other questions? If not, Madam Chairman, I would ask that the treasurer's report be approved, and Resolution 23-19 ratifying payments be approved.

Director Bruce Mann: So moved.

Director Veronica Chapa Gorczynski: Second.

Director Allen Owen: And a motion to do that.

Director Bruce Mann: We got a motion and a second.

Chairperson Carol Lewis: Got a motion and a second.

Ms. Katherine Parker: Mann.

Chairperson Carol Lewis: Did you get it, Lisa?

Ms. Lisa Patke: Yes, I did.

Chairperson Carol Lewis: Alright. All in favor?

Board: Aye.

Chairperson Carol Lewis: Any opposed? Alright, thank you. Thank you very much.

Chairperson Carol Lewis: Alright, we're on to item eight, public comments, three minutes per speaker. Is there anyone who would like to sign? There's no one in the room. Is there anyone on the web who would like to speak? If you would, raise your hand, please.

Director Bruce Mann: Do we want to walk down the hall and make sure nobody showed up at the other...

Director Kendric Jones: He's down there.

Chairperson Carol Lewis: Yes, the gentleman said...

Director Kendric Jones: The gentleman that was helping.

Chairperson Carol Lewis: ...he was going to stay for a while.

Ms. Katherine Parker: He's supposed to direct them back to this room.

Chairperson Carol Lewis: Okay. I don't see any hands, Ms. Lisa.

Ms. Lisa Patke: No, there are no hands.

Chairperson Carol Lewis: Alright. Thank you. With that, we'll go on to item nine, Marketing and Outreach Committee update. Director Bartholomew, please.

Director Angelique Bartholomew: Thank you so much. I appreciate the opportunity to address the board. Many of you are aware we were considering or have been considering for some time an evaluation of moving our marketing to the next level and bringing us into the 21st century utilizing social media and building our platform more public facing. The RFQ was put out for a response from various vendors. We received two responses, so I was just glad that we got some response. Some government entities and agencies don't even get a response to these things, so we were excited that we at least received two responses. They were reviewed by myself and Andrea, which is an outside resource to assist us with just some of the overall transportation marketing and compliance type of work. Jeff wasn't able to attend but we reviewed the RFPs and requested additional information on the 5th. We reviewed them on the 4th.

Director Katherine sent out a request for additional response from those two responders and they have provided that information with regard to their overall analytics on social media campaigns that they've run and even some video. I think that everyone in the room is very aware of the new platforms for marketing being inclusive of some level of video and interactive engagement with the public that you're trying to reach, so we wanted some examples or inferences around their experience on that. We plan to review them finally and, if at all possible, be able to submit something to the board for action by November.

Just to give you a rough estimate of the budget, it's pretty amazing to get different responses from different vendors and they're both close in range. That's really kind of how we know if somebody's off or not. Other than one having heavier experience from a TV and videography standpoint, they were both within the same range on a monthly basis maintaining the platforms of about \$3,500 a month. I know that that is very steep for the budget that we discussed initially. An initial kind of review of both the brand, the messaging, and some engagement or input from each of us was what was recommended by both of the responders and that has an initial fee as well. So, that's kind of where we are with regard to the marketing. We plan to be able to present a recommendation on which we've selected and the budget and everything, and I think that Director Katherine will assist me with getting that done. Are there any questions? I can try to share with you all one or two of the responses. I'm not sure if my screen is showing. Is that showing?

Chairperson Carol Lewis: At this point no.

Director Bruce Mann: No.

Director Angelique Bartholomew: Okay. I was attempting to share the screen.

Director Bruce Mann: Might not have a permission.

Chairperson Carol Lewis: If it doesn't...

Director Angelique Bartholomew: It doesn't allow me to share. There it is, I'm sorry.

Chairperson Carol Lewis: Okay.

Director Angelique Bartholomew: Can you see it now?

Chairperson Carol Lewis: Yes. Now we can see it.

Director Jeff Ross: Part of it.

Director Angelique Bartholomew: Okay. This was KSRC Media. This particular group, their videographers are Channel 2 people, Channel 11 freelancers, and they have KSRC Media Company. They proposed and provided a very detailed breakdown of what would take place during each month. I do like that they added a month because they wanted to make sure that they had the proper time for an assessment of the organization, and as you can see here, the pricing is outlined at \$7,875. We were going to request a... from both before bringing it to the board and then the monthly pricing maintaining the platforms is here.

And on the second one, it is Cultural Measures. This I believe is an individual small business, but she's provided quite a bit of background and experience working with agencies and I think school districts or something. We were looking for transportation experience from both. I believe KSRC, one or two of their people have worked or engaged with METRO before, but that is all that we have with regard to that. There's the breakdown and then the pricing similarly here is an initial commencement to spin the project up with assessments and roughly around \$3,500 to maintain the consistency of the platforms. Both have agreed to shoot video and those videos can

be broken up into segments. They can be pulled from various other platforms regarding our messaging to allow us to really capture and build on our messaging from there. So, that's it.

Chairperson Carol Lewis: Okay. I would thank you for that report. I think as we look and think about ourselves, this is something that we actually need to do. As we talk about THE HART, as we think about the other projects that we want to be engaged in, we need a better understanding of GCRD in the community as well as kind of the impetus and energy that we want our elected officials to see coming from us. With that, I would open the floor for other questions for Director Bartholomew. Questions, thoughts, and all of that.

Ms. Lisa Patke: Jean Mann has her hand raised.

Chairperson Carol Lewis: Director Mann? Jean Mann.

Director Jean Mann: Okay. I'm just going to offer this. That for social media maintaining, that's pretty pricey. So, like how many videos will we get for that price, and when you say maintaining the platforms, what does that include?

Director Angelique Bartholomew: That's an excellent question, Director Mann. The initial request is to develop a segment or segments of multiple videos related to our platform once we've conceived the messaging and what branding we would like to have. So, we can narrow down on the scope for the number of videos, but the videos are really going to relate to or pertain to whatever we decide as a board would be our segment for messaging. So, for example, if we're talking about grading or we're talking about various other things happening in transportation, they will link that messaging to video that they develop and produce for us and edit. The videos can be two or three minutes and then they're used in snippets, which will run throughout the year. It really just depends on how we decide once we've brought on a social media and PR media group to break up how we would like to convey our public-facing message. So, I'll ask them if there are a particular number of videos included in that, but it's definitely going to depend on the assessment of messaging. The posting, the monthly maintenance, is usually related to content development and responding to social media posts. It may be related to developing additional content, but having a consistent flow of media is really crazy. But that's what is required to stay present.

Director Jean Mann: Okay. So, what platforms are we talking about?

Director Angelique Bartholomew: That too will be recommended or suggested based on their assessment of the organization and speaking with board members from a stakeholder engagement. So, for example, we would decide if Facebook is really our platform, if LinkedIn is our platform, if Instagram is our platform. I'm not a big fan of Twitter anymore but I don't want to bring that into the conversation. But yes, so they will assess and recommend the various platforms and we can still determine what that needs to look like.

Director Jean Mann: Yes. Because I mean, like for Facebook, there are charges to boost posts, increase your reach. On Twitter you can pay for followers. Everything costs money. And so what I'd like to know is what specifically are we paying them \$7,000 a month for or \$3,000 a month or whatever.

Director Angelique Bartholomew: It's the social media engagement and the post and content development as well as of course I'm sure some segments around video or press conferences, but we will drill down on that to ask. I know that they provided their grassroots approach and then their targeted approach for gaining followers or building presence on the site. I don't know if it included any additional purchase of followers. I haven't delved into purchasing followers or anything yet, but a lot of people do it.

Director Jean Mann: Yes. Because I mean, it's just been my experience in dealing with campaigns that a lot of these PR media places can really overcharge. And I, for one, since I'm all over many platforms on social media, I'd like to know exactly what they're going to do. If they are going to answer questions, are we going to train their people to answer intelligently or are they just going to say something like, "Well, thank you for asking that question," or "Thank you for coming out," and really not give people what they're looking for. Are they going to be trained on what we're doing?

Director Kendric Jones: So, Director Mann?

Chairperson Carol Lewis: One half sec. So, let me say, Director Mann, I appreciate all these questions you're asking, and I think we do need to drill down and have good responses to them. I will say that we don't want to pay for followers. I don't think anybody would appreciate a public agency paying for followers, so we will not do that.

Director Angelique Bartholomew: Thank you. I didn't think about that.

Chairperson Carol Lewis: No. We're not going to do that.

Ms. Katherine Parker: That was not a part of either proposal.

Chairperson Carol Lewis: Either scenario. But I do appreciate what you're saying. And yes, when you talk about public responses being, "Thank you very much for that question." When I worked at METRO and did public involvement, we used to always laugh because of that... it was a Discount Tire commercial. This woman would come back with her tire, and she'd throw her tire through the window, and it would crash, and they would say, "Thank you very much." Right? So, that's how we feel in the public arena when we're thanking people for their comments. So, we're going to note all of that. I'm going to call on Director Owen because he's had his hand up, then Director Jones, to kind of circle this conversation. Director Owen?

Director Allen Owen: Yes, Madam Chair. My only question is—well, I have two. One, do we own this social media once we get to the end of the six-month period of time? Is it ours, we own it? And my other question is after six months going forward, if it has to be maintained is there going to be a fee to do that?

Director Angelique Bartholomew: I mean, it's not necessarily a fee. It just really depends on how the platform is built and when we receive the passwords, if it is a role or responsibility that the board or organization or one of our other contractors would like to just kind of maintain for us. I know that Director Katherine has been working with an overhaul of some of the material and content, so it may be quite possible that whoever is providing that. I don't mind supporting content development, but I don't have the opportunity or the time to go and make posts and all that stuff. I mean, it does take time and it does have to be a thoughtful process. But once so much

content is developed, agencies and organizations, if you recognize, they're really reproducing a lot of the same information and content and continuing to put it out there until something arises like if we're going to the Legislature or something like that. That's when you're going to want to have high volumes of content so that they're aware that GCRD is communicating with them and just kind of subliminally messaging them.

Director Allen Owen: I agree. Like I said, my main question is do we own what they're going to produce?

Director Angelique Bartholomew: Yes. Yes, sir.

Chairperson Carol Lewis: Alright. Thank you. Director Jones?

Director Kendric Jones: I would just like to say that I personally use a firm to be able to do the things that you all do. You all can ask for a package, and they do have certain packages or firms that do this, do offer certain packages. So, like with my package, I pay about \$1,500 a month for an individual or a firm to run my social media, and they don't engage back. They just say thank you on holidays and things like that. When friends or someone makes a comment or something like that, they engage within a certain appropriate spectrum. They won't go in to give elaborate detailed response if I have a citizen that's complaining about a road or a bridge, but then I'll also receive an email, Thanks, I will be following up on this speaking with the engineer or whatever the case may be. And then I'll receive an email from my platform to basically say these are the things that I have to go about doing. You do own the platform. But it is a business, and just like anything, when you buy your first set of tires, they cost more but you always go back and need something done every six months to a year. So, you guys can discuss on package plans because the hardest part is really getting it up and started and having that content. And once you have the content or the information, then after that six months it allows the group to go back and negotiate because the extreme workload has been all done up front rather than behind.

Chairperson Carol Lewis: Thank you for that. Very great to have something from someone who's in the middle of it at this moment. Director Mann, did you want to circle back? Jean Mann.

Director Jean Mann: Yes, yes. Can you hear me?

Chairperson Carol Lewis: Yes, we can.

Director Jean Mann: Another thing that I would ask them because with each platform, there's all kinds of reporting that comes with that. Can we hold them to a standard of engagement to get the bang for our buck?

Director Angelique Bartholomew: Yes, I will definitely ask that and if you're talking about the analytical reporting or providing reports, I do believe that they both included reporting analytics. I think that that's usually required in terms of engagement and where they are and what they've accomplished so far and even sharing the posts. A lot of us aren't on social media as frequently as other people, but I believe that anyone that comes onboard would need to provide us with a regular report to share the posts with the board.

Director Jean Mann: I would also suggest that whoever the named person is, that somebody have access to the platform, admin access that they can go out and check the engagement and make sure that... I mean, not that they would lie on a report, but I think for that kind of money we need to definitely police it for the first six months.

Director Angelique Bartholomew: I've set these up for startup companies and small businesses in the past and I am usually the admin or there is additional admins from the organization that have the passwords and everything.

Director Jean Mann: Perfect. Perfect.

Director Bruce Mann: Maybe one of the ways, because I'm kind of concerned like you about the monthly fee. Maybe we put in there they have to have... I bill out \$300 an hour for consulting, so if they're charging \$3,000 a month, then just saying, "Hey, you need to have a minimum of 10 hours a month and we need documentation of where that time was spent," and that may be a way to get to the \$3,000.

Director Jeff Ross: Accountability.

Director Bruce Mann: Yes.

Chairperson Carol Lewis: Okay, yes. Alright, okay.

Director Veronica Chapa Gorczynski: This is Veronica.

Chairperson Carol Lewis: Yes.

Director Veronica Chapa Gorczynski: The only value-add I have, having gone through a similar process for myself last year, is we found that the firms on the reporting and analytics side that gave you a software response, that gave you advertising reach, or could you give you reach beyond like, "This is the number of posts that people... that were targeted." And there's two or three software brands, and I'm blanking at the moment, and we were asking them as a more sophisticated partner, is there software they're using to evaluate the reach of your social media posts, what is it, and can you include that as part of a dashboard of analytics and outcomes so we can evaluate in six months.

Chairperson Carol Lewis: Okay.

Director Angelique Bartholomew: Excellent. Thank you. If you come across that, Veronica, please send that to me, the platforms that you're thinking about, so that I can pretty much sound intelligent with this technology stuff and drives me crazy.

Director Veronica Chapa Gorczynski: Well, the one I'm thinking of is Sprout Social. I can't remember if Sprout Social is only used.

Director Angelique Bartholomew: And HubSpot.

Director Veronica Chapa Gorczynski: And HubSpot. And I don't know if they were for every application platform, but this is where my knowledge just ends. But at those level of fees, I

would hope that that kind of reporting is available and included. And I think that would give some comfort to folks because it's not just the accountability that they're producing with the hours, the time, but that the outcomes are actually measurable beyond how many videos or posts we have, right? Which considering the size of the region, it should be pretty significant.

Director Angelique Bartholomew: Thank you.

Chairperson Carol Lewis: Thank you.

Director Veronica Chapa Gorczynski: Oh. And because I do this in every space that I'm in, the opportunity for Spanish translation or Spanish language when talking about this stuff would also be really key because it comes into everything from communication with container and truck-freight shipping to individuals that you're talking to about crossing a railroad track.

Director Angelique Bartholomew: Excellent, bilingual communication. I mean, even though the platforms themselves actually translate, it's pretty crazy, but you're right, I'll ask about that as well, that's great. That's it for me.

Chairperson Carol Lewis: Okay. Is there any more questions?

Director Stephen Gilbreath: I had a comment.

Chairperson Carol Lewis: Director Gilbreath, go ahead.

Director Stephen Gilbreath: I guess one of the big things beyond just the platform is going to be the content of it. If we're paying this much every month, we're going to have to stay on top of content, otherwise we're just sort of maintaining almost like a website. So that's going to be a trick for all of us to be engaged in posting things, writing things on behalf of the District, so just get ready for that if we're going to do this.

Chairperson Carol Lewis: Yes, that's a good point. So, look, you all have made... Director Mann, is your hand up on purpose still? Okay.

Director Jean Mann: Yes, sorry. I was just going to say, yes, as far as the content goes, I think the way that they do it is they'll produce a bunch of different videos right up front and then it'll be released in a timely manner. Like, say, if there's something happening, that they will release a video that covers this. The videos will already be there is the way I'm assuming they're going to do it. They're going to shoot 8 to 10 videos or whatever, they're going to stack them in, and then release them over time and push them. Is that correct?

Director Angelique Bartholomew: That's normally how it works, Director Mann, but there is an assessment and evaluation part of their kickoff, and I think that we can have input. As far as additional development of content and everything, I'm sure that they will interview each of us and have statements that we make and those types of things and why GCRD is important and what projects we're on and stuff like that. So, yes, the point is to have the board interactive. The point of the social media is to have us get outside of the box. So, it really just depends on if we're ready to do that and take that leap or if we want to maintain the status quo.

Director Veronica Chapa Gorczynski: This is Director Chapa Gorczynski. So, what I feel the homework coming is this. For content purposes, if we're managing a calendar, is all of the directors have to think of one thing that's super meaningful in your area and make sure it gets on the list. And if the list is with Katherine or Angelique, whatever you're sitting up in front of that you view as the critical piece, or with a place like a port that's multiple, we start with at least everyone giving one bullet, two bullets, three bullets. Then we've got 12 months' worth of stuff.

Chairperson Carol Lewis: Perfect. I love that suggestion.

Director Angelique Bartholomew: I think you need to join the Marketing Committee, so make sure that you send me all of your information and you're recruited.

Director Jeff Ross: I'd say Jean Mann should also.

Director Jean Mann: Yes. I should have learned that the punishment for speaking up is more work.

Director Angelique Bartholomew: Appoint some more appointments. Yes, more appointments, yes. We get it done, Jean, we get done.

Director Jeff Ross: I'm on the committee and I don't use social media at all.

Director Angelique Bartholomew: It is a lot of work, you guys. It is a lot of work to make sure that the messaging...

Director Jean Mann: No, it totally is.

Director Angelique Bartholomew: It is a lot of work to make sure the messaging is right and that we all approve.

Chairperson Carol Lewis: So, anyway, yes, so speaking up is synonymous with volunteering. Alright. Hold up, Jeff. One, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight. You're good, Alright.

Director Jeff Ross: Okay.

Chairperson Carol Lewis: You're fine. But I just need to make sure we weren't breaking quorum because we got a voting item. We're good.

Director Angelique Bartholomew: Thanks, Jeff.

Chairperson Carol Lewis: Okay. Thank you all. So, here's sort of my takeaways at this moment. That we'll make sure that you, Director Bartholomew, get the minutes sooner rather than later so you can go through and pull all of these suggestions out because there were many. Then I guess you'll come back next month with more conversation?

Director Angelique Bartholomew: Definitely at least a response to the input that we've gathered. And then really just try to take a vote on procuring one of the submissions to get started if the board is willing to approve the budget and the plan.

Chairperson Carol Lewis: Alright. That sounds wonderful. Thank you so much. Appreciate all the work you've done and all the comments. I think this is really important. Whenever you do something, sort of like what Director Jones said, whenever you do something new, it's always going to be bigger and probably more expensive than you thought. When you got ready to redo your house and they came back with the estimate, you never thought it was going to be that much. I do think it's worthwhile to see if we can bang that monthly cost down a little bit because I did a quick multiply by 12 in my head, that's a lot of money. So, if we can bang it down a little bit, I think we'd like it, at least sometime, at least later or whatever, you all can kind of think about that. But this is something we have to do. We actually need to do this to stay cutting edge. It's 2023 and it's about to be 2024.

Director Angelique Bartholomew: Definitely.

Chairperson Carol Lewis: That's where we are. Alright, so thank you all very much for that.

Director Veronica Chapa Gorczynski: Thank you, Angelique.

Chairperson Carol Lewis: Yes. So, need to go back to item seven. I forgot to do our committees. So, this is Resolution 23-20, it's a continuation from last month. You'll remember that last month we did Legislative, Funding, and Bylaws, we did Passenger Transport, and we did Marketing and Outreach. We did not do the Houston Area Rail Transformation for reasons that I'll take ultimate and full responsibility for. It just came out; it was just too confusing. But now here we have what we're recommending on Houston Area Rail Transformation, THE HART Committee of GCRD. You see the names that are there that are recommended.

Chairperson Carol Lewis: So what we would like, if you agree, is a motion for these individuals to be on THE HART. So, this is the formal, THE HART Committee of GCRD. So, you all may think and recall that there's a HART Working Group and other subcomponents, but those are not formal GCRD committees. This is the formal GCRD committee.

Director Stephen Gilbreath: So moved.

Director Kendrick Jones: Second.

Chairperson Carol Lewis: Alright. Thank you. We've got a motion and a second. All in favor? Board: Aye.

Chairperson Carol Lewis: Okay. Any opposed? Okay. Alright. All you folks online, is everybody in agreement?

Director Jean Mann: Yes.

Chairperson Carol Lewis: Okay, great. Thank you. Alright, motion carries.

Chairperson Carol Lewis: Alright, so we now have item 10 which is an East End Rail update from Jack Hanagriff who's manager of Road Safety and Mobility Program for the East End District. You all will recall he came and presented to us several months ago about the work they had done. It was fascinating. I'm going to ask Director Chapa Gorczynski, do you want to say anything before Mr. Hanagriff starts?

Director Veronica Chapa Gorczynski: Yes, I just want to say that I really enjoy having Jack's leadership at the East End District. We have in this area multiple statistics. About 40% of the freight that comes to Houston comes through the East End, and we really, through his innovation, most recently were awarded an independent SS4 grant because of Jack's efforts. We've received investments from both of the railroads of time and even a little bit of treasure,

which we're grateful for, in collaborating on some solutions. And so we're asking and I'm asking that he participates because the East End is a pilot area for a lot of the troubleshooting, whether it's the intersection of problems with pedestrian crossings or just train blockages, Jack has been in the thick of it for just about 18 months now. So, I'm really grateful. He's a subject matter expert. You're also very welcome to independently contact him regarding questions about what is being presented today. So, Jack, I can't quite see you, but I see the JH, sir, it's all yours.

Chairperson Carol Lewis: So, Jack do you...

Mr. Jack Hanagriff: I'm sharing my camera. Y'all can't see me?

Chairperson Carol Lewis: Yes, we can. Do you want to control your screen, Jack, or do you want...

Mr. Jack Hanagriff: I can.

Chairperson Carol Lewis: ...Lisa to do it from here? Okay.

Mr. Jack Hanagriff: I can do it. That's okay.

Chairperson Carol Lewis: Alright. Fine.

Mr. Jack Hanagriff: Y'all see my screen?

Chairperson Carol Lewis: Yes. We can see it.

Mr. Jack Hanagriff: Okay. Thank you for having me again. I'm Jack Hanagriff, and formerly with the City of Houston, now pretty much East End District. I wanted to kind of go over some of the growth that we've had in the transportation realm in the East End District. The East End District, 16 square miles, both residential and business community, and based on the map, we touch a little bit of everybody. We touch all the way to Fourth Ward, all the way down to almost South Park, so we have a little... I mean Fifth Ward all the way down to South Park. So we have a little bit of everybody. So, we have been working for the past 18 months to try to connect with these individual communities. Originally starting with railroad, but as we looked at what's going on in the transportation space, roadways and railroads, they are connected. What people do on the roads affect trains, and what trains do on the tracks affects the roads. So, we decided to kind of grow this into a road and rail safety program. And then working with these neighborhoods, we stood up these little different groups in every neighborhood. We try to get every neighborhood to have a representative of a topic of interest. Because we were awarded a DOT grant, we will soon be standing up a Safe Streets Technical Advisory Committee, and that's to help us develop the safety action plan so we have transportation safety continuity, that we tie in all these modes of transportation. We have a pedestrian safety group that is made up of the various communities to talk about what problems are occurring or what their needs are. The whole purpose of all these individual groups, bringing in these different communities, is to create one voice. And it was very successful on the Rail and Safety Task Force because we were able to communicate as one voice to the railroad what the priorities were in the East End and East Houston area and what the needs were. And the railroad really liked that because instead of dealing with all these individual communities, they were dealing with them all as a whole in that approach. We have an East End Bicycle Advisory Committee to understand what their needs are. But again, we have the Rail

Safety Task Force that has very been successful and also became a model for some of these other committees. And in the next few weeks, we're going to stand up a Spanish-speaking-only community group that's going to touch on all the modes of transportation. Because we feel that there's an audience out there that wants to be heard and they may not be as comfortable speaking English and they go to these meetings, and we don't really hear from them. So, maybe if we have an environment that's conducive and comfortable for this type of audience, we will get even more information. So we're really excited to have the Spanish-speaking-only group, and again, that will be made up of stakeholders from around the community, it will be more of a town hall kind of format.

Focusing on the road and the rail, we looked at our high injury network. We do have portions of the high injury network and it's changed a little bit. When I first came on, it was 6% of Houston roads account for 60% of the transportation-related fatalities or serious injuries. And the East End had a few little slivers in there, but now because East End's on the move, it's growing, more people are coming in, we're kind of seeing that shift a little bit, and we're seeing some other neighborhoods that weren't part of the high injury network come into play. And I kind of started noticing this in the very beginning, so we've been ramping up efforts in preparation for this because as things shift, we want to make sure our infrastructure and our programs are keeping up with the changes at the East End District.

Just with the mobility, blocked crossings. We're part of the high injury network but we're also very significant in reported blocked crossings. We have two of the highest congressional districts, by congressional districts of who has the most reported blocked crossings. We lead the nation. We tripled some of the other larger cities. Our little 16-square mile area triples in blocked crossing concerns and complaints than the rest of the nation, and that's significant. Everybody thinks, "Oh, Houston's big, and yes, they're going to have a lot of blocked crossings," until they find out it's just a little 16-square-mile area of Houston that has the highest rate of blocked crossing concerns. That's another one of our primary focuses because this type of congestion, this type of impact causes other what we call creative driving or combat driving because people react, these behaviors come out to try and avoid these trains.

To try to get assistance, we started working with foundations. We worked with the Traffic Injury Research Foundation who came in about a year ago and started working with these community groups and took a survey. They surveyed the 12 neighborhoods. The 12 neighborhoods—these are neighborhoods even outside of East End, Fifth Ward all the way down to South Park. And diverse stakeholders, teachers, first responders, city councilmembers, business owners, professional drivers, and residents, to take the survey. And these are just some of the things that kind of bubbled up was lack of consistency in road safety activities. If they were going on, if there was any kind of safety programs, they weren't aware of them. Again, limited awareness of these programs. There seemed to be siloed data sharing efforts. Pedestrian was over in one area and bicycle was in the other, but they weren't kind of looking at them together. And then there seemed to be no identified funding mechanism to concentrate these efforts and keep these things sustainable.

Through those efforts of the Traffic Injury Research Foundation and all the data we collected, as Veronica said, we were able to secure grant funding under the Safe Streets for All Program and some in-kind resources so we can go out there and create a safety action plan of tying all bicycle, pedestrian, vehicle, and train event into one action plan that we can as a district start buying down or working through the risk of these activities. We're conducting feasibility studies and

road assessments; we're working with other foundations. We pretty much have different organizations out there that are assessing and helping us collect this data. The whole goal is to use evidence-based project strategies as an integral part of the planning process.

Other than these initiatives, we have the Safe Streets for All Action Plan that we're working on. The University of Houston came out and did a capstone project and they did two things. One team studied our injury network, the other team studied business impacts caused by train, and we hope to get that final product published soon—they're still in editing. But it was kind of interesting to see what the businesses were experiencing as they encountered train events and what their customers were experiencing. Texas A&M came in, they're in this semester now doing a capstone program on crossing bypass study. We want a way to alert motorists and guide them around some of these impacted crossings. We have some underpasses, we have some ways to get around, but visitors to East End or even some East End residents don't know where they all are. So, everybody just kind of sits in one place and creates this congestion waiting for the train. So, some of those efforts we're looking at is advanced warning, detour or guide the motorist to not even go in that area, how to bypass that area completely. And then those that find themselves in there trapped by a train, how to get them out. The goal is to keep everybody moving; moving and doing it safely. We also have a road assessment program under the Road Safety Foundation and Iowa State University. They're in studying every primary and every secondary route. Every 100 meters, as they say, they are looking at speed, width, crash, and infrastructure basically to see if our infrastructure needs improvement to reduce some of the crashes we have in the East End. And then finally, we want to look at developing a road and rail safety toolkit of information and materials that's conducive to those neighborhoods, schools, and community centers, information that they need. Are there children or people walking everywhere? Then they need a lot of pedestrian. We want to be able to prioritize what the needs are of those neighborhoods and deliver the appropriate materials to better help them travel.

The other thing we looked at is, as you saw back in the survey, a lot of lack of awareness. So, we wanted to see who is doing what, where or what organization. What safety organizations are operating in the City of Houston or even operating in the East End? And a lot of these safety organizations are funded by railroads and other businesses that are part of the East End. So I'm trying to focus these efforts into the East End and East Houston area. So we created the Safety Sync Up where we get together regularly, we look at what type of programs we have, how often, what are the locations being served. And then we're looking at some of the concerns. Are they tracking with our rail safety and mobility? Do we have anybody looking at sight distance limitations and dangerous intersections and bike/pedestrian access? This has also been very successful but that's only because it's networking and it's an exchange of ideas to help everybody not only to address their one little safety area, but also look at other safety concerns outside their realm.

And then finally, we work really closely with the Mayor's Office of Innovation on the smart railroad cameras and sensors. We have 18 locations being monitored by the City of Houston. The majority of them are in the East End. We also have some federal-funded pilots going on in the East End supported by the Federal Railroad Administration. They're interested in adding even more sensors in the East End – East End and Fifth Ward – because the little sensors they have now are detecting anomalies that they've never seen before or data they've never seen before, train traps. We've identified what we call a few train traps which are the train triangle. Fifth Ward has one, East End has one. You can't go north, south, east, or west. You're stuck in the middle of this. They've never seen those anomalies before.

The City of Houston is also wanting sensors for their city. They wanted to scale this project to a regional or a TxDOT district-wide effort. So, helping the city, we're working to scale this into Harris County, Fort Bend County, METRO, and the METRO area. We are working with cities within Harris County, we are working with cities inside Fort Bend County to try to identify, as well as Houston, what crossings they need covered and where can we put these sensors. The goal is to get these alerts and this information when these crossings are occupied to TranStar so everybody can benefit. Just like you do with the freeway cameras and the freeway map. We want to make railroad operations part of the traffic congestion model. We're currently piloting advanced warning signs that would start flashing saying, "Turn here before you go down there because you're not going to be able to get out once you get down there." So, we're looking at advanced warning signs as well.

This is one of the benefits that we're getting from these sensors. This gives us the ability to look at, over time or individually, each one of these crossings that has a sensor. There's various types of sensors but this is one that can deliver average wait time. That's very important and, one, it tells us if the railroad is moving the needle. What I was seeing, hour-average wait times and 30-minute-average wait times, I'm seeing those times come down over the month as we keep working with the railroad to change their operating practices and make them better aware of what their operations are doing. We try to keep the average wait time around 10 minutes. This will also be important to the motorists. If everybody gets accustomed to seeing, "Oh, okay. I got about 10-minute wait, okay." Maybe on a good day, if everything works well, maybe they just sit there and make a better decision instead of trying to play beat the train or cut through the train if they're a pedestrian. That also helps the community because you can't always see how the railroad's operations are changing. It's a very slow process, so this data helps the community understand, yes, things are improving. You may not see it, but the data is showing it. And that's all I have. We post everything that we pretty much do as part of the Road Safety and Mobility Program on the East End District. Any articles, any data, any programs, and any publishing will be posted there. So just go there and you get a wealth of information on what's going on with that program in the East End District.

Chairperson Carol Lewis: Thank you very much. You want to see any more of the presentation? Otherwise, we can get him onscreen.

Director Bruce Mann: Yes, I just have a question about the last slide.

Chairperson Carol Lewis: Okay. Yes. Go ahead, Director Mann in the room.

Director Bruce Mann: Hey, Jack. Thank you. So, just on that last slide, I think one of the things that might help is if the railroad's operating an 8,000-foot train, it's going to take eight minutes to cross through the crossing. So if we could identify, "Here's the target for how long a train should be occupying a crossing," I think what that'll do then is tell us when you look at it and it's 34 minutes, it's absolutely failing, but if it's 7 minutes that might not be failing, and I think if it's 6 minutes, that's probably not failing. So, I think just trying to be able to understand how long does it take for the average train to cross through that crossing because five minutes isn't a blocked crossing, it's a train passing through a crossing.

Mr. Jack Hanagriff: Correct. So, the Federal Railroad Administration and the Surface Transportation Board, their line or their threshold is 10 minutes. They don't want to see a crossing occupied for more than 10 minutes, so that's typically what everybody's working off of,

but every crossing is different. And yes, you're right. A 3-minute, 5-minute, that's just a slow-moving train, 10 minutes could be a slow-moving train. When you start getting into 15, 20, and 30 minutes, that's definitely a train's stopped in there somewhere.

Director Bruce Mann: Right, for sure.

Mr. Jack Hanagriff: Hirsch Road is one of them. They were seeing hour-long waits, now we're getting them down to 34 minutes and 19 minutes, which is good news because they were historically an hour long. Lockwood hovers around 30 minutes regularly, and sometimes in the hours. We still get the 4-hour and 11-hour trains, but we're not seeing them like we were a year ago when it was common to see 3 hours and 15 hours each month.

Chairperson Carol Lewis: Alright. Thank you.

Ms. Lisa Patke: Angelique.

Chairperson Carol Lewis: Okay. Director Bartholomew.

Director Angelique Bartholomew: Thank you. I appreciate the presentation, Jack. I'd like to understand, or have you repeat what you were asking with regard to Fort Bend County and things that you're looking to accomplish in terms of notifications or crossings. I missed the exact ask or verbiage around that. Can you repeat?

Mr. Jack Hanagriff: So, with Fort Bend County, we're scaling the Houston Smart Railroad Crossing project. We want to get it into TranStar, and TranStar wants to scale it into other counties. So, we're looking to work with TxDOT to identify funding to purchase other sensors or purchase sensors for the outlying counties. So, Fort Bend County, I am working with Fort Bend County Emergency Management, City of Sugar Land, Stafford, and Missouri City are in there, but I haven't directly contacted them. But right now we're assessing as a region, we need to identify what are the common deliverables everybody is looking for. And basically, they want to be able to know when a crossing is occupied, and they want to know how long it's occupied, and when it's no longer occupied. Those are the common factors that we're trying to develop a solution to cover because we could spend months and months adding in additional things everybody wants. So we kind of took the city criteria and we're seeing if it is adaptable to these other jurisdictions. So, I have several jurisdictions working regularly with me in the Office of Innovation and we are working as a group to identify how many sensors and then find a funding source. And then the goal is to get the information into TranStar and make it part of its Central Services Division so it's in there with all the freeways and everything else so everybody can benefit from it including the jurisdictions. Did that answer your question?

Director Angelique Bartholomew: That answers the question, but I mean, this may be an off-the-record call and, I mean, forgive me, I'm a new board member, but is this something that we would target to collaborate with the East End on to find targeted funding, Director?

Mr. Jack Hanagriff: Yes, the East End's part of it but this is actually driven by the Mayor's Office of Innovation, and Houston TranStar and TxDOT are all kind of driving this and we're bringing in the regional. When I say "we," I'm part of that mix because I'm bringing the subject matter expertise to these groups. So, the collaboration's already there. TranStar and the executive leadership of TranStar, they're really looking hard at this solution. They just want to make sure

that other regional partners can benefit from it. So, that's what we're exploring now, working with these individual communities. They've already submitted crossings of concern for their areas, mostly the fire departments have been doing that, and now we're just kind of narrowing down what part of the solution would benefit everybody, have TranStar host that, and then seek funding, external funding either through the federal government or TxDOT.

Chairperson Carol Lewis: So, Director...

Director Angelique Bartholomew: I guess my... I'm sorry.

Chairperson Carol Lewis: No, your question was spot-on. It's actually what I was going to ask too. I'm going to pause for you to do a follow-up question but I'm thinking the same thing. I'm like why wasn't THE HART because it seems exactly like something that THE HART would have under its umbrella to bring all the counties in. I don't know how much you all have in Waller like that. We know Fort Bend does; we know Montgomery does. So, it seems like our members would be extremely interested in this, but I understand that TxDOT at the table is taking that overarching sort of spot. But I'll see if you have a follow-up... But I want to confirm that that was an excellent question, I had the same one. So, do you have a follow-up behind that one, Director Bartholomew?

Director Angelique Bartholomew: It was literally just to reiterate, I mean, if the goal or our role is to participate in these types of advocacy efforts and everything, Jack, I mean, I want to see if, from the Fort Bend perspective, if we're able to team up or collaborate and GCRD plays a role in that. I mean, I don't know the details or intricacies of how all of the process works but when you said that, I was just thinking why aren't we engaged.

Ms. Katherine Parker: You can look at it as it's a two-pronged approach. From THE HART standpoint, it's much longer term because of cost of grade separations and the like, whereas what Jack has been working on is things that can happen more quickly with technology that can provide, you know, real-time issues for drivers, pedestrians. And so yes, I do think that it can be a part of HART. I just think we'll have to add that as a piece of one of our working groups.

Chairperson Carol Lewis: So, remember we have...

Director Bruce Mann: Or it could be in the unfunded.

Chairperson Carol Lewis: Exactly.

Ms. Katherine Parker: Unfunded, okay.

Chairperson Carol Lewis: Exactly, exactly.

Director Bruce Mann: Because this isn't a funding thing, it's a technology thing.

Chairperson Carol Lewis: Exactly. That's what THE HART has...

Mr. Jack Hanagriff: It's also...

Director Angelique Bartholomew: Can you repeat that?

Mr. Jack Hanagriff: It's not that we did not want to include all these other jurisdictions as part of HART.

Chairperson Carol Lewis: I understand.

Mr. Jack Hanagriff: The immediate thing is get this hub and get this funding source established. TranStar already has an established process with their Central Services Division where METRO, Fort Bend County, Harris County, and Houston and TxDOT all kind of pay into these hosting of these services.

Chairperson Carol Lewis: Got you, got you.

Mr. Jack Hanagriff: So I think that was the intent there. Start with who's already hosting these types of services, get it in there as a baseline, and then grow it out appropriately.

Chairperson Carol Lewis: I got it.

Mr. Jack Hanagriff: So, that was my direction to start with those counties that were already established in the TranStar Central Services Division.

Chairperson Carol Lewis: Right. Got you, got you. That makes sense. So, maybe what we look at in THE HART is who's not included therein.

Director Bruce Mann: Right.

Chairperson Carol Lewis: Which would bring us to Waller and Montgomery, and for that matter, some of the other areas outside of this core that TranStar covers. But I had a couple of questions too. How much does a sensor cost?

Mr. Jack Hanagriff: About \$8,000 per location depending on what you put on there.

Chairperson Carol Lewis: Okay. And then who monitors the sensors?

Mr. Jack Hanagriff: In the test pilot, it's done in the Mayor's Office of Innovation, and the direct feeds are going into the fire stations that are in those areas. But it's going to set up as the same data sharing that the precedents that TranStar has where everything will go into their general dashboard and things will be alerted. There's also capabilities to do dynamic messaging boards, to get on the computer-aided dispatch. I mean, I was only scratching the surface. That's a whole... another briefing on what all these sensors do. And then get that information into the individual jurisdictions as well. So, there will be visual capabilities. So not only will they get the alert, they'll be able to get on a camera and see what is going on at that crossing.

Chairperson Carol Lewis: Got you. Okay, thank you for that. Let me see, are there any other questions, any other further conversation with Jack? So, Jack, people's hands are full but whenever they see something and know they want a part, they're trying to, "Okay, let us find more that we need to do."

Director Angelique Bartholomew: No, no. I wasn't interjecting that at all.

Chairperson Carol Lewis: No, but I'm telling you. I was thinking exactly the same thing. I'm sitting here, I had all these notes on my page about that very thing. So, yes, absolutely. Alright.

Director Angelique Bartholomew: Well, that would be Mayor Owen would take this one on. He's in Fort Bend as well.

Chairperson Carol Lewis: Yes, for sure, for sure. I was waiting for him to click in.

Director Allen Owen: Oh, yes. We've had the railroad participate in warnings at 90A and Gessner, so the railroad is very concerned about that. There's been a number of fatalities at that particular crossing, so they actually funded the money to put up some warning signs recently about that intersection. So don't think that they don't participate with some of this stuff too.

Chairperson Carol Lewis: Right.

Director Allen Owen: Their money.

Chairperson Carol Lewis: Yes, that's true.

Mr. Jack Hanagriff: Yes, they're very well-involved in this, and they did express interest because they see the sensors as a public safety support mechanism, but it's got to get through the politics and the other local government effort. They are very involved in this. We meet monthly with the four railroads—the City of Houston, emergency services and the four railroads, and I'm bringing in the outlying counties as well to start meeting with them as part of the process.

Director Allen Owen: Yes, they don't want crossings closed because of train traffic blocking intersections. And so that's another thing that they get concerned about is that municipalities actually can go in and close the crossroads at some of these intersections where they blocked them, they can actually say... The railroad wants you to close intersections.

Mr. Jack Hanagriff: Correct.

Director Allen Owen: That's their deal. And so that's the leverage you have with them is, "Hey, you know what? We'll close that but here's what it's going to cost you."

Mr. Jack Hanagriff: Well, the leverage I have is I can show them the pictures of a fire truck being blocked by their train.

Director Allen Owen: Oh, absolutely.

Mr. Jack Hanagriff: They lose their train for 11 hours; I can bring that to them. So, I mean, we have a lot of leverage with these sensors.

Director Allen Owen: That's right. Madam Chairman, the railroad runs the entire length of 90A. Yes, every city... Most cities in Fort Bend County that are along 90A are affected by this.

Chairperson Carol Lewis: I'm sure. So, the other thing I'm going to be interested in, Mr. Hanagriff, is this business impact study when it's done. That's going to be interesting to look at. So, we'll be looking forward to seeing that as well. So, thank you. Anybody have anything else? Alright, alright. Thank you very much, appreciate it. We'll get you back over here maybe in six to nine months or so and tell us what else you're doing. See what new things you can bring to us so we can say, "Oh. What about us?"

Mr. Jack Hanagriff: Did you hear that, Veronica? You have to keep me for another six to nine months.

Director Veronica Chapa Gorczynski: Whatever. Jack is amazing and we're really grateful to have him on staff. I'm sure he'll be changing the world a whole lot by then.

Chairperson Carol Lewis: No kidding. Alright.

Mr. Jack Hanagriff: Bye-bye, everybody.

Chairperson Carol Lewis: Thank you, Jack.

Ms. Katherine Parker: Thank you. Appreciate you.

Chairperson Carol Lewis: Alright, so on to item 11, report from Executive Director Parker.

Ms. Katherine Parker: Alright. We'll go through this hopefully pretty quickly. Again, thank you to Jack for the update. Next slide. So, a short HART update. We met; it was held September 22nd. We talked about the structure and the GCRD board review just as the board talked about in our last meeting. The Grant Working Group provided a letter of support for the City of Sugar Land. They applied for the Reconnecting Communities grant submittal which was September 28th. Also, the Unfunded Needs Committee had their first meeting October 2nd. And so just what we were talking about earlier about having the connection. That conversation will be a part of our next Unfunded Needs Committee meeting. And on Monday, I'll present to the Greater Houston Freight Committee about THE HART program. We're actually doing a field visit, but I'll have a piece to talk about what we've done so far with THE HART Committee. Bruce is the chair, I think, of the Greater Houston Freight Committee. I tried to twist his arm into doing the presentation but with him being the chair, that would be a bit much, but we'll have it together for Monday.

So, for the West Belt, the City of Houston meets the last Wednesday of each month. I'm a part of those meetings with the FRA. Our last meeting was September 27th. The representatives are the Houston Public Works, the Federal Rail Administration, and the Volpe Center. Our topics of discussions are various agreements, the environmental-NEPA determination, and funding and grant management requirements. As I said earlier, I'm going to ask that the City of Houston provide us an update for this particular project and these topics for the November meeting. So even though we're transitioning out of this, we will know where they are with it because we'll pretty much be forever tied to the West Belt since that thing began here.

Next slide. So, just some administrative updates. It's that time of year again to extend the TTI contract, that means Lisa, yes, and my answer's always been yes since she's worked with me for

these number of years. So her contract is coming up. You can toggle to the next one and then we'll come back. The annual report.

Ms. Lisa Patke: Which one did you want, this one?

Ms. Katherine Parker: Yes. So, we talked about last time the annual report and also the brochure. These are just layouts. We're working with Sara Tristan who is our website designer. So, all the content has to be updated but I just asked her really two or three days ago, "Can you provide me something for our meeting?" And so these are the annual report layouts. That's four pages—that would be two pages back-to-back. And then that panel card will just be a front and back. So, we talked about leave-behinds when we go to these various meetings with our elected officials, or if any of you all as directors to attend meetings, you can take this. I look at the annual report as more of information for directors to take back to the entities that you represent, and we will have updates as to what we've done for that year. And then the panel card, like I said, will replace the brochure. There will also be a QR code on there that would lead you to the annual report as well. So those are some of the things we discussed. It's also falling under Marketing and Outreach, but we just pulled out these two pieces because we need something quicker from that standpoint as opposed to the social media. So that's why these are kind of sync, if you will. Can you go back?

Director Bruce Mann: Just on that, really quick. There are two things I would probably make sure we'd want to put on there. One, the creation of HART, obviously. But two, I would put because you're on the Policy Council... I would put down funding regional goods movement as part of H-GAC because we had a part in that since you sit on the Policy Council, and I sit on the TAG, and you sit on the TAG. We should take credit.

Chairperson Carol Lewis: Yes, yes.

Ms. Katherine Parker: So, put that as part of our...

Chairperson Carol Lewis: In your report.

Director Bruce Mann: Yes.

Ms. Katherine Parker: ...priorities in review. Okay.

Chairperson Carol Lewis: Contributed to, we didn't do it by ourselves.

Director Bruce Mann: Yes.

Chairperson Carol Lewis: Contributed to.

Ms. Katherine Parker: Okay.

Director Bruce Mann: Because that's the first time regional goods movement's ever been part of a call for projects.

Ms. Katherine Parker: Okay. Alright. And if there are others that we feel as though we need to add, we can do that. Next is the Harris County Board of Commissioners Annual Report. Every year, I have to fill out this information. Basically they ask questions not just about the Harris

County appointees but all board appointees, their attendance record, what have we accomplished this year, our bylaws, and what can Harris County do to help us forward the work that we're working on at the Rail District. So, this is a report that happens around this time of year, so it'll be due on the 13th. So after we take attendance for this meeting, then I'll turn it in for Harris County. It's also time for our annual audit, so in November, Mr. Tolden will come to give us the audit for the Rail District. We had a long conversation earlier this week about how we would represent the grant funding and all that, so that was a part of my conversation earlier with him, so he'll provide that in November. And then lastly, the annual county payment request letters will go out. So, those are kind of our administrative day-to-day updates, just wanted to let you all know. Alright.

Director Bruce Mann: Before we go...

Ms. Katherine Parker: Yes.

Director Bruce Mann: So, one thing. I was in San Diego two weeks ago and I was emcee for a conference. Karen Hedlund, who's an STB member, was one of our panelists. She didn't know about THE HART. So, she asked that I provide her with something about what we're doing, so I'll probably get with you just to send her something. She wants to update Chairman Oberman. In the middle of the conference, she goes, "Well, Houston should have something like CREATE," and at the end, I go, "Well, actually..."

Chairperson Carol Lewis: We kind of do.

Ms. Katherine Parker: And I think she was the speaker at the Southwest Conference, but we had just...

Director Bruce Mann: Just started.

Ms. Katherine Parker: It was our first, yes, so I did a small presentation. But yes.

Director Bruce Mann: So, I told her I would send her some information.

Chairperson Carol Lewis: Yes. So, that needs to be real big on the annual report layout. The other thing we need to get, Katherine, is that strategic plan. So, those three pieces, yes.

Director Bruce Mann: Yes.

Ms. Katherine Parker: I'm glad you said that. She is working... that's the last piece. She just didn't have it by 2:00 p.m.

Chairperson Carol Lewis: Okay.

Ms. Katherine Parker: She's working on the formatting of the strategic plan.

Chairperson Carol Lewis: Good, good, good.

Ms. Katherine Parker: So, those are the three pieces that Sara will provide for us.

Chairperson Carol Lewis: Okay, perfect.

Ms. Katherine Parker: As with anything that we have here, I can send that out to the full board if you all want to make comments.

Chairperson Carol Lewis: Send it. Yes, send it to everybody.

Ms. Katherine Parker: But those asterisks mean that I'm still working on content so those board of directors is definitely not our current board, but I just wanted something visually for us to kind of work from. And Lisa's been working with us as well. There are updates to our logo that we wanted to have higher resolution for a future printing and website products, so those are some of the things we're doing.

Chairperson Carol Lewis: I like the gold in it.

Director Bruce Mann: Yes.

Chairperson Carol Lewis: This is the first time we've done the gold.

Director Bruce Mann: Looks nice.

Chairperson Carol Lewis: I think that gives it a little pop, yes, which is nice.

Director Bruce Mann: Have we landed on METRO yet?

Ms. Katherine Parker: Not yet. Not yet, that I have to move forward. I haven't heard any...

Chairperson Carol Lewis: But we've given them everything that they need.

Ms. Katherine Parker: Yes.

Chairperson Carol Lewis: So it's not on us.

Ms. Katherine Parker: It should be on their agenda. I was hoping it would have been this last month, that was our conversation, but I'll have to see. I don't think that it was, and I haven't talked to Director Fry. Usually he keeps me up to date as to the changes. November, we'll have an update on that. But yes, they were good with everything we provided as far as the fee structure is concerned. And also those annual letters will, of course, be under the new fee structure. So those will be the ask, that'll be a part of those letters as they go to each member entity. I think that's it for my piece. Any questions or comments or something you think we should add to what you're seeing?

Chairperson Carol Lewis: Anybody online have a question for Director Parker? Okay, thank you.

Ms. Katherine Parker: Alright.

Chairperson Carol Lewis: Alright. So, last but not least—Westpark. For everyone to know, we've been working on Westpark BRT for years. We learned that an MOU was signed between Harris County Toll Road Authority and someone in Fort Bend—not sure if it was Fort Bend Toll

Road or Fort Bend County—to use that right of way, for them to examine that right of way for HOV and express bus. Through that MOU, there would be no room for BRT, so we've got to have conversation of that. We've got a call, Ms. Parker and I have a call, I think, tomorrow morning or Thursday morning, I don't remember which one, with H-GAC because H-GAC, who submitted the request to TxDOT for the \$600,000 for the BRT, is not a part of the MOU. So, they're in conversation with Harris County Toll Road Authority. We need to be in conversation with them to see what happens next. And we are not sure what happens next but just wanted everyone to be aware of it. The way it affects, and one reason I hadn't answered, Director Gilbreath is working on the map that we put in the strategic plan. I had not gotten back with you because I wanted to make the circle to see if Westpark actually comes off as a BRT and if it goes in the same category at some potential future, which we'll never do if they actually do HOV. Anyway, that's the Westpark story. US 90A, H-GAC is in negotiation for the contract. So I'm always hopeful that the next time we meet I'll be able to tell you that the contract is underway and those who are on the steering committee will actually have been called for the first meeting hopefully by the time we get together next time. And Director Owen, you will be excited to know that both Jeff and I have become a little more excited about your idea about the Fort Bend Toll Road as opposed to 90A. I think you've actually... You've actually convinced us of that, and I've talked to H-GAC about it. And so they're going to make sure that it's on the list of alternatives that we're looking at when we do our Emerge.

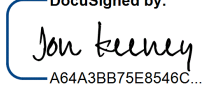
Director Allen Owen: Makes a lot of sense.

Chairperson Carol Lewis: Honestly, it does. I mean, when you think about not beating your head up against a wall, what is the shortest, easiest path, that might be it. Alright.

Director Allen Owen: You bet.

Chairperson Carol Lewis: Alright. So, that's basically it for me. Our next meeting is November 14th. Thanks, everyone, for your time today, everyone online. Great work today between everything we've talked about and those of you in the room, always appreciate your being here. So, thank you very much. With that, I will entertain a motion to adjourn. I think I can just adjourn without a motion; I think I finally read that. So we will now adjourn. It's 3:31 p.m. Thanks everyone.

ATTEST:

DocuSigned by:

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Jon Keeney, Secretary
Gulf Coast Rail District

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