

PROJECT AND PLANS FOR GULF COAST RAIL DISTRICT

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The Gulf Coast Rail District (GCRD) is a political subdivision of the State of Texas empowered to work with local governments and the railroad industry to develop rail facilities and rail facility improvement. Membership is comprised of Harris County, Fort Bend County, Galveston County, Waller County and the City of Houston. The GCRD will work to enhance the economic benefits of rail while improving regional quality of life, most notably through the addition of commuter and intercity passenger rail.

Following is a summary of current GCRD activities.

Commuter Rail

- The GCRD received \$2 million in American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funds for commuter rail preliminary engineering.
- The Gulf Coast Rail District has entered into a contract with Klotz Associates to begin work on development of a conceptual layout and service plan to assess requirements for implementing commuter rail service on the Union Pacific Railroad Eureka Subdivision.
- Fort Bend Bypass Study – The GCRD has initiated further analysis of the Fort Bend Bypass option proposed in the HRFS. Three corridors are under review for feasibility as a freight rail bypass to enable the use of existing rail along 90A for commuter rail operations.

Freight Rail

- Projects of Regional and National Significance – The GCRD is seeking designation of freight rail improvements identified in the HRFS as a Project of Regional and National Significance to secure federal funding.
 - 7 Rail Enhancement Projects (\$198 million)
 - Bridge 16 - Construct a second bridge across Buffalo Bayou on the East Belt
 - Belt Junction - Extend the second track on the West Belt Subdivision north from Freight Junction through Belt Junction
 - Englewood Yard - Expand Englewood Yard east to Dawes
 - Lafayette Subdivision – Dawes to Sheldon - Construct additional main track east from Dawes to Sheldon

- Bridge 5A and Galena Junction to Manchester Junction (PTR A) - Construct a second main track between Galena Junction and Manchester Junction. Construct a new bridge and second track over Buffalo Bayou
 - Sinco Junction to Deer Park Junction (PTR A) - Construct a second main track between Sinco Junction and Deer Park Junction
 - West Belt - Construct grade separations and close crossings on the West Belt Subdivision between Cullen Boulevard and Tower 26
- Economic Analysis Study – The GCRD sponsored a study of the costs to local shippers associated with rail congestion. The study found that regional shippers spend approximately \$429 million annually to mitigate the effects of rail congestion.
- \$138 million in annual benefits to shippers through cost reductions and efficiencies.
 - \$ 98 million net present value (NPV) of public benefits from mobility, safety and air quality improvements over 20 years.
 - \$ 73 million NPV of benefit to railroads in cost savings over 20 years.
 - The NPV of combined benefits to the public, railroads and private shippers over a 20-year timeline are estimated to be \$1.4 billion.
 - The total economic impact of the proposed improvements on the 8-county region is estimated to be \$227 million in increased business sales (output) per year, supporting roughly 610 permanent jobs and \$32.0 million in annual wages