



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
February 04th, 2021

Port of Victoria Secures Multi-Million Dollar Grant for Rail Expansion Project

Robby Burdge
Chairman

Byron Burris, II
Vice-Chairman

Donald Pozzi
Secretary

Elton Calhoun
Commissioner

John H. Gilley, IV
Commissioner

Sean Stibich
Executive Director

Duane G. Crocker
Legal Counsel

The Victoria County Navigation District, owner and operator of the Port of Victoria, has secured a \$6 million CARES Act Grant through the Economic Development Administration (EDA) for a proposed Rail Expansion Project. This grant, which requires a 50%, or \$3 million, match from the Port, will help fund the construction of a 1.9-mile rail loop and 2,000-foot ladder track at the Port's North Industrial Site. The Rail Expansion Project will connect three tracts of available land, totaling 115 acres, and provide current tenants with improved rail access. It will also allow the Port to accommodate the delivery of unit trains with 100+ railcars and provide additional capacity at the Port for railcar storage.



The new rail from the Rail Expansion Project is marked in red and available lease site is highlighted in green.

The benefits of a project of this magnitude have been discussed for over a decade, and securing this grant sees that idea come to fruition. The project will build upon the multi-modal commerce that exists at the Port's complex today, improve opportunities for current tenants, and make the Port more attractive to potential business development partners. When asked about what this grant means for the Port, Sean Stibich, Executive Director of the Navigation District, stated, "This project is a culmination of a years-long effort by the Port to expand our facilities and infrastructure. The goal of the Port has always been to improve the quality of life and economic opportunities of our citizens by increasing industry and commerce in our region. The Rail Expansion Project will help us meet that goal and give us a competitive advantage in attracting new businesses to our region."

This project has the potential to create hundreds of high-skilled and high-wage jobs in industrial and transportation related fields, which are more resilient to economic dislocations, such as the coronavirus pandemic. The entire region, especially the low-income Opportunity Zones, will see spin-off benefits in housing and small business opportunities when industry takes advantage of these improvements. The Rail Expansion Project will further fortify our region's critical infrastructure and existing modes of transportation, strengthening our foundation for economic development and resiliency to natural disasters.

This is the largest federal grant the Port has received to date and the first it has explicitly received for economic development purposes. This announcement, which comes on the heels of the Port entering into a Memorandum of Understanding with local government entities to strengthen industry and commerce in Victoria County, required backing from our congressional representatives. Senator John Cornyn and Congressman Michael Cloud wrote letters of support for the project, and when the EDA delayed the grant process, they were quick to make the calls needed to get the ball rolling again. Congressman Cloud's Office played a crucial role in aiding the Port in the application process, was persistent in breaking through the gridlock, and maintained the momentum in favor of the Port's receipt of the grant. We are extremely grateful to our elected officials for their support and collaboration in this effort, further highlighting the importance of these strong relationships in improving our local economy.

The Port of Victoria will begin the procurement process for the Railway Expansion Project in February 2021. Construction time is estimated at around nine months and is expected to be finished by the end of 2021. This project is one of many exciting improvements the Port of Victoria is making, and we are thankful for the possibilities this brings our community.

The Victoria County Navigation District was created in 1946 and established the Port of Victoria in 1968 upon completion of the 35-mile Victoria Barge Canal. With over 2,000 acres available for commercial and industrial development, its location within a Foreign Trade Zone and a Texas Enterprise Zone, access to rail and highway transportation, proximity to the airport, and a canal that meets Gulf Intracoastal Waterway parameters, the Port of Victoria is full of potential! To date, the Port has created over 500 jobs in the area and has an estimated annual impact of close to \$9.0 billion on the economy.

VICTORIA COUNTY
NAVIGATION DISTRICT
1934 FM 1432
Victoria, TX 77905
Ph: 361-570-8855
Fax: 361-570-8854
www.portofvictoria.com