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**HOUSTON-GALVESTON AREA COUNCIL**

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PO Box 22777 • 3555 Timmons Lane, Suite 120 • Houston, Texas 77227-2777 • 713/627-3200

May 19, 2009

Dear Rail Stakeholders:

The Federal Rail Administration (FRA) will be in the Houston-Galveston area on **Friday, May 29, 2009, 1:00 – 4:30 p.m.** as one stop in FRA's seven-city national tour to sponsor a workshop on development of a High-Speed and Intercity Passenger Rail network ([www.fra.dot.gov](http://www.fra.dot.gov)).

FRA Deputy Administrator Karen Rae will lead discussions on the proposed High Speed Rail Strategic Plan. This workshop focuses on the South Central and Gulf Coast Corridors and includes rail stakeholders in Texas, Arkansas and Louisiana. The event will be held in Ballroom A at the **Houston Airport Marriott at George Bush Intercontinental, 18700 John F. Kennedy Blvd., Houston, TX 77032** (Ph: 281-443-2310; Web: [www.marriott.com/iahap](http://www.marriott.com/iahap)).

The purpose of this workshop is to present information on FRA's national initiative, receive insights from a regional perspective, and seek feedback on future funding requests. The \$8 billion available in federal grant funds will further development across the U.S., including connections to the Houston-Galveston Region. Written comments can be submitted to FRA by June 5, 2009.

There is NO charge for this event. Please see the enclosed information from FRA Administrator Joseph Szabo for workshop registration and program details.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Alan C. Clark".

Alan C. Clark  
MPO Director

AC/ams

Enclosures



U.S. Department  
of Transportation

Administrator

1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE.  
Washington, D.C. 20590

**Federal Railroad  
Administration**

Dear Stakeholders:

Please join us for the Federal Railroad Administration's (FRA) ***High-Speed and Intercity Passenger Rail Workshops***, as we begin to implement President Obama's vision for developing a cohesive national intercity and high-speed passenger rail network. This vision was set forth in FRA's Strategic Plan for High-Speed Rail (HSR) announced by President Obama, Vice President Biden, and U.S. Transportation Secretary LaHood, and sent to Congress that same day on April 16, 2009.

The workshops will be led by FRA Deputy Administrator Karen Rae or myself. Through these workshops, FRA is reaching out to the rail community in seven regions across the country to seek your input on the Interim Guidance we are required to issue on or before June 17, 2009, for the \$8 billion in grant funds provided by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA) for the high-speed rail corridors program, intercity passenger rail grants, and congestion grants. The workshops will enable FRA to discuss the HSR Strategic Plan with key stakeholders such as state departments of transportation, regional planning authorities, metropolitan leaders, associations and labor groups (***under the ARRA, these workshops exclude the participation of lobbyists***). We seek your input not only to provide us with your regional vision of high-speed and intercity rail networks, but to enable stakeholders to focus on the critical factors that will make this program a success for generations to come.

The goal of the workshop is to take the first steps toward determining how we can best partner together to make the Strategic Plan a reality. During the workshop, you will have an opportunity to share experiences, raise concerns, provide insights, and make recommendations on several key issues and questions, as well as hear those of your colleagues and representatives from a regional perspective. The workshop schedule will include the following:

- |   |                   |
|---|-------------------|
| <b>1. Introduction</b>                                  | <b>10 minutes</b> |
| <b>2. Overview of FRA strategic plan and next steps</b> | <b>30 minutes</b> |
| <b>3. Amtrak presentation</b>                           | <b>15 minutes</b> |
| <b>4. Q &amp; A</b>                                     | <b>35 minutes</b> |
| <b>5. Regional presentation</b>                         | <b>30 minutes</b> |
| <b>6. Break</b>   | <b>15 minutes</b> |
| <b>7. Working group break-out</b>                       | <b>1 hour</b>     |
| <b>8. Wrap-up</b>                                       | <b>15 minutes</b> |

The workshops will be held 1:00 p.m. – 4:30 p.m. on the following dates and locations:

- **Southeast Corridor: Charlotte** **May 20**  
**Renaissance Charlotte Suites Hotel**  
2800 Coliseum Drive, Charlotte, NC 28205
- **Florida Corridor: Orlando** **May 21**  
**Marriott Orlando Airport**  
7499 Augusta National Drive, Orlando, FL 32822

- **Pacific Northwest Corridor: Seattle** **May 27**  
**Seattle Airport Marriott Hotel**  
 3201 South 176th Street, Seattle, WA 98188
- **California Corridor: Sacramento** **May 28**  
**Sacramento Marriott Rancho Cordova**  
 11211 Point East Drive, Rancho Cordova, CA 95742
- **South Central and Gulf Coast Corridor: Houston** **May 29**  
**Marriott Houston Airport**  
 18700 John F. Kennedy Blvd, Houston, TX 77032
- **Midwest Region: Chicago** **June 1**  
**Union Station, Union Gallery (off the Great Hall)**  
 210 South Canal Street, Chicago, IL 60606
- **Northeast Region: Philadelphia** **June 2**  
**The Westin Philadelphia**  
 99 South 17th Street at Liberty Place Philadelphia

Due to practical space and time constraints, I ask that you only plan to attend the event that is nearest to your location or proposed corridor. Please RSVP at the following Web site : <https://survey.deloitte.com/wsb.dll/5644/FRARegistration.htm>, and indicate which workshop you will be attending no later than 3 days before the scheduled workshop, after which confirmed attendees will receive additional details regarding the location and program. Those wishing to attend without a RSVP may do so as long as space is available. *(Despite the name survey in the URL, the website is not a survey, but rather a means to track the number of individuals who indicate that they will be attending particular workshop sessions.)*

In addition to participating in the workshop, I am inviting you and other members of the public to submit written comments to FRA by June 5, 2009, on issues that should be addressed in the Interim Guidance and specific recommendations on the criteria to be used in evaluating grant applications. FRA has created a public docket (Docket No. FRA-2009-0045) for the receipt of written comments. Please visit FRA's Web site at: [www.fra.dot.gov/us/content/2236](http://www.fra.dot.gov/us/content/2236) for information regarding the various ways in which you may submit comments to the public docket.

**Please note, additional sessions to aid states with the mechanics of applying for ARRA funds will be scheduled after these workshops, as will informational sessions for industry, labor, intergovernmental and other interested parties.**

I look forward to working with you over the coming months to ensure the grant programs funded by ARRA are implemented successfully.

Sincerely,

Joseph C. Szabo  
 Administrator

## George Bush Intercontinental/Houston Airport - IAH

### Maps & Transportation

<http://www.marriott.com/hotels/maps/travel/iahap-houston-airport-marriott-at-george-bush-intercontinental/>

### Houston Airport Marriott® at George Bush Intercontinental

18700 John. F. Kennedy Blvd. Houston, Texas 77032

- Phone: 1-281-443-2310
- Toll-free: 1-800-627-7468
- Driving Directions: Located within George Bush Intercontinental Airport. Take complimentary underground tram located one level below baggage claim in all terminals.
- Alternate transportation: Complimentary Underground Tram System
- Airport shuttle service, on request, complimentary

### Parking

- Complimentary on-site parking
- Valet parking, fee: 24 USD daily
- Limited parking for high top ADA vehicles is available just a few feet from the main entrance or valet.

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# VISION *for* HIGH-SPEED RAIL *in* AMERICA



## KEY

- Designated High-speed Rail Corridor
- Northeast Corridor (NEC)
- Other Passenger Rail Routes

(Alaska Railroad (Seward to Fairbanks/Eielson) not shown.)