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## **Rail realignment taskforce members announced**

On Oct. 8, 2015, Wilmington Mayor Bill Saffo announced the appointment of three new members to the Rail Realignment Taskforce, chaired by City of Wilmington Councilwoman Laura Padgett. The appointments are effective immediately and include:

- Marc Hamel, NC DOT Rail Division, Rail Project Manager
- Randy McIntyre, MCO Transport Operations
- Frank Williams, Brunswick County Commissioner

These members are joining the existing taskforce, consisting of:

- Councilmember Laura Padgett, Chair
- Beth Dawson, Vice Chair, New Hanover County Commission
- Councilmember Earl Sheridan
- Glenn Harbeck, Planning Director, City of Wilmington
- Laura Blair, Port of Wilmington
- John Cease, Clear Track Ahead
- Jim Van Derzee, CSX Rail

### **Background**

This summer, City of Wilmington Planning Director Glenn Harbeck gave a presentation to City Council about the potential advantages for economic development and community growth if the CSX rail line that currently runs through the city were to be relocated just across the Cape Fear River. According to Harbeck, moving the rail line would improve access by freight trains directly into the Port of Wilmington, enhance economic development in the region, ease traffic congestion on area streets, and, by repurposing the existing rail for a greenway and possible trolley line, incentivize major new investments in underutilized properties adjoining the rail.

On August 18, the Wilmington City Council passed a resolution in support of a feasibility study that would examine the possibility of moving the CSX rail line for direct access into the Port. The estimated cost of completing the feasibility study is \$300,000. The current proposal involves cost-sharing between the City of Wilmington, the Wilmington Urban Area Metropolitan Planning Organization and the North Carolina Department of Transportation, with each entity contributing \$100,000 toward the study. Visit [www.wilmingtonnc.gov/rail](http://www.wilmingtonnc.gov/rail) for more information.

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