

# MEDIA KIT

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## Blue Ridge Connector

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**Location:** 3315 White Sulphur Road, Gainesville, GA 30501

### Overview

- The Blue Ridge Connector inland rail terminal is a \$134 million project, including \$127 million funded by GPA and \$7 million in investment from Norfolk Southern.
  - The BRC is a forward-looking infrastructure investment supporting Northeast Georgia's rapid growth—six times the national average.
- Will help improve mobility, create jobs, and keep infrastructure aligned with demand.
  - With daily rail service, the Blue Ridge Connector helps customers build a stronger, more affordable supply chain.
- Direct rail connection to Port of Savannah strengthens the Gainesville area's manufacturing and logistics corridor.
  - The area is home to more than 330 manufacturers, expanding logistics capacity, and growth in food processing, automotive supplies, plastics, and life sciences
- The Blue Ridge Connector will provide 20 direct jobs.
  - Port activity supports more than 15,000 jobs in Hall County and more than 63,000 jobs in the nine-county region.
- Georgia Ports anticipates trade through the BRC to grow to 3-4 times that of the Appalachian Regional Port in Crandall, Ga. The ARP handled nearly 46,000 containers in 2025.
- The BRC will eliminate an estimated 52,000 long-haul truck trips in Year One, improving congestion, air quality, and roadway safety across Hall County and the Atlanta region.

### Positive Community Impact

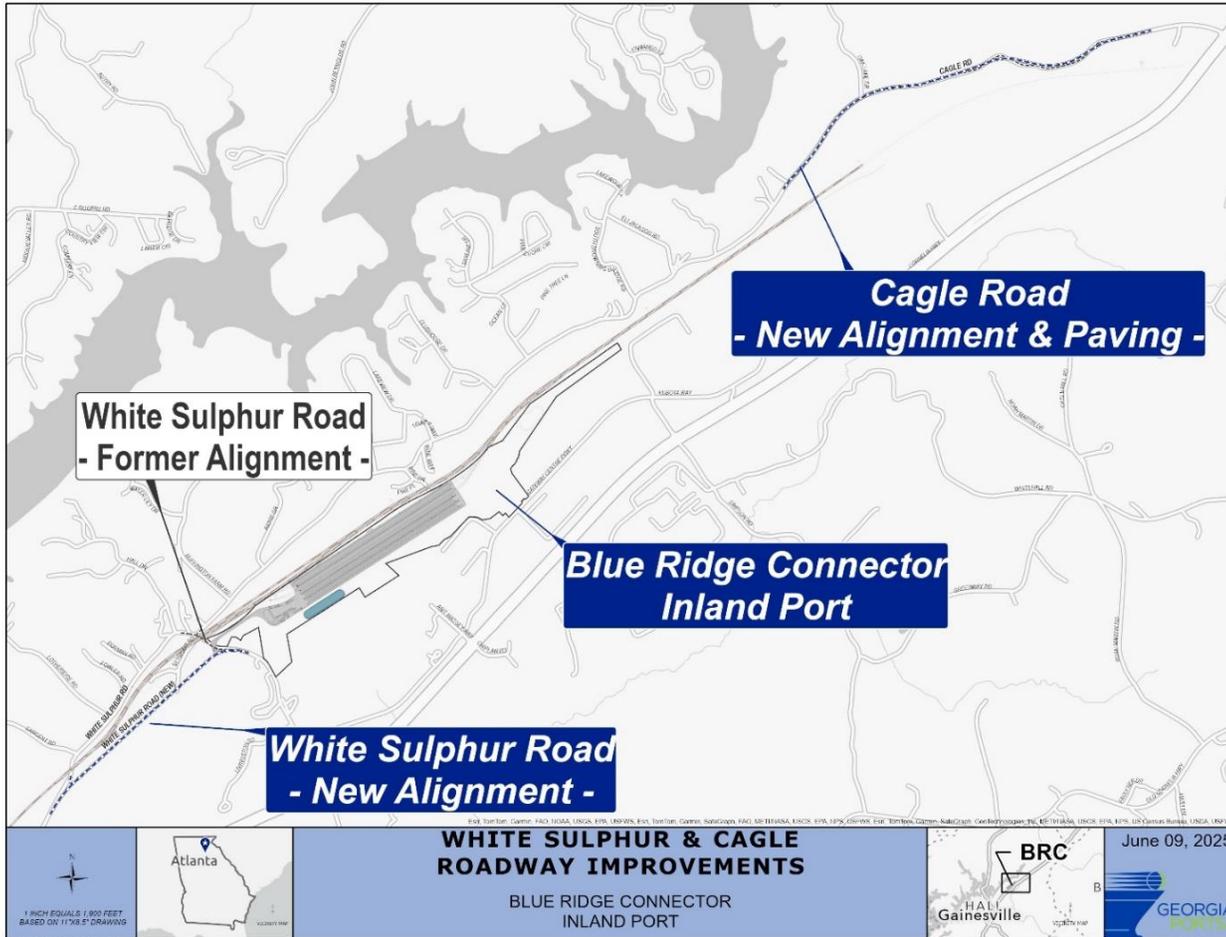
#### Improved Local Mobility

GPA invested **\$4.8 million** in Hall County road upgrades, including:

- Eliminating an at-grade rail crossing.
- Rerouting White Sulphur Road for uninterrupted emergency access.
- Resurfacing Cagle Road for smoother travel.

#### Quality of Life and Traffic Relief

- Takes long-haul trucks off roads.
- Safer commutes.
- Less wear and tear on local infrastructure.
- Better daily experience for families and businesses.
- GPA investment in White Sulphur Road and Cagle Road ensures emergency vehicles have uninterrupted access and avoids train delays for residents.



Local road improvements were completed in the summer of 2025, ensuring better traffic flow for residents long before the Blue Ridge Connector’s 2026 opening.

## **A Boost for Local Jobs and the Economy**

### **Long-Term Regional Planning / Smart Growth**

Blue Ridge Connector will support jobs, improve mobility, and ensure our infrastructure keeps pace with community needs.

### **Strengthening Industry and Supply Chain Resilience**

Direct rail option will support global competitiveness for heavy equipment, forest products and food producers.

- The BRC is a \$134 million project, including \$127 million of GPA funds and \$7 million in investment from Norfolk Southern.
- Will help support 9,600 Hall County jobs; 63,000 regional jobs, and catalyze new industrial growth.
- Nearly a dozen anchor customers committed among GPA’s current customers in the area.

## **Cleaner, More Sustainable Transportation**

### **Environmental savings in Year One:**

- Avoids 15 million truck miles from Georgia highways
- 22,510 metric tons of CO<sub>2</sub> eliminated
- Nearly 80% reduction in carbon emissions compared to truck-only transport

## **What Residents Can Expect When the Facility Opens**

- Soft opening: May 2026
- Full service: Spring 2026
- Daily train operations: Monday–Friday via Norfolk Southern’s existing rail network
- Container handling: Approximately 100 containers per day shifting from long-haul trucking to local short-haul routes
- Terminal capacity: Up to 200,000 containers annually at full build-out
- The project is currently 95% complete. (as of Jan. 16, 2026)

## **Project Facts**

### **Gainesville, GA Inland Port: [Blue Ridge Connector](#)**

- Project cost to date: \$134 Million
- Supported by a grant of up to \$46.9 million from the U.S. Maritime Administration (MARAD) to help cover construction costs, with the goal of transitioning long-haul trucks to rail.
- 104-acre site
- Three 6,000-foot working tracks.
- Opening with seven electric rubber-tire gantry cranes, expanding to 14 cranes as demand increases
- Only 50 miles from Atlanta

## **Project Timeline**

- Conceptual Planning: September 2017
- MARAD Grant Notification: June 2021 (INFRA 2021 for Northeast Georgia Inland Port)
- MARAD Grant Award: August 2023
  - Up to \$46.9 million to help cover construction costs, with the goal of transitioning long-haul trucks to rail.
- GPA Board Approves Construction: December 2023
- Construction Start: January 2024
- Rubber-tire Gantry Crane assembly and commissioning complete: March 2026
- Construction Complete: April 2026
- Soft opening: May 2026
- Full service: Spring 2026

## **GPA’s inland port network**

The inland port model means containers can be trucked for shorter distances and staged at the intermodal yard, where they are loaded onto trains moving hundreds of containers in a single trip.

The Blue Ridge Connector is the latest addition to GPA’s inland port network. Other terminals include:

**Appalachian Regional Port:** A joint effort of the state of Georgia, Murray County, the Georgia Ports Authority and CSX Transportation. The ARP inland rail terminal provides a powerful gateway to global markets. Each container moved by rail to and from the Appalachian Regional Port, in Crandall, Ga., offsets 710 truck miles.

**Bainbridge Terminal:** Owned and operated by the Georgia Ports Authority, Bainbridge is conveniently located on the Apalachicola-Chattahoochee-Flint Waterway, or Tri-Rivers System. The facility is equipped to handle a variety of bulk cargo via barge traffic, including nitrogen solution, gypsum, ammonium sulfate, urea, cottonseed and cypress bark mulch.

**Carolina Connector:** North Carolina importers and exporters tap into a faster supply chain through a direct rail connection between Savannah and Rocky Mount, NC, via the CSX Carolina Connector (CCX) intermodal terminal.

Features 7-day-a-week CSX rail departures with three-day transit time from vessel to cargo arrival. The CCX service delivers faster access to cargo, because Savannah is a first port of call from Panama Canal. Containers are ready for pick-up before they can be unloaded at other ports.

#### Advantages of GPA inland ports

- Extend Port of Savannah's reach
- Stage cargo on doorstep of end customer
- Shift long-haul truck routes to rail, easing highway traffic and reducing demands on roads
- Cut emissions through rail's greater fuel efficiency.
- Create new inland markets, acting as a draw for new private investment
- Free up capacity at marine terminals.
  - Provide additional container storage off the port.
  - Better serve export/import container flows to inland markets.
  - Allow GPA to handle more cargo at port.
  - Optimize Mason Mega Rail's 1 million-container capacity at the Port of Savannah.



**The seven electric rubber tire gantry cranes that will serve Georgia Ports' Blue Ridge Connector inland terminal have been assembled and tested. They will be fully commissioned by March 2026 after electrical service is completed to the facility near Gainesville, Ga. Find additional images [here](#). (Georgia Ports)**



Direct rail service via Norfolk Southern between Gainesville, Ga., and Savannah will provide a new option to a long-haul truck move of around 600 miles roundtrip, reducing highway congestion, cutting emissions and avoiding costly empty container moves to or from the coast. (Georgia Ports, Artist's rendering)

2<sup>ND</sup> DAY AVAILABILITY

## BLUE RIDGE CONNECTOR – OPEN 2026

GPA owned & operated • 18,000 ft of working track • 104 acres terminal area  
7 rubber-tire gantries initially; 14 at full capacity • 200,000 container capacity per year



# NE GA ECONOMIC IMPACT

**15,169**  
**JOBS**  
Hall County



**63,000+**  
**JOBS**  
Nine-County Region

## BLUE RIDGE CONNECTOR 20

New direct jobs at the BRC facility



SOURCE: FY2024 Economic Impact Study by the UGA Terry College of Business

## PROJECT DETAILS

- Links I-85/I-985 corridor to 324-mile intermodal freight rail service.
- **6 tracks** with approx. **18,000 feet** connecting with **Norfolk Southern**.
- Capacity of **200,000 lifts** per year on **104-acre** site.
- Creates **20** new direct jobs, **\$687M** in net public benefits.



# BLUE RIDGE CONNECTOR

Facility will link Gainesville, Georgia with the Port of Savannah's **39 global container ship services** that call each week.

Starting at five-day a week service, the Blue Ridge Connector will operate from **6 a.m. to 8 p.m.** Monday through Friday.



## BLUE RIDGE CONNECTOR BENEFITS

Customers will **no longer** need to truck containers through **Gainesville, Georgia** to the Port of Savannah.

**Shorter routes** to the inland port will become possible.

- Reduces **emissions**
- Cuts transportation **costs**
- Avoids traffic **congestion**
- Decreases **road maintenance**



# BLUE RIDGE CONNECTOR BENEFITS

- In first year, rail service will eliminate **52,000 truck trips** through Atlanta.
- In the future, volume could rise to **200,000 truck trips** saved.
- Reduces CO2 emissions by nearly 80% or **20,000 metric tons**, compared to an all-truck route in first year.



# BLUE RIDGE CONNECTOR BENEFITS

- Reduces truck use from **7 hours** to less than **30 minutes**.
- Approx. **46% of truck traffic** between NE GA and Savannah will use rail instead.
- Avoids **15 million** truck miles from Georgia highways



# BLUE RIDGE CONNECTOR BENEFITS

- GPA contributed **\$4.8M** to Hall County road improvements.
- Eliminating at-grade rail crossing.
- Re-routing White Sulfur Road and resurfacing Cagle Road.
- Ensures free access for Emergency vehicles and traffic disruptions.

