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## Port of Houston Planning \$74M Bayport Expansion

By Amy Wolff Sorter

HOUSTON-Continued growth and a \$250-million bond approved last November are allowing the Port of Houston Authority to step up its next phase of construction at the Bayport Container and Cruise Terminal. The commission has authorized spending up to \$74 million to build seven more docks and develop 385 acres of container storage behind the docks.

A request for proposals will be floated in one week. The plan is to award the construction contract by mid- to late spring. Work should begin later this year, with completion expected in one or two years.

Jim Edmonds, the port authority's chairman, tells GlobeSt.com that the new docks have always been part of the Bayport plan, but the port's growth has pushed up the time line and the need for the extra docks and container storage. He emphasizes that the passage of the \$250-million bond package helped to speed up expansion plans for the 1,000-acre Bayport terminal.

"We've been growing at around 10% to 12% per year and that's what's driving this," Edmonds adds. "We're building the port as quickly as we can to meet this demand."

Edmonds says logistics-oriented companies like the port because of its proximity to the marketplace. "A day's ride is the most economical way to move a container," he says. "You can get to other locations in Texas within a day with no trouble."

Eventually, the Bayport project will include intermodal capability. But in the near future, Edmonds says the authority will begin examining the entire Gulf of Mexico and determining where the next terminal should be. "We own 1,100 acres of land on Pelican Island in Galveston and that might be the logical place to go next," he says.

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