

COASTAL TEXAS PROTECTION & RESTORATION STUDY RELEASE

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS PLAN

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US Army Corps
of Engineers®



MISSION / PEOPLE / TEAMWORK



KEY MESSAGES / ADMINISTRATIVE PRIORITIES



- **Coastal Resiliency – Combating Extreme Weather**
 - This comprehensive project improves quality-of-life of local communities along the Texas coast by using structural and non-structural features to reduce the risk of storm surge and improve accessibility to damaged areas.
 - The recommended plan is adaptable to sea level rise and integrates engineering with nature elements to provide a more resilient coast and maintain more resilient communities.
 - Hurricane Ike required more than \$37 Billion in disaster response and recovery costs. This project would pay for itself in one large Ike-like storm event.
- **Environmental Justice and Equity**
 - There is an increasing frequency of extreme weather expected in the Greater Houston area and socially vulnerable communities are at greatest risk to exposure to natural disasters. This plan targets risk reductions to all communities along the coastline, including those economically disadvantaged.
 - Meaningful involvement of all sectors of the regional population led to proactive approaches for reducing flood risks and ameliorating economic disparities.
- **Jobs Creation**
 - Texas Coast is ranked No. 2 among the 50 U.S. states in waterborne commerce, handling 616.2 million tons of foreign and domestic cargo and generate \$449.6 billion of total economic value for the State of Texas and the nation. Affordable and reliable waterborne commerce provides economic benefits to all consumers and this project provides approximately \$60 billion dollars in national benefits.
 - By reducing flood risks and improving storm recovery this project reduces loss of jobs, loss of economic and tax revenues, reduces FEMA payouts and recovery costs, and promotes job growth.
 - Implementation of this project will involve innovative designs and strong partnerships with public, private sector and academia.
- **Ecosystem and Environmental Restoration**
 - The plan includes more than 6600 acres of aquatic ecosystem (wetlands) restoration and protection that provide natural defenses and combats coastal erosion to maintain adaptability to sea level rise.
 - Combining natural and man-made features provides multiple layers of robust defense.



COASTAL TX PROTECTION & RESTORATION STUDY



Situational Summary:

- The Coastal Texas Study is a six-year, \$20.63 million comprehensive study led by USACE in partnership with our non-federal cost-share sponsor, the Texas General Land Office (TXGLO). The purpose of the study was to identify feasible projects that reduce risks to public health and the economy, restore critical ecosystems, and advance coastal resiliency.
- The results of the engineering, economic and environmental examinations have resulted in a final plan that consists of multiple coastal storm risk management and ecosystem restoration features that together form a resilient Texas coast.
- The final version of the Study was released on 10 Sept 21. The NOA was published in the Federal Register and the final documents placed on SWG's public-facing website, which could invite public scrutiny/additional media interview requests.
- Chief's Report signed on 16 Sep 21.
- **POTENTIAL QUESTION:** The estimated first costs of the study have increased from **\$26.2 billion to \$28.9 billion**. Cost increases are due to:
 - Our estimates underwent a formal certification process that highlighted additional funds needed for:
 - Account for costs required to identify and reduce residual risks during design
 - Account for cost of dewatering during construction of the artificial islands housing Bolivar Roads floating sector gates
 - Increases in contingency to account for cost of materials in the future (inflation)

Communication Posture: Active

RTQ Responsibility: SWG PAO in coordination with TX GLO & GCPD*

Communication Objectives:

1

Be consistent in USACE messaging and responsibilities while countering false information in media about the project: Work with our non-Federal sponsors (GLO and now GCPD) to ensure our messaging is consistent, and the responsibilities for the financial aspects of the project are outlined clearly for the public, while providing accurate information to media queries.

2

Effectively show USACE followed all applicable processes for project: To combat public perception and misinformation, we must continue to be consistent and clear in the steps we took to allow for public comments throughout the study phase of the project and the path forward during future public outreach events.

3

Explain the CSRSM benefits that will be provided by the project along the Texas Coast : As we execute similar projects along the Texas Coast, it is important to educate the public on the long-range safety, strategic and economic benefits associated with building the Coastal Texas, in conjunction with S2G and Ecosystem Restoration projects up and down the Texas Coast.

* GCPD – Gulf Coast Protection District



USACE COMMUNICATION PLAN: Coastal Texas

Last revised: 9.10, 2021



Define Assignment / Challenge:

In collaboration with study sponsor, present study findings to key stakeholders regarding the Coastal TX Protection & Restoration Study (CTPRS), which identifies and recommends a comprehensive strategy for reducing coastal storm flood risk through structural and nonstructural measures and identifies areas that will benefit from ecosystem restoration efforts. Inform the public of the process and moving toward Congressional Authorization and funding of the Coastal Texas Resiliency Improvement Plan (CTRiP is the new name now that the study has been completed).

Key Stakeholders:

Navigation Districts	Environmental Orgs
Federal Agencies	Tribal Government
City, County, State Govt.	The Impacted Public
Industrial Complexes	Media
Members of Congress	NGOs

Communication Goals:

- Educate public about first costs versus fully funded costs
- Introduce public to GCPD and its role as new cost-share sponsor; other state & local gov't agencies that are partnering for project
- Increase awareness & enhance public understanding of **coastal storm risks and ecosystem restoration actions** along TX Coast.
- Present structural & non-structural risk reduction measures designed to reduce risks.
- Inform & educate public on long-term resolutions & findings of CTPRS / CTRiP
- Maintain & cultivate relationships in providing information to audiences, demonstrate commitment to continue to reduce storm risk to residents along TX Coast.
- **Inform public on** next steps in process using different platforms and products to routinely inform stakeholders.

One Voice Message for project:

- The Texas Coast is a complex and vulnerable system that provides substantial value to the nation. Vital resources critical to the economic and environmental welfare of the nation are at risk from coastal storm damage.
- The Coastal Texas Protection and Restoration Study identifies critical data needs and recommends a comprehensive strategy for reducing coastal storm flood risk through structural and nonstructural measures and identifies areas that will benefit from ecosystem restoration efforts.
- USACE, GLO and GCPD are working together with local, state, and federal agencies and the general public to achieve a shared vision that will continue to support a vibrant economy, cultivate a resilient community and encourage a healthy ecosystem.
- We have delivered a technically sound, cost-effective, comprehensive plan that is socially and environmentally satisfactory.
- Communicate "portfolio" of interlocking FRM & CSRM & Ecosystem Restoration projects being executed by SWG (S2G, interior drainage projects, Jefferson County, Natural and Nature-based Features, etc.)

Project Milestones:

- Sept 2021 Chief's Report Signed
- Nov 2021 ASA signs ROD (Record of Decision)
- Summer 2022 Submit to Congress

NOTE:

- Outreach/communication/synchronization with new GCPD leadership and staff has begun
 USACE, GCPD & GLO Public Affairs will work together to:
- Approve all items to be published or posted
 - Coordinate/plan/produce messaging and other products for public consumption
 - Coordinate/plan/produce public outreach/speaking events
 - Coordinate/plan/execute all media events

Communication Products/Objectives:

- **Website**
 - Update language to indicate study phase is complete
 - Clarify next steps
- **Infographs / Renderings**
 - Visually explain project
 - Enviro. benefits; one for overall project benefits
- **Select-Media engagements**
 - Explain final study, actions, benefits
 - Clarify next steps
 - Correct misinformation
 - Highlight project features
- **National/Int'l conferences and speaking engagements**
 - Seek out opportunities to tout plan and upcoming design competition
- **GIS StoryMap**
 - Updated as needed
- **News releases**
 - Announce final report
 - Releases will also inform public as plan goes through approval process
- **Elected Officials Email** (provided prior to public release of study)
- **[FUTURE] Live Cameras/Drone Flight Videos (once project starts)**
 - Explain project features
 - Inform public/media/stakeholders
 - Live cameras at project sites to record in real-time as project comes to fruition
 - Technical Webinars (as needed to provide new/updated information, counter misinformation)
 - Drone flights videos (to provide updates on project progress)

***** Webpage Updates and Social Media posts to align with all communication activities/projects *****



Action Matrix: Roles and Responsibilities



HQ USACE

Brief to Mr. Leach

- Mr. Bush and Mr. Leach/Ms. Colosimo
- 20 Sep 2021

Discussion with Mr. Pinkham

- MG Graham/Mr. Lee and Mr. Pinkham
- 20 Sep 2021

Public Notice of Chief of Engineering Signing

- Video release
- Public notice
- 20 Sep 2021

Notification to Administration

- LTG Spellmon notification with ASA(CW)
- 20 Sep 2021
- Briefing upon request

SWD USACE

Mega Study Panel (complete)

- Summer 2020

Exemption Request

- Senior Leader Panel and MG Graham approval 21 Jan 2021 (complete)

Agency Decision Milestone Meeting – 28 Jan 2021 (complete)

Site Visits (complete)

- MG Graham; 18-20 May 2021
- Mr. Leach, Mr. Lee and Mr. Bush; June 2021

Distribute HQ USACE Public Notice

- SWD and SWG PA further distribute Public Notice; 20 Sep 2021

Briefing to Mr. Pinkham

- BG Beck/Mr. Smith and Mr. Pinkham; 29 Sep

Briefing To Senator Cornyn

- BG Beck/Mr. Smith; 28 Sep

Briefing to Senator Boozman (Senate Committee on Appropriations and Environment and Public Works)

- BG Beck/Mr. Smith; 28 Sep

Briefing to Senator Cruz

- BG Beck/Mr. Smith; 30 Sep

Briefing to Congressman Weber (Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure)

- BG Beck/Mr. Smith; 30 Sep

Briefing to Congressman Babin (Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure)

- BG Beck/Mr. Smith; 30 Sep

Briefing to Congresswoman Granger (House Committee on Appropriations)



Action Matrix: Roles and Responsibilities*

DISTRICT and SPONSOR

PRODUCTS

Ongoing - E-mail Blasts & Social Media Posts [as needed]

- Clarify/notify of next steps
- Provide updates
- Correct misinformation

Project Videos/FB Live Chats/Webinars

- Explain project features
- Inform public/media/stakeholders
- Project features website & StoryMaps updated

TBD

- Ecosystem restoration benefits for beaches & dunes w/graphic renderings
- CSR & FRM – working together to protect the TX coast w/graphic renderings of CTRiP & S2G side-by-side
- The appropriations process & current costs vs actual costs w/graphic renderings of cost of bread from 2018 to today

OUTREACH TIMELINE

Continuous

- Congressional Inquiries
- Media Inquiries

10 Sept 21

- NOA – Final EIS/Feasibility report been posted
 - Study Process w/graphic renderings of process to date
 - Next step in the process

23 Sep 21

- CODEL Staff Briefings

EVENT HIGHLIGHTS

Mile-by-Mile Targeted Outreach meetings for impacted publics: (TBD - During PED)

- Engage public & answer questions

FORMAT:

- Opening remarks by USACE/GCOD.GLO and brief PED process
- Open house with information stations (posters, exhibits, maps and SMEs to explain/answer questions)

LOCATIONS:

- Galveston Island, Clear Lake/Houston, Bolivar Peninsula/High Island, South Padre Island/Port Isabel

PRODUCTS:

- Update study FB page, Twitter, Email Blasts with dates/times/locations
- Posters, Exhibits & Maps (CTRiP traveling “booth” with infographics, 3D renderings, roll plots, TV to play video, etc.)
- Registration and comment documents
- Other informational handouts as appropriate

Formal NEPA Public Meetings (TBD – During PED)

- Engage public & provide opportunity for the public to offer public comment

FORMAT:

- Open house with information stations (posters, exhibits, maps and SMEs to explain/answer questions)
- Updated video (play continuously during open house portion)
- Formal USACE & GCPD presentation
- Formal public comment period (public provided three minutes to offer verbal comment)

LOCATIONS:

- Galveston Island, Clear Lake/Houston, Port Lavaca, Bolivar Peninsula/High Island, Corpus Christi, South Padre Island/Port Isabel, other locations TBD

PRODUCTS:

- Update study FB page, Twitter, Email Blasts with dates/times/locations
- Posters, Exhibits & Maps (CTRiP traveling “booth” with infographics, 3D renderings, roll plots, TV to play video, etc.)
- Registration and comment documents
- Other informational handouts as appropriate

***SWG PA & GCPD will take the lead on all communications at this point, with input from GLO**



STRATEGIC ENGAGEMENT PLANNING



Communication Timeline

Website

- Updates posted to website: <http://coastalstudy.texas.gov/>

GIS-based Storyboards

- Hub
- Storm Modeling
- Environmental Impacts & Mitigation
- Ecosystem Restoration
- Real Estate
- Bolivar Roads Gates
- Ring Barrier
- Project Management
- Clear Lake, & Dickinson Bay
- Social Vulnerability Index
- Economics
- Updated Costs

Public Outreach - Dates/times/locations all TBD

- **Community Working Groups w/GCPD and TX GLO:** Upon request
- **Other Groups:** Upon request
- **Mile-by-mile:** Targeted outreach meetings during PED for impacted publics

Public Meetings: As REQUIRED during PED

- Live Opening with pre-recorded presentation and facilitated by Comms Team AE firm
- 6 Meetings total (3 days – 2x per day (lunch/post-dinner) with court reporter transcription

Comments

- *NOA 30-day public review period (10 Sept – 12 Oct 2021)
- Notifications via social media/website announcements, newspaper ads, and postcard mailouts
- Comments can be rec'd via Public Meeting call-ins, email via study mailbox, USPS

*This is a “review” period only; however, we have provided an email address and mailing address with the expectation that the public will still want to provide inputs on the final study. These inputs will be collected and information used to help shape future messaging/outreach events.





KEY THEMES AND MESSAGES



- **Public Safety is our main priority**
 - Life safety, economic success and quality-of-life of local communities along the Texas coast is of the utmost importance.
 - USACE and TX General Land Office completed a study that develops a comprehensive characterization of the entire Texas coast that:
 - examined the feasibility of coastal storm damage risk management and ecosystem restoration projects coast-wide and
 - investigated alternatives for reducing storm surge and flooding vulnerabilities along the Texas coast
 - Increased the resiliency of communities to natural disasters
- **The study is a prime example of outstanding partnership among local, state and federal governments**
 - Local, state and federal agencies worked together to achieve a shared vision that supports a vibrant Texas economy, cultivates a resilient community that withstands coastal storm surge, and builds a strong, sustainable and healthy natural ecosystem along the Texas coast.
- **Ongoing public participation helped refine robust regional alternatives.**
 - Residents were regularly informed and deeply involved throughout the study and will continue to be a part of the process as we move into PED.
 - Our strong federal-state partnership enabled the Study Team to complete the study as expeditiously as possible and deliver a recommended plan to Congress for possible authorization and funding.
 - BRIDGE TO MESSAGING tying in CTS with S2G and other CSR & FRM projects occurring.
- **Environmental stewardship is one of our core tenants**
 - The recommended plan presented to Congress resulted from extensive planning, engineering, design, environmental analysis and public participation, which occurred throughout the study process. This cooperative approach with all stakeholders will continue as we move into the PED stage.
 - The PED process will continue to incorporate potential environmental impact analysis and, where appropriate, investigate reasonable alternatives to design features based on public feedback.



KEY THEMES AND MESSAGES



- **Environmental stewardship is one of our core tenants (cont.)**
 - A multiple-lines-of-defense strategy was used to formulate the plan, including engineering with natural and nature-based options.
 - BRIDGE TO S2G, RE, FRM to show the system-within-a-system approach
 - Environmental restoration opportunities were maximized throughout the study and will continue to fill-the-gaps unaddressed by other entities
 - BRIDGE TO THE PLAN'S mitigation program that builds wetlands, oyster beds, marshes, bird islands, etc.
- **We are leveraging national and int'l SMEs to innovate as we move into PED.**
 - We are currently using existing data and analyses including preliminary storm surge modeling, engineering design, economic values from I-STORM, as well as storm surge data from FEMA which has helped to speed up the process tremendously.
 - We are also leveraging the depth and breadth of the Corps of Engineers to provide quality engineering solutions. We have a highly skilled team of engineers, scientists and contractors dedicated to the project.
 - BRIDGE TO INFO ABOUT Int'l Design Competition once available



PROJECT Q&A



COST INCREASES

Q. Why have the costs for the project increased from \$26.2 billion to \$28.9 billion?

A. Our estimates underwent a formal certification process that highlighted additional funds needed for:

- Account for costs required to identify and reduce residual risks during design
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- Increases in contingency to account for cost of materials in the future (inflation)

NEXT STEPS IN THE PROCESS

Q. What is the next step in the process for the Coastal Texas Study?

A. Study Team released the Final Feasibility Report and Final Environmental Impact Statement on 10 Sept. 2021 for a 30-day public viewing period through a Notice of Availability (NOA) in the Federal Register. This NOA does not solicit further public review and comment. However, tiered NEPA affords opportunities for public review and solicitation of comments in future phases, as certain measures proposed in the Recommended Plan will require additional environmental assessment. USACE, GCPD and GLO remain committed to keeping Texans apprised of the study's progress through the approval and appropriations process, should Congress authorize and appropriate funding for the Coastal Texas Project.

Q. Where can I get more information about the Study and/or find copies of the documents?

A. For more information about the Coastal Texas Study, visit the study website at: <https://coastalstudy.texas.gov/>. To review the final study documents, visit the SWG website at: <https://www.swg.usace.army.mil/Business-With-Us/Planning-Environmental-Branch/Documents-for-Public-Review/>.