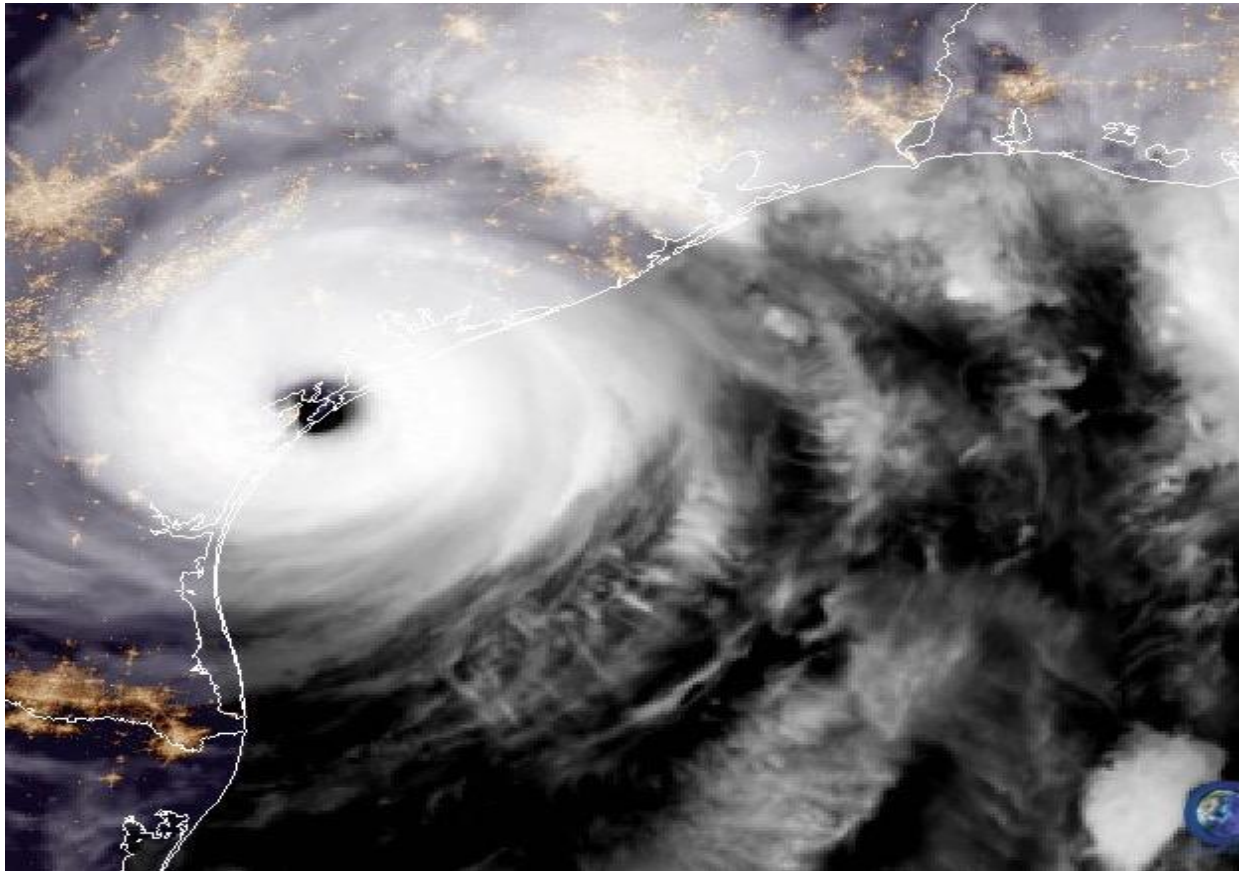


Regional Resilience Partnership (RRP) Strategic Plan Texas Coastal Bend 2022-2032



Regional Resilience Partnership Strategic Plan 2022-2032

The Regional Resilience Partnership of the South Texas Coastal Bend (RRP) is administered by the Coastal Bend Council of Governments (CBCOG) and the Harte Research Institute for Gulf of Mexico Studies (HRI) at Texas A&M University Corpus Christi (TAMUCC). Following the devastation caused by Hurricane Harvey, the partnership was founded in 2019 with the objective to build the capacity of Coastal Bend and partner communities to mitigate disaster risk. RRP works with local officials and stakeholders to help bring communities from recovery to holistic resilience. RRP focuses on the 11 counties encompassing the South Texas Coastal Bend region, though we encourage partnerships in neighboring regions, as well as throughout Texas, the Gulf of Mexico and beyond.

This Strategic Plan describes the action items the RRP team plans to undertake during the next ten years to achieve program goals and objectives. The goals, objectives, and action items set forth in this ten-year strategic plan describe an integrated approach to disaster risk management that includes building and implementing targeted mitigation activities, strategic partnerships and funding strategies, community outreach, technical assistance, training, and capacity-building. Appendix I of this ‘living’ document further lists current projects and partner communities. Revision and update of this plan will occur through periodic review of accomplishments and assessment of needs in a changing environment.

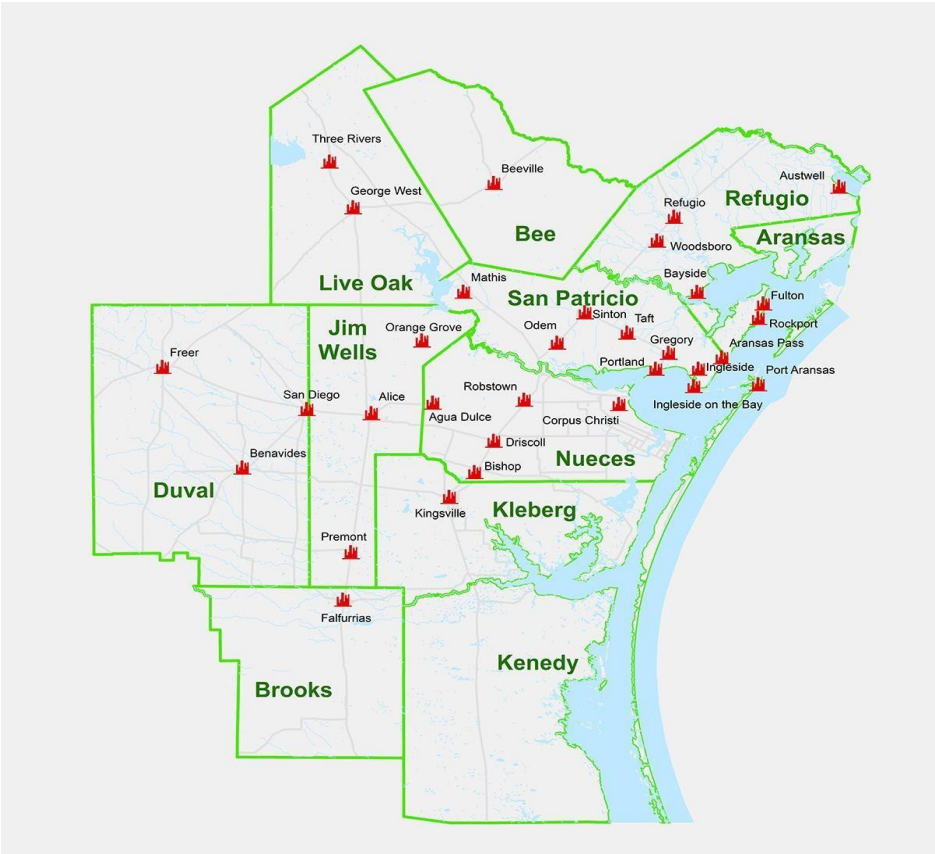


Figure 1: Counties of the South Texas Coastal Bend Region

INTRODUCTION

The goals and objectives of RRP, which are also described in this strategic plan, originated from the Memorandum of Understanding establishing a joint project between Texas A&M University Corpus Christi and the Coastal Bend Council of Governments in 2019. This agreement provided the ability to develop and implement a Regional Resilience Partnership that would “work with researchers, additional experts, local officials, business partners, non-profits, community organizations, and students in bringing communities from disaster recovery to disaster risk mitigation and holistic resilience.” RRP was established with specific Priority Actions in mind, which will enable RRP to achieve its vision and mission.

RRP Priority Actions

1. Provide scientific and technical advice, training and capacity-building information.
2. Promote long- and short-term interchange of researchers and local officials and experts for investigating, training, and teaching.
3. Simplify the access and exchange of information required by the institutions interested in disaster risk mitigation and resilience information.
4. Aid Coastal Bend communities in identifying and prioritizing risk.
5. Build strategic partnerships and funding strategies to mitigate risk.
6. Provide the necessary resources, within the limits of HRI and CBCOG, with the purpose of negotiating additional agreements for the development of programs or projects in specific areas of shared interests, their respective budgets and other relevant aspects.
7. Build and implement a sustainable financing model for the Regional Resilience Partnership of the South Texas Coastal Bend.

Vision

Coastal Bend and partner communities are resilient to natural and manmade disaster events and environmental change and are leaders in innovative strategies to mitigate disaster risk.

Mission

RRP brings a holistic approach to community resilience and capacity building, creating a foundation for robust economies, infrastructure, and ecosystems as well as strong and healthy social systems.

DEFINING COMMUNITY RESILIENCE

Resilience is the ability to ‘bounce-forward’ from a shock or stressor, meaning communities come back from a disaster stronger and better positioned for the future. This is achieved through a collective ability to diversify and build on community strengths while establishing safeguards to mitigate disaster impacts. Building resilience goes beyond physical aspects, such as securing infrastructure, to creating stronger economies and social systems and providing access to and expertise in technologies that enable self-healing (e.g., smart grid systems). This is a critical point for small and rural communities that do not have the resources and capacity needed to pursue such goals. RRP will especially focus on partnering with these areas.

STRATEGIC CHARACTERISTICS

RRP Priority Communities & Actions

RRP prioritizes capacity building in smaller communities in the Coastal Bend, based on population size, though the partnership may also engage in projects with larger communities, particularly where strong relationships and capacity exist. RRP pursues and executes funded projects with community partners. A longer-term goal is to also provide grants administration services to communities that lack such capacity. RRP strives toward multijurisdictional projects, building partnerships between communities to leverage diverse strengths. RRP is consistently assessing existing data related to mitigation and resilience, identifying gaps, and looking for opportunities to address those gaps. As part of the partnership between the COG, TAMUCC and local partners, we can access a strong pool of expertise and exchange timely, relevant and actionable information between stakeholders. Additionally, TAMUCC students can be considered a resource in partnership-building and project implementation.

Stakeholders: RRP serves the communities in the South Texas Coastal Bend region. Examples of stakeholders RRP typically collaborates with include:

- Local government
- Chambers of Commerce
- Economic Development Corporations
- Independent School Districts
- Non-profit organizations
- Churches
- Public health entities
- Industry partners
- Higher Education
- Workforce
- State agencies and federal partners

For a list of current projects and partners, see Appendix I.

RRP Limitations

RRP is a regional collaboration - not statewide nor nationwide - specifically for the South Texas Coastal Bend region. The partnership may coordinate with other Texas or Gulf of Mexico regions, but our mission is within the 11-county area and our work must tie back to it. RRP team members are considered partners - not consultants - to communities in the Coastal Bend. Projects are owned by the communities; we are a resource to help communities pursue, develop, implement and evaluate those projects. RRP is not an emergency response agency and does not conduct emergency response services; rather we focus on longer-term recovery

projects and risk mitigation. Where applicable, we also help communities develop and coordinate projects with relevant response and short-term recovery agencies. RRP does not have legal status by itself but is held to the legal standards of its partner organizations. The partnership is apolitical, focusing on working with communities to help establish priorities and co-develop actionable strategies around those priorities.

RRP Governance

To help measure our success, we will seek experts and peers to serve on an advisory group, estimated to be established by 2024. This expert group will help define the evolving mission of RRP, create strategic alliances and will help to identify certain positions in RRP that should be filled to organize and advance current and future projects, such as: Community liaison; Communications specialist; Funding strategist (helping communities find funding resources); Funding developer (private sector funding and philanthropy); Data and information specialist; and GIS specialist. The advisory group will also help RRP evaluate its success.

STRATEGIC GOALS & ACTIONS

Over the next ten years RRP will focus on advancing six goals and associated outcomes and actions, which will strengthen the partnership’s approach toward achieving its vision and mission:

- Goal 1: Establish consistent, two-way communication with communities
- Goal 2: Understand and define resilience at the local level with local data
- Goal 3: Conduct a needs assessment in each Coastal Bend County
- Goal 4: Create, implement and/or inform data-driven strategies for resilience
- Goal 5: Build local capacity to strengthen resilience and mitigate risk
- Goal 6: Build RRP capacity for long-term partnerships with local communities

The following summarizes RRP goals, outcomes and actions, and the current status of each. These goals, outcomes and action advance RRP Priority Actions, and will be assessed and updated in this living strategic plan on an annual basis.

Goal 1: Establish consistent, two-way communication with communities
<i>Outcome:</i> A more inclusive network is created by establishing and maintaining relationships and points of contacts in each Coastal Bend county (continuous)
<u>Action Item</u>
1. Identify local officials and/or stakeholders in each county that can serve as a point of contact (POC) and hold initial meeting. Where appropriate, also establish POCs at the municipal level. Build and maintain Access Contacts Database (Y1).
2. Check in by phone or in-person quarterly to assess priorities, challenges and opportunities, and capture input for needs assessments (Goal 3)
3. Provide consistent outreach - Curate and distribute weekly RRP Listserv with training and funding opportunities and social media

4. Share local wins and use to track success (eval) - Record local wins through excel sheet - Send out biannual RRP newsletter to all to update progress; include in presentations - Provide consistent social media updates

Emerging/Completed Products:

Constant Contacts database

Goal 2: Understand and define resilience at the local level with local data

Outcome: Resilience is defined at the County and, where possible, sub-county level, and local data are identified that could help in assessment (short-term: 1-2 years)

Action Item

1. Work with POCs to define what resilience means to each
2. Work with POCs to identify additional local information and data sets that could be used in further assessment, as well as gaps
3. Once local definitions are obtained, work with RRP Team to revise the regional definition in this plan

Emerging/Completed Products:**Goal 3: Continually assess needs in each Coastal Bend County, starting with regional approach – what do they need to get to their resilient future?**

Outcome: Priority needs to mitigate or recovery from disasters are identified in each county, as are challenges, capacity, data and funding required to address needs (mid-term: 3-5 years)

Action Item

1. Assessment: based on local definition of resilience, review local plans and assessments (e.g., HMPs, Comprehensive Plans, Floodplain Plans, Economic Development Plans, AgriLife and/or Sea Grant assessments) and summarize potential high priority needs in a Local Hazards & Risk Summary
1. Use GeoRED – and other tools - in collaboration with communities to identify needs– locally and regionally
2. Iteratively update and where needed expand needs assessments

Emerging/Completed Products:**Goal 4: Create, implement and/or inform data-driven strategies for resilience and risk mitigation**

Outcome: Resilience and risk-mitigation at the local level is strengthened while addressing high priority needs (mid-term, long-term: 3-5 years, 5-10 years)

Action Item

2. Write action plan to advance priority actions re: needs assessments, help tie to specific funding & partners that can help move the needle on local assessments
3. Facilitate discussions with stakeholders – determine if solutions should be handled local, regional state level
4. Partner with local communities to advance high priority items included in the [Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy \(CEDS\)](#) through tailored projects

Emerging/Completed Products:

Goal 5: Build local capacity to strengthen resilience and mitigate risk
<i>Outcome:</i> Resilience building knowledge and skillsets are strengthened, including through early-career and youth mentorship and across civil society?? (mid-term, long-term: 3-5 years, 5-10 years)
<u>Action Item</u>
1. Create and implement RRP Leadership Training network/program to build the next generation of resilience leaders (interns undergrads too)
2. Training in resilience and risk mitigation
3. Creative civic stakeholder engagement
<i>Emerging/Completed Products:</i>

Goal 6: Build RRP capacity for long-term partnerships with local communities
<i>Outcome:</i> RRP capacity to assist communities in resilience building, including through shared capacity for, e.g., grants administration and procurement, as well as technical skills like floodplain management and GIS, is secured (long-term: 5-10 years)
<u>Action Item</u>
1. Ensure enough capacity within team, ensuring appropriate contacts responsibility across the team (Goal 1) and streamlining efforts (Goal 3)
2. Secure additional team member with floodplain expertise to provide services to rural/small capacity communities
3. Secure additional team member with GIS expertise to provide services to rural/small capacity communities and to continue to expand/maintain/update GeoRED
4. In partnership with local jurisdictions, create and implement long-term funding strategy for sustained RRP collaboration, e.g., through a mix of grant funds and local fees
5. Secure XX additional team members to assist rural/small capacity communities with grant writing, administration and procurement
<i>Emerging/Completed Products:</i>

RRP AND THE COASTAL BEND: 10 YEARS AND BEYOND

The RRP Team will use this strategic plan as a guiding document over the next ten years, to build its program of work and to strengthen resilience in partnership with Coastal Bend communities. An evaluation framework also is being completed and will be added to this document as a second appendix. Evaluation will occur biannually to assess progress, challenges, opportunities and to update Strategic Goals & Actions as needed. As well, the partnerships RRP builds will be examined to ensure gaps are addressed and opportunities are opened to advance Strategic Actions, including by partnering with experts outside the Coastal Bend or, potentially, Texas. As the Coastal Bend continues to grow in significance as a major hub for the Gulf and nation, RRP will use this plan to help ensure that growth is smart, sustainable and resilient.

APPENDIX I: RRP PROJECTS

<i>Project</i>	<i>Status</i>	<i>Partners</i>
CEDS	Drafting complete, implementation ongoing	11 counties, and their jurisdictions, in the Coastal Bend
Carbon Management Equity Dialogues	In progress	Corpus Christi Metropolitan Statistical Area and additional interested communities
Regional Partnerships for Wastewater	In progress	11 counties, and their jurisdictions, in the Coastal Bend, with extension to Nueces River Basin communities
GeoRED	In progress	7 Coastal Bend Counties: Aransas, Bee, Kleberg, Kenedy, Nueces, San Patricio, Refugio
Resilience Training	Complete	Any local official or stakeholder in the Coastal Bend, or relevant to resilience/mitigation
CDBG-MIT Vulnerability Mapping	Complete	Harvey impacted areas, as designated by GLO

Additional information may be found on the RRP website at: <https://coastalbendcog.org/regional-resilience-partnership>