



COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT MITIGATION PROGRAM

Virtual Public Meeting 2 (09/19/20) Questions & Answers

The Texas General Land Office (GLO) has established a statewide competition for federal funds allocated to Texas following Hurricane Harvey. Houston Public Works hosted a virtual public engagement meeting for flood mitigation project proposals under the Community Development Block Grant Mitigation Program on **Saturday, September 19th at 10:30 am**.

The purpose of this meeting was to inform residents about the following applications for project funding the City plans to submit:

- Huntington Village Area
- Port Area
- Kashmere Gardens Area
- Fifth Ward Area
- Sunnyside Area
- Alief Parks Area
- Braeburn Glen Area

The applications are focused on where flooding threatens homes that meet the State application criteria.

The meeting began with a brief presentation about the program, followed by a moderated Q&A session with the Project Team members. The presentation can be found on the project website at this link: <https://www.publicworks.houstontx.gov/houston-drainage-studies>. Residents were able to submit questions and comments during the Q&A session. The questions were answered verbally by the Presenter. The questions and answers from the session are below:

Question: What is the proposed timeline for the project involving Gregg St. (north to south) Starting at ??? moving south to Buffalo Bayou. Will it be done incrementally starting in the north?

- **Answer:** That is a question in reference to the Fifth Ward project. So, these projects have not yet gone into design. The detailed schedule and the sequencing of work will come out of the design process. The design is one of the things for which Houston Public Works (HPW) is requesting funding. If the application is approved, then HPW will get the funding to go into design. Staff have worked with consultants to get them to outline at least a broad sequence of how things could be done to get a sense of what the timeline from start to finish to complete a project will be:
- The consultant has said that once the design is finished and all the procurement and everything is done, HPW is looking at about a 24-month construction schedule. That [schedule] will obviously be phased and will be established during the final design process. It

will definitely be phased so it does not disrupt traffic on all of Gregg St. for that entire length. From what the consultant said the project will probably start in the south and build the outfall first so that everything after that can go right out to the Bayou. So, it will probably be built south to north and again it will be built in segments to minimize disruptions to traffic.

- Another factor on this project is that this is an area near I-10 where TxDOT is proposing to do some work as part of its I-45 project. HPW would try to coordinate any work in that area with TxDOT, again, to minimize impacts to the community. So yes, it will go south to north.

Question: When will we find out if the applications for the funding have been approved?

- Answer: Everyone at the State and local level understands that it is 3 years post-Harvey, so there is a big sense of urgency. The State has done such a great job of getting a plan completed quickly in March and then requesting applications in October. HPW/COH is hopeful that the State will be able to review things and start awarding funds in the early part of next year. The City is prepared for that and there are teams and some consultants on board to keep working on these projects, so the City can seamlessly move into the design phase of work and keep these moving.

HPW/COH is trying to come up with accelerated schedules so the projects could be designed and constructed quickly. It is the expectation that in the first part of next year, whether it's the first quarter or up to May or so, when the initial funding awards will come out.

- General: A transcript of all questions and answers will be published online. (<https://www.publicworks.houstontx.gov/houston-drainage-studies>). For questions or comments please send an email to: drainage.study@houstontx.gov

Question: How will you inform the impacted residents along the project route?

- Answer: HPW is trying to inform the community about the studies or the improvements that HPW is proposing for this funding opportunity. As the projects go through the design phase, HPW will go out to the community again, and go into specific areas where there is funding to construct and start talking about design elements. For instance, where there are parks and where HPW is trying to connect detention ponds and create more green and open space.

As the project moves through the process, there will be public meetings during the design phase and as it moves into construction. HPW has a community outreach and stakeholder information program developed. Particularly right before construction, HPW will go out to the community and talk about the construction phasing; where the impacts will be; and provide points of contact for any questions or problems.

So, all of that is kind of built into the project development process. As these projects get funded and awarded, HPW will move forward with additional public outreach.

Question: Will questions be posted in Spanish?

- Answer: Yes, HPW can absolutely do that. HPW can take the questions that have already been received and post them in Spanish with responses. Also, HPW has translators available to respond to any questions.

Question: Are the consultants applying also going to be the ones conducting the detailed design work?

- Answer: There have been consultant teams that have done the hydraulic and hydrologic analyses that have assisted HPW with developing the proposed improvements. The consultants have basically done the front-end feasibility work. If the City gets a CDBG MIT grant award for any of these projects, separate consultants will be procured to move the projects into design, and then separate contractors to move the project forward into construction.

The Federal Government has very specific rules about how that procurement process is undertaken. Regardless, as these projects move forward, different consultants will be procured to move them forward in the process.

Question: You mentioned some of these applications are in collaboration with other local entities. How does that work?

- Answer: HPW works in collaboration with other entities, particularly Harris County Flood Control District (HCFCD), to coordinate and maximize the benefit of local investments. The goal is to develop projects that build off each other and enhance the benefits to the community.

With these particular projects for the CDBG MIT applications, under the partnership applications, one of the partners is identified as the primary applicant and it is that applicant which submits. So, for instance, on the City of Houston (COH) partnerships, COH will submit application for Huntington Village and the International management District will provide supporting documentation. It will be the same with the Port Area project, where the COH will submit and will be responsible if funding is awarded for the Federal funds but will work out agreements with Port Houston and the Buffalo Bayou Partnership for them to do their pieces of the project.

- The other partnership that the City is proposing under this application opportunity is for the Sharpstown Area with HCFCD. In that case HCFCD will be the primary applicant and then if the funding is awarded, the City will work out an agreement with Flood Control and some of that funding will flow to the COH for funding improvements.

Question: what happens if we don't get these funds?

- Answer: If the COH/HPW doesn't get the CDBG MIT grant funds, the City will continue to move forward with the development of these projects but will have to do it with local funds. Relying on local funds will elongate the schedule for both design and construction.

- The General Land Office (GLO) has designated or set aside \$2 billion. These applications are due October 28, 2020. The GLO is referring to that as round 1 and the State has indicated it will award applications for \$1 billion. There will still be \$1 billion remaining. There is an expectation that there will be another round of applications requested by the State. So, the City can re-submit anything that is not funded this round. The City expects that GLO will change some of the criteria, so the City will have to review to see what could probably score best under the State criteria in an effort to get the funds awarded.

The City will remain vigilant in trying to identify sources of funding for flood mitigation whether it be other Federal competitive grant programs or programs through the State of Texas.

- For questions or comments please send an email to: drainage.study@houstontx.gov. Thank you all for coming and enjoy the rest of your day.