

Economic Resilience Strategy & Diversification Study

Phase 2 : Economic Development Strategy for the Region

Draft Goals, Objectives, and Strategies

August 2020

Prepared for Texas - General Land Office
Contract No. 20-088-000-C015

This study brings together nine neighboring counties impacted by Hurricane Harvey - **Aransas, Bee, Calhoun, Goliad, Jim Wells, Nueces, Refugio, San Patricio, and Victoria** - to build an inventory of the economic assets and deficiencies within the study area, provide economic development strategies, and develop an action plan for creating a diverse and resilient economic base. The study aims to help the counties grow jobs, and help residents prosper and remain sustainable through future economic downturns.

During Phase II an economic development strategy will be created based on the research and inventory developed in Phase I. This phase will identify and analyze strategies for attracting new sustainable target sectors, emerging market areas, and will develop strategies for retaining existing sectors within the region.

The purpose of this brochure is to gather your input on draft goals, objectives and strategies for this study. Please take this survey!



Upcoming Public Engagement Opportunities



August 2020 -
Launch Survey



September 2020 -
Virtual Summit



October 2020 -
Steering Committee Meeting



November 2020 -
Incorporate all feedback and
post pre-final strategies for review



December 2020



January 2021 -
Final plan posted for public input



February 2021 -
Public Meetings



DRAFT GOAL 1 - ORGANIZATION CAPACITY

Strengthen organizational capacity and regional partnerships that enhance resilience to climate hazards and economic disruptions, and expand market access.

► DRAFT OBJECTIVES

1. Enhance regional cooperation and partnerships in support of integrated regional infrastructure planning to expand market access and integrated disaster response for swift recovery.
2. Expand regional cooperation and partnerships that support and oversee implementation of strategies that build regional resilience to economic disruptions and climate shocks.
3. Expand economic development capacity in governmental entities for rural counties and minimize the duplication of services to save resources.
4. Build technical analysis capabilities and compile relevant data repositories to monitor and support decision making for local businesses, existing infrastructure, and adaptation efforts underway.

► DRAFT STRATEGIES

Enhance regional cooperation and partnerships across municipal boundaries for integrated regional infrastructure planning and development.

Expand funding to appoint personnel that can be shared between two or more rural counties that can collaborate to share resources to appoint staff personnel for pursuing grant writing for funding opportunities, and staff personnel to market 'ready-to-go' developable sites for business attraction and expansion.

Develop a GIS application or tool of regional data inventory which supports decision making for both private and public partners and create an education campaign to train government staff, institutions and members of the public on it's applications.

Build capacity for county and local governments to build GIS databases that link business establishment data to track local and regional trends and identify property condition and available development sites.



DRAFT GOAL 2 - INFRASTRUCTURE AND HOUSING

Promote the growth of the region through strategic infrastructure and housing projects that build on the region's unique assets and competitive strengths.

► DRAFT OBJECTIVES

1. Align regional and local infrastructure development to support future residential, commercial, and industrial development to build regional economic development.
2. Prepare regional infrastructural assets including utilities, communication services, highways, ports, and railways to withstand and swiftly recover from climate shocks and stresses.
3. Develop strategies to support swift rebuilding efforts of damaged housing stock post- storm events while maintaining affordability for renters and owners alike.
4. Ensure new construction of housing units and infrastructure is sited and built to ensure minimal storm damage.
5. Encourage housing reinvestment and expand availability of housing options in support of labor force growth.
6. Incentivize investment in property development by focusing on vacant, abandoned, and otherwise blighted property, particularly in downtowns.
7. Identify and market 'ready to go' sites to support the economic development of rural counties.

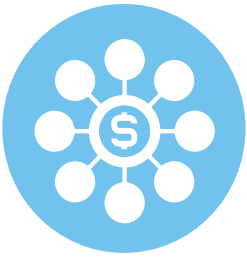
► DRAFT STRATEGIES

Identify and market 'ready - to - go ' sites to expand market access through attraction or expansion of industries.

Aid rural counties in pursuing state or federal programs to support development.

Identify critical roadway segments that are prone to flood impact and invest in raising its level and drainage solutions to accelerate post-storm recovery.

Collaborate with housing trust and community foundations on a housing revitalization strategy that supports construction of affordable housing for the workforce and redevelopment of vacant or blighted properties.



DRAFT GOAL 3 - ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND DIVERSIFICATION

Foster regional resilience through economic inclusion and diversification to provide stability during downturns.

► DRAFT OBJECTIVES

1. Support business retention, expansion, and attraction efforts targeted on industry clusters that are positioned for future growth.
2. Enhance innovation ecosystems or interconnected networks for knowledge sharing across the private sector, k-12 schools, community colleges, and higher education to support new business incubation and formation.
3. Identify and promote workforce training strategies that clarify pathways into entry level work for “in demand” occupations that offer clear trajectories to higher wages based on incremental improvements.
4. Promote business continuity and preparedness to withstand and recover from hurricanes, floods, and droughts.

► DRAFT STRATEGIES

Support local and regional economic development and diversification through a business, retention, expansion, and attraction program led by local EDC's.

Provide resources for branding and marketing locally produced goods to differentiate them and expand their global market awareness and demand.

Revisit supply chains of industries within the study area to evaluate potential expansion and value add opportunities based on regional and global trends.

Workforce centers, workforce training programs, higher education institutions and high schools will collaborate to identify “in demand” occupations that cut across multiple industry clusters, aligned with transferrable skills, abilities, and certifications.



DRAFT GOAL 4 - QUALITY OF LIFE

Encourage quality of life improvements that enhance tourism and environmental quality to create a tourism destination that attracts families from beyond the Texas Triangle.

► DRAFT OBJECTIVES

1. Market and invest in promoting existing natural and heritage assets as well as in developing new recreational opportunities for residents and as tourist attractions.
2. Maintain a high level of environmental—water, air, and ecosystem—quality alongside future economic development of heavy industries in the region.
3. Protect residents and businesses by leveraging the coastal ecosystem as assets to build resilience against future storm events.

► DRAFT STRATEGIES

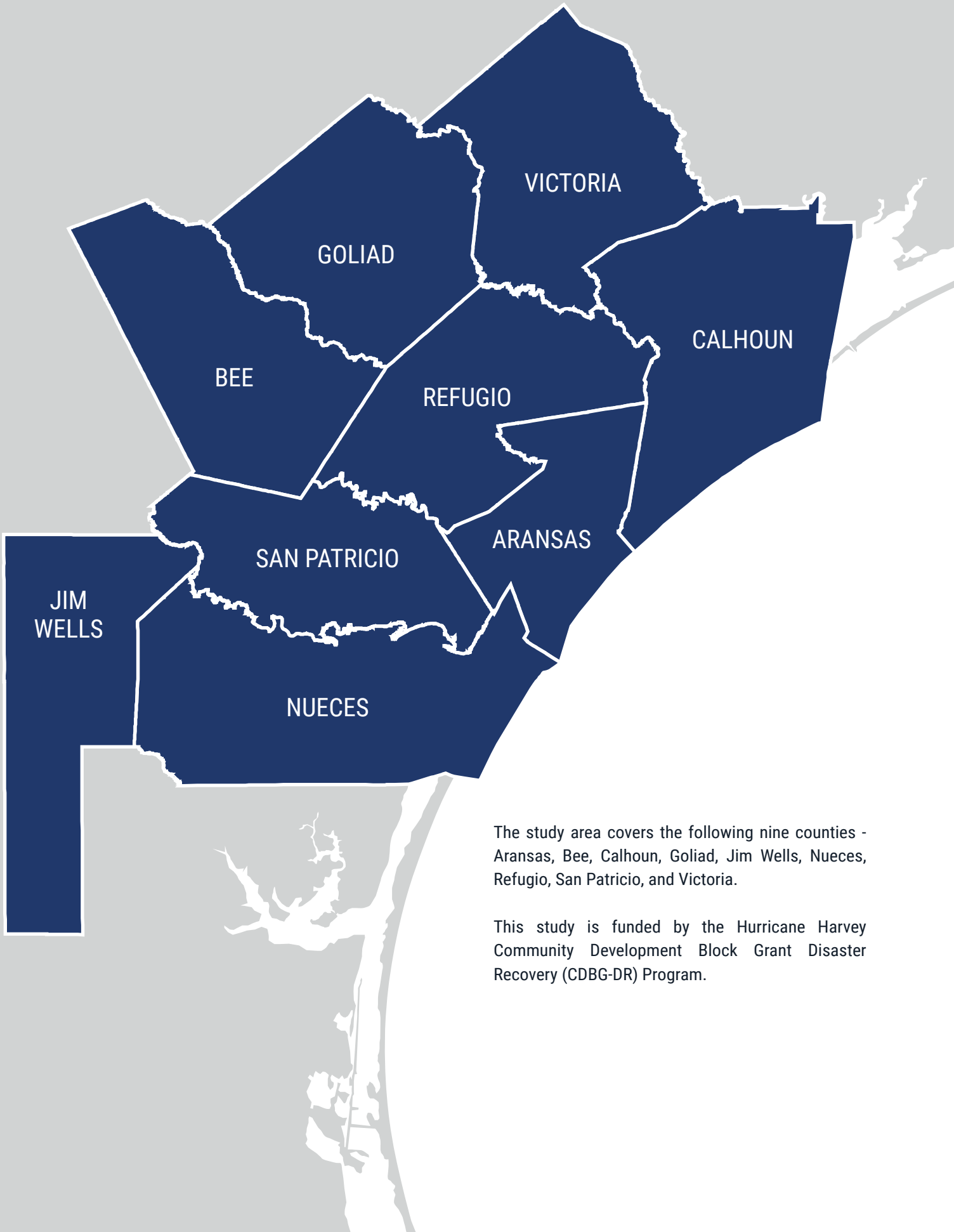
Identify and invest in amenities that improve quality of life and quality of place to encourage local market workforce diversification, but also support tourism attraction.

Create strategies to leverage regional strengths, and market the area as a family-friendly vacation destination, and draw families from beyond the Texas Triangle.

Prioritize areas for protection of natural assets along the coast to manage conflict between industrial use, ecological functions, and recreational opportunities.

Identify properties on flood prone areas with repetitive losses and identify strategized acquisition through a voluntary buyout program.

Study Area Extent



The study area covers the following nine counties - Aransas, Bee, Calhoun, Goliad, Jim Wells, Nueces, Refugio, San Patricio, and Victoria.

This study is funded by the Hurricane Harvey Community Development Block Grant Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) Program.