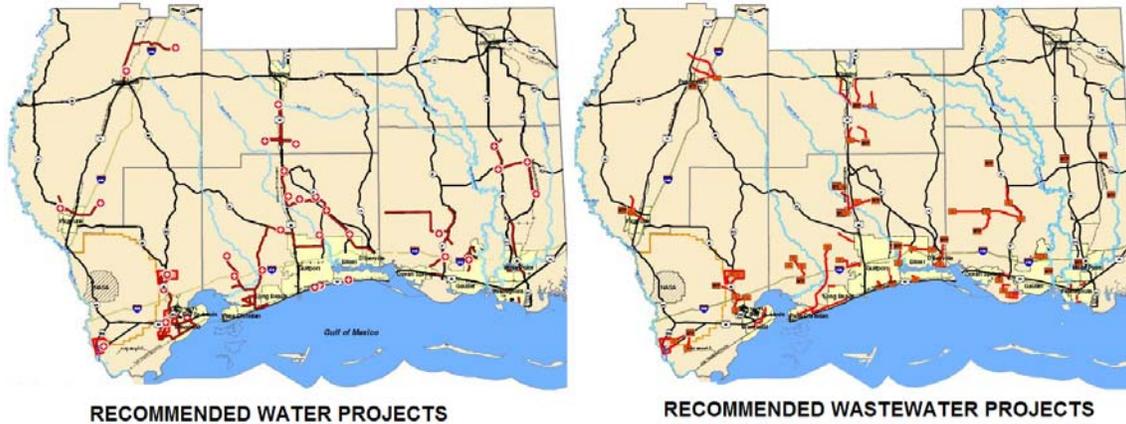


Recovery Snapshot:
Mississippi Infrastructure Planning



Grantee: State of Mississippi

Administering Agency: Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ)

Program began: 7/14/06

Planning DR CDBG Budget: \$6,500,000

Infrastructure Projects

DR CDBG Budget: \$586,075,000

Projected Households benefiting: 65,380

Impact of the Disaster: Water and wastewater infrastructure throughout the Gulf Region suffered extensive damage as a result of both storm surge and high winds. Clearly the most severe impacts occurred to facilities located below Interstate 10 in the three coastal counties. Even if structures escaped wind damage, the excessive storm surge flooded most facilities and rendered electrical and mechanical equipment inoperable. Many of these damages to existing facilities are being addressed with hazard mitigation and other programs of funding from FEMA.

Program Description: This activity provides funds to develop a master plan to implement a regional infrastructure system. The plan does not seek to remediate damages to local facilities caused by Hurricane Katrina, but to provide new or enhanced infrastructure and to locate new facilities out of harm's way. Using Disaster Recovery CDBG fund, the Mississippi Development Authority (MDA) addresses long-term infrastructure needs for six coastal counties in Mississippi—Hancock, Harrison, Jackson, Pearl River, Stone, and George—that are experiencing some unexpected population shifts due to Hurricane Katrina.

The master plan will include the following:

- Assessment of pre- and post-Katrina water, wastewater, and storm water infrastructure
- Assessment of projected growth and relocation patterns in the six counties
- Development of short- and long-term water, wastewater and storm water infrastructure needs and costs

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- Development of a prioritization process for required infrastructure
- In addition, Mississippi created a \$25 million emergency fund to address immediate and critical infrastructure needs determined by the Mississippi Development Authority (MDA) and the Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ).

Coordinating the Recovery Effort:

DEQ engaged an engineering firm, the Mississippi Engineering Group, Inc., to assist in the development of the Gulf Region Water and Wastewater Plan in April of 2006. Following publication of the Draft Plan in November 2006 a twenty-day public comment period was provided, during which time three public meetings were conducted in the Gulf Region. Input from this public comment process subsequently was integrated into the Plan.

A critical component of the approach was the involvement of local community stakeholders. This component did not constitute any single task; rather, stakeholder involvement was interwoven throughout the process. Stakeholders included members of the county utility authorities, public officials from both county and municipal governments, leadership from the private sector, and state and regional agencies. Outreach meetings were conducted throughout the Gulf Region during the planning period. Stakeholders provided input regarding local infrastructure conditions and needs and were given opportunities to respond and comment on findings of the Plan.

Through an extensive process of involvement with local stakeholders in each of the counties, over 300 projects were identified that addressed the perceived infrastructure needs throughout the Gulf Region. Some of these were projects that had been in some stage of planning or conception prior to Katrina. Criteria for evaluating individual projects included credible costs (cost per customer), time required for project implementation, impacts to quality of life (health and safety, access for human use, improved aesthetics), vulnerability to storms, impact to economic development potential, impact on housing construction, and environmental protection.

The infrastructure improvements identified through the planning process were categorized as near-term (to be completed by 2010) or long-term (to be completed by 2025 or beyond, depending on funding). Near-term projects were considered to be those critical to regional recovery, with high levels of stakeholder support, limited permitting requirements, straightforward implementation, and high potential for shared funding. In order to be implementable by 2010 projects needed to have the support of local stakeholders, as demonstrated through a willingness to invest in project implementation and long-term maintenance and operation. Once near-term projects were identified according to these criteria, they were prioritized for funding and implementation.

For more information on this project, visit

http://www.deq.state.ms.us/MDEQ.nsf/page/About_MGRWaterWastewaterPlan2006?OpenDocument