



Lower Rio Grande Valley Watershed Assessment

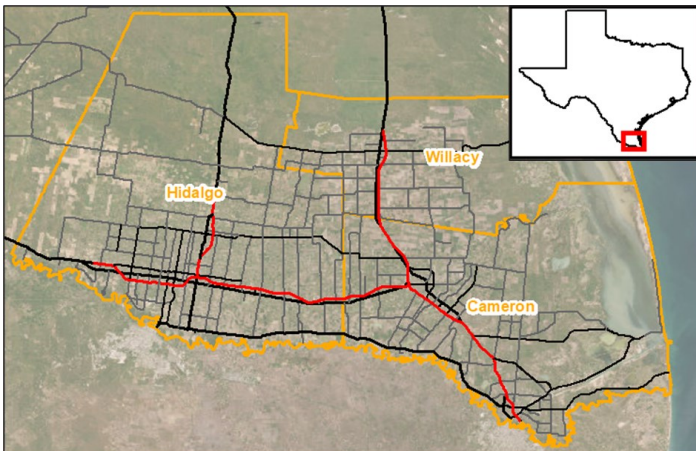
Draft Shared Vision Statement

& Problems, Opportunities, Objectives, and Constraints



The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) in partnership with Cameron County is conducting a watershed assessment of Hidalgo, Cameron, Willacy, and Kenedy County. This assessment will identify the problems, opportunities, goals, and constraints facing agencies with water resource related responsibility in the region and will develop a strategic roadmap to inform future investment decisions by multiple agencies.

USACE is *seeking your input* on the **Draft Shared Vision Statement** and the **Problems, Opportunities, Objectives and Constraints Statements** drafted by USACE, partners, and stakeholders



Do you have feedback on the Shared Vision, Problems, Opportunities, Objectives, and Constraints for the LRGVWA?

Please email your comments to:

CESWG-PM-LRGVWA@usace.army.mil

Would you like to receive email updates about the study or join a working group?

If so, please email your request to:

CESWG-PM-LRGVWA@usace.army.mil

Draft Shared Vision Statement - The shared vision statement is a mission statement for the study. The draft shared vision states:

“Cameron County—in partnership with Hidalgo, Willacy, and Kenedy Counties, and the State of Texas—recognizes the challenges the Lower Rio Grande Valley faces. Water resource challenges are exacerbated by the growing need for affordable housing, including updated critical infrastructure needs; international water control policies; water supply and quality for potable, agriculture and aquatic ecosystem needs; as well as the management of risks associated with coastal storms, riverine flood risk and stormwater management.

These partners, in collaboration with USACE, other Federal agencies and non-Federal stakeholders, seek to develop a comprehensive plan focused on water resource related resiliency across the entire LRGV. USACE, with its technical and engineering planning expertise, will support the development of a plan to meet the long-term viability needs of the Region.”

Problems: An existing, negative condition.

- 1.) Socially vulnerable communities experience decreased economic resilience and increased risk to public safety from coastal, riverine, and stormwater flooding events.
- 2.) Loss of floodplain functions in the region has reduced capacity in streams, rivers, and other bodies of water depended upon for stormwater management and drainage leading to an increased risk of inundation and degradation of natural resources. A degraded ecosystem exacerbates the floodplain functionality problems and increases the water related risk factors within the LRGV.
- 3.) Increased drought conditions and demand for water supply to support population growth, agriculture and ranching production has stressed water supply and water quality across the region.
- 4.) Lack of regional, comprehensive, long range watershed management plans degrade regional resilience to water resource problems and increases risk to public health and safety. Over time the various entities throughout the study area (including the various municipalities, special districts, communities, etc.) have created a patchwork of regulations and thus a lack of regional coordination has made it difficult to implement and collaborate on efforts that can improve watershed function throughout the study area.

Opportunities: Desirable future conditions.

- 1.) The opportunity exists to improve the resilience of the region to water resource related problems such as flooding, degrading ecosystems, coastal storm risks, and over development of the floodplain through regional, long-range comprehensive watershed management planning.
- 2.) The opportunity exists to manage the risk associated with flooding to life safety, Justice40 Communities, roads, critical public facilities, infrastructure, as well as cultural and natural resources.
- 3.) The opportunity exists to utilize natural and nature-based features (NNBFs) and/or restoration of the natural system of defenses to improve resilience to water resource related problems across the region.
- 4.) The opportunity exists to improve floodplain management and restore floodplain functionality across the region to meet the demand for development while reducing the risks to water supply and water quality in the region that is vital to drinking water, agricultural needs, as well as ecosystem health.

Objectives: Things we want to accomplish with the assessment

- 1.) Support community resiliency and recovery from flood-related events.
- 2.) Increase community outreach to improve the public's understanding of flood risk and provide them with the tools to reduce their risk.
- 3.) Improve reliability and resiliency of water resources to meet increasing demand during drought through integrated watershed management.
- 4.) Increase long-term resilience of infrastructure and environment to inland and coastal (RSLC) climate stressors.

Constraints: A restriction that limits the extent of the planning process.

- 1.) Manage impacts to Justice40 communities. Avoid or minimize disproportionate impacts to those communities who are socially vulnerable to the impacts of water resource related hazards including but not limited to: Workforce Development; Linguistic Isolation; Education; Income; Transportation Dependence.
- 2.) Water supply is constrained by water rights agreements and limited by precipitation, surface water inflows from upstream of the Lower Rio Grande, and inflows from Mexico to the Lower Rio Grande.
- 3.) International boundaries intersect regional watersheds and limit our ability to influence stressors that originate in Mexico but result in surface water quantity and quality issues, as well as flooding issues in the U.S.