

Gulf Regional Planning Commission and its Role in Katrina Response and Recovery





No one on the Mississippi Gulf Coast was immune to Hurricane Katrina's wrath. Like so many others, GRPC staff, despite suffering some catastrophic personal losses, rallied behind first responders to support response and recovery efforts.

Recovery Support

GRPC Staff divided to attend a variety of planning meetings across the coast, including meetings of the city councils, county supervisors, emergency managers, major transportation providers, federal agencies and others. They identified needs with which our agency could meet, primarily by producing maps, assisting with dissemination of information while communication lines were down and participating in the damage assessment process.



Mapping Support

Prior to Katrina, one of GRPC's core support functions for the jurisdictions of the Gulf Coast was in mapping.

Our GIS team was responsible for maps including; streets, zoning, demographics, wards, traffic counts and roadway classifications.

In response to the storm, we also worked to produce accurate maps depicting city limits, parcels, railways, critical facilities and other materials to help responders navigate through

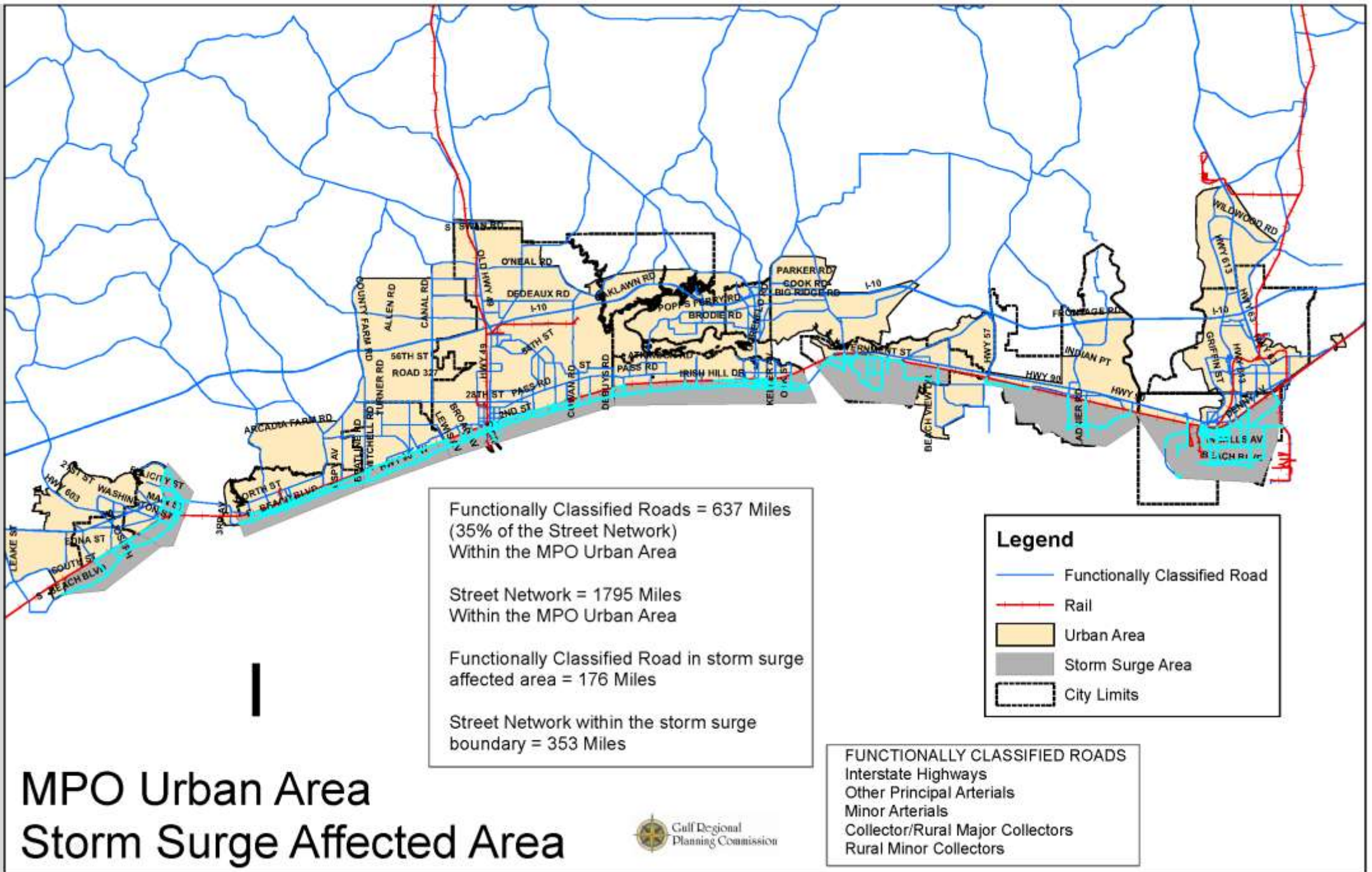


our community.

Streets were buried and broken, signs blown away, homes had been picked up and moved and businesses were demolished.

Good maps were critical for rescuers providing aid and supplies, as well as for work crews restoring services and utilities to our neighborhoods.

EXAMPLE



Project Support

In Katrina's wake, GRPC/MPO staff, in coordination with federal, state and local representatives, led the effort to develop a project selection process that would result in improvements and infrastructure rebuilding across our three county region. Our staff led the project identification process and successfully secured \$10 million in American Recovery and reinvestment Act (ARRA) funds.



Damage Assessments



A major undertaking by GRPC, was the completion of roadway damage assessments for numerous local jurisdictions. These focused on signage to support their efforts to get reimbursement/replacement funds.

One street at a time, our staff evaluated signs for structural integrity and damage, noting, via GPS tracking device, which signs needed replacement and which needed to be repaired. This process took a couple of months to complete.

The comprehensive evaluations were detailed and published in map books, which the jurisdictions later used in their requests for recovery funding.

Support for Coast Transit

Coast Transit Authority as the main provider of fixed route transit service on the Gulf Coast.

Once roadways were being cleared and community members were being allowed back into damaged areas, CTA began its process of recovery as well.

GRPC staff worked with their administration to identify needs, assess alternative routes and to produce service maps.



We also assisted CTA in securing Federal Transit Administration funds to develop an emergency operations plan to ensure their continuity in the event of another large scale disaster event.



Grant Support

sensitive awards that were put on hold during recovery. Immediate needs were taking precedence over new construction, beautification and other planned improvements.

As requested, GRPC staff acted as a liaison between the local entity and its grant provider to coordinate and ensure compliance.

In many cases, we were asked to assist with grant administration and in that capacity, submitted for grant extensions to preserve awarded funds whenever possible.

Another function of GRPC with regard to the local cities and counties was in the form of grant administration, application support and management.

This role became a critical function post-Katrina. Many local municipalities had outstanding, time

Additional Support

Our office and planning staff fielded hundreds of calls from consultant firms, other MPOs as well as planning and engineering associations. Some were already providing support to a specific agency or municipality and were seeking information and data.

Others wanted to provide support, but did not know what was needed. GRPC staff coordinated with them or acted as liaison, connecting them with appropriate emergency managers, city and county officials.

We also worked closely with community charrette coordinators to deliver and set up needed mapping equipment at their head-quarters within the former Isle of Capri Casino.





Some of our photo
memories

Scenic Ship at Treasure Bay Casino – Gone Now







Beach Front Condos Then and Now



Biloxi Light House then and now





Hwy. 90 Live Oaks become art pieces



GRPC staff at time of Landfall

