



THE WATER INSTITUTE OF THE GULF®

Houston's Resilience Strategy

On Aug. 25, 2017, the Category 4 Hurricane Harvey made landfall in Texas causing widespread damage and flooding. According to the Harris County Flood Control District, 4.7 million people in the county were impacted directly or indirectly by the flooding. Just one day after the storm made landfall, parts of all the 22 major freeways in the Houston metro area were flooded and impassable.

In order to prepare for future extreme events, the City of Houston, 100 Resilient Cities, The Rockefeller Foundation, Shell and The Water Institute of the Gulf (Institute) announced in August 2018 that Houston would become the 101st city to join the 100 Resilient Cities network. Although 100 Resilient Cities has closed, the work funded through Shell continues. Through this continuing partnership Houston will create and implement a comprehensive resilience strategy to enhance the city's long-term vision of building more resilience into the city.

The first phase of the resilience strategy development process was completed in May 2019 with the development

of Houston's Resilience Assessment. This effort defines urban resilience as the capacity of individuals, communities, institutions, businesses, and systems within an urban area to survive, adapt, and thrive no matter what kinds of long-term shocks or short-term stresses they experience.



Above: Stakeholder meetings helped inform the framework of the developing plan.

Below: Birdseye view of Houston, 1891





Above: The City of Houston, with support from Shell, working toward greater urban resilience in the face of short-term shocks and long-term stresses.



Community meetings and stakeholder engagement are crucial when developing strategies for increased resilience

Resilient Houston's five themes

- A healthy place to live
- A leader in climate adaptation
- An equitable and inclusive city
- A city that grows up, not out
- A transformative economy

MOVING FORWARD

The Institute was tasked with advising the city throughout the resilience strategy development process, including helping to synthesize and analyze current flood mitigation initiatives, holding an agenda-setting workshop to launch the effort, developing a stakeholder engagement plan, working with Houston to review existing neighborhood and city plans as well as identifying gaps in those plans, and helping the city customize its approach to resilience. A number of workshops have already been held including “Living with Water” in November 2018 and May 2019, working group meetings, and a public comment

session that ran through September. All of this will culminate into the launch and implementation of Resilient Houston in the coming months.



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