

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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THE TUMON FLOOD MITIGATION PLAN

In the last few months, there has been a lot of information circulated out to the public about the Tumon flood mitigation plan, which is a good thing. The Guam Economic Development Authority and its board appreciate the discussion that this issue has created. There are some points that need to be made to clarify the plan created to address this decades-long issue that rises to the forefront with every large rainstorm.

There are three phases of this project. The first phase was to study the problem and determine where the storm water is coming from before going into Tumon Bay or flooding San Vitores Road. The second phase will include installing additional storm water inlets along San Vitores Road to capture storm water runoff, and expanding the ponding basin near Old Fujita Road. The third phase, which is the controversial phase, would build a gravity bay outlet that would direct overflow from the ponding basin into Tumon Bay.

The first phase of the project is completed and from the study six options were developed that would channel the storm water thus, improving the collection of water that was causing flooding, but also causing beach areas to erode from storm water rushing down the beaches. The second phase will soon begin. This will take about a year to complete.

This will give us time to look at ways to enhance our solutions. Look at ways to enhance the third phase, by welcoming other options that weren't options prior to this discussion because of funding constraints.

For example, senators are saying they can provide funding for some of the other options provided by the consultants.

TO BE CLEAR: THE CONTROVERSIAL THIRD PHASE OF THIS PROJECT, KNOWN AS THE 'CULVERT' IS NOT MOVING FORWARD. THIS GIVES THE LEGISLATURE ONE YEAR TO COME THROUGH WITH THE FUNDING THEY PROMISED THAT WOULD MAKE THE THIRD PHASE BETTER THAN WHAT WAS INITIALLY PROPOSED.

BACKGROUND

The Guam Economic Development Authority was tasked with managing approximately \$55 million in capital investment projects to improve Guam's tourism infrastructure. Collectively known as the "HOT Bond Projects", the improvements include several projects one of which is the Guam Museum. The required investment was funded by a bond to be repaid from proceeds from the Hotel Occupancy Tax.

One of the most important projects made possible through this program is a flood mitigation project for the Pleasure Island area of San Vitores Road in Tumon. The project seeks to effectively mitigate intermittent flooding near San Vitores and Fujita Road that disrupts and impacts traffic, tourism, utilities, residences and businesses in the Tumon area. The potential for harm is real and represents a pressing and persistent issue for residents and the visitor industry. GEDA was asked to address this vexing problem and implement the best solution.

GEDA contracted with Stanley Consultants, a leading engineering firm in the region to design a viable solution to the problem. Six options were developed, evaluated, and discussed with regulatory agencies.

The GEDA Board initially chose an overflow outlet into Tumon bay for Fujita Pond. This option was within the allotted project budget does not require large pumps or machinery, and can be constructed without acquiring private property. At an estimated cost of \$6 million, this solution is approximately \$15 million less than other options, and, more importantly, provided a solution that could be implemented sooner than the other options.

The overflow option was presented to regulatory agencies and at a public meeting earlier this year in March. After reviewing the comments received from the general public and local and federal regulatory agencies, the second phase of the project: cleaning existing culverts, creating additional curb inlets and grates on San Vitores Road, expanding the Fujita Pond, plus the installation of “rain gardens” and porous pavers. This will improve drainage capture.

The second phase will take about a year to complete. This allows us time to consider other options that will resolve the flooding issue. Senators said they have they have money to help enhance the plans GEDA initially proposed.

GEDA feels that this direction will allow steps to be made towards reducing flooding at San Vitores Road while considering possible funding options.

PUBLIC DISCUSSION:

GEDA is holding another public discussion at 2 p.m. on Thursday, Dec. 17 at the GEDA conference room.

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