

Riverside Lakeland POA Community Update - 8/24/2024

Dear Riverside Lakeland Residents,

I hope this message finds you well. As part of our ongoing efforts to keep everyone informed about the latest developments in our community, I'd like to provide an update on both the overall state of our neighborhood and the current status of the bridge repair and replacement efforts.

FEMA Assistance and Claims Update:

Over the past few days, there has been a notable increase in communication from FEMA regarding the claims submitted for damage caused by the recent storms and Hurricane Beryl. Many of you may have already been contacted with questions about the bridge, and I've heard that almost everyone who submitted a claim has received \$750 per disaster to help cover costs related to power outages, food loss, and other damages. This amount should also assist in covering the \$300 special assessment that was approved at the annual meeting.

Additionally, FEMA has been covering the cost of essential items such as generators, and they are also addressing damages caused by the heavy rainfall and high winds, including washouts and other significant impacts. If you discover any new damage that was not included in your original claim, it's not too late to amend it.

For those who have not yet submitted a claim, the deadline to file for Hurricane Beryl is currently set for September 15th. I encourage anyone with outstanding damage to take advantage of this opportunity.

Funding:

Regarding the bridge, we have taken proactive steps to ensure we have financial options available:

- a. Special Assessment was passed in the annual meeting of \$300 per property owner which should generate approx. \$50k.
- b. FEMA funding for Bridge Replacement of either 100% or we have heard a 75% FEMA and 25% RLPOA split.
- c. Undetermined other governmental program. We are working with Texas Department of Emergency Management for these programs.
- d. SBA Loan: if we are unable to secure sufficient funds from FEMA or other government programs. We've filed for an SBA loan to keep this option open. This loan has a 30 year term with a 3.25% interest rate. Our intent is to not utilize this loan unless we are forced to, but we need to keep this option open just in case.

Currently, it appears that our FEMA claim is progressing, but it may take 30 to 90 days before we receive any definitive news. Rest assured; we will keep everyone updated as soon as we hear anything.

Bridge Replacement:

We have received three bids for the bridge replacement, ranging from \$188,000 to \$287,000. Additionally, we are submitting claims and bids to FEMA for the road damage that has become evident on Lakeland and through the community.

All of the documents requested by FEMA for our bridge claim have been uploaded, and if/when FEMA contacts you, you can reference my claim number: 62-0162924. FEMA has advised that they will use the information from my claim when assessing the bridge, so there should be no need for you to upload any additional files for this. If you would like to review the documents submitted, they are available on our website at www.RiversideLakeland.com under the "FEMA Documents" section.

Why Not Repair?

Repairing the washout has been estimated at \$75k+, but this option comes with no warranty. For roughly twice that amount, we aim to build a new, 24-foot-wide bridge which will be 6 foot wider than our current bridge with proper guard rails and two six-foot by six-foot concrete box culverts, offering nearly 500% more water flow capacity than the current four pipes each two-foot diameter.

Community Efforts and Historical Context:

I want to extend a heartfelt thank you to everyone who has taken the time to file claims with FEMA. While FEMA won't disclose the exact number of claims from our neighborhood, the agents at the Storm Shelter confirmed that many of our residents have applied for both personal damages and the bridge. Your efforts are crucial as we work together to replace the bridge with minimal cost to our community.

To provide some context, our neighborhood was originally a mining quarry in the 1920s, where Fuller's Earth was extracted and transported via a short gauge railroad from approximately the back boat ramp to FM980. The bridge we use today was constructed approximately 50 years ago on top of a low-water crossing built during the 1920's, making the bridge nearly 100 years old. According to an engineer who assessed the structure, the bridge is well past its intended lifespan, with the steel pipes and tension rods likely rusted away.

Conclusion:

We are committed to working diligently to secure the necessary funding and resources to replace the bridge with a structure that will serve our community for many years and decades to come. Your continued support and engagement are invaluable as we navigate these challenges together.

Thank you once again for your understanding, cooperation, and dedication to our community. Should you have any questions or require further information, please do not hesitate to reach out.

Best regards,

Fraser Stanley-Jones
(713) 385-6907