



Why build a levee?

- ▶ St. John is continually threatened by hurricanes and tidal surges
- ▶ Hurricanes Isaac, Gustav and Ike fully exposed our vulnerability to flooding and tidal surges and the Great Flood of 2016 threatened the homes and businesses of our residents.
- ▶ After more than 40 years in the study phase, the West Shore Lake Pontchartrain Hurricane Risk Reduction Project received Congressional authorization to move the project forward in December of 2016.

How much is the levee project anticipated to cost?

- ▶ The projected cost of the levee is \$718 million which includes earthen levees, flood walls and pump stations. St. John's cost-share is \$50 million, with annual maintenance costs of \$5 million.

How much will I have to pay with the passage of this ad valorem tax?

- ▶ This election will address taxation for a period of thirty (30) years for the purpose of paying any costs associated with construction, acquiring, maintaining, operating, extending and/or improving levees, facilities and structures associated with outer flood protection systems within the Parish.
- ▶ An additional 7 mils will cost St. John property owners only \$1.50 to \$13.12 more per month for homes valued from \$100,000 to \$300,000 and only \$18.95 to \$53.95 per month for homes valued from \$400,000 to \$1,000,000.

What are the benefits of constructing a levee system?

- ▶ Flood protection for homes and businesses
- ▶ Economic development and growth in areas previously prone to flooding
- ▶ Reduced or stable flood insurance rates

Will my flood insurance rates decrease?

- ▶ Flood insurance rates remain steady or reduce

When will the Parish begin collecting the new tax if passed?

- ▶ January 2018



What happens to the money collected if the project is not ultimately federally funded?

- ▶ The money collected will be dedicated to flood protection costs including building levees and structures associated with flood protection systems not limited to the Westshore Lake Pontchartrain Levee Project

Why didn't we use another means of funding instead of a tax, such as increasing sales tax or utilizing 2015 Bond Issue monies?

- ▶ Due to the sales tax already being at the highest rate possible in St. John Parish, further increasing sales tax would have had to been approved by the Louisiana Legislation in a special session.
- ▶ Bonds from the 2009 and 2015 Bond Issues have already been allocated to certain projects.

When is the last day to register to vote?

- ▶ The last day to register to vote in person or by mail for the Spring Municipal General Election is March 29, 2017
- ▶ Visit www.sos.la.gov to register or pick up a mail in ballot at the Registrar of Voters offices (Percy Hebert Building/Edgard Courthouse)

When is early voting?

- ▶ **Early voting is April 15-22, 2017** (except for Sunday, April 16, 2017)
8:30 am – 6 pm, at the Registrar of Voters offices
(Percy Hebert Building and Edgard Courthouse)

When is Election Day?

- ▶ **Saturday, April 29, 2017**
Polls will be open from 6 am – 9 pm Parishwide

Where can I find additional information?

- ▶ St. John Website – www.sjbparish.com
- ▶ Facebook – St. John Parish@sjbparish
- ▶ Twitter – @Sjbpgov
- ▶ Government Access Channel
(RTC/COMCAST 15/ U-VERSE99)



How soon can we start the construction of the levee?

- ▶ The beginning of construction depends upon when funding is allocated. The amount required for the pre-construction phases of the project which includes surveying, soil testing, property acquisition, wetland mitigation and final design is significantly less than the amount required for construction.
- ▶ Federal funds are likely to be allocated in a phased approach over several years, with appropriations varying from year to year.
- ▶ According to Congressman Graves, is working with the Corps of Engineers to make sure this project is properly prioritized and would like to see it funded in their budget within 18 months.
- ▶ The Pontchartrain Levee district has \$11 million in bonding capacity for this project and is currently negotiating an MOU with the Army Corps of Engineers to begin some of the pre-construction work and have it apply to the non-federal match.
- ▶ The target to begin construction is 3-5 years, which will allow us to begin securing the parish's cost-share.

How much money do we need to start construction?

Based on projections from the design firm, allocations are projected over 6 years:

- ▶ Year 1 - \$2.23 million
- ▶ Year 2 - \$2.23 million
- ▶ Year 3 - \$6.49 million
- ▶ Year 4 - \$20.85 million
- ▶ Year 5 - \$12.23 million
- ▶ Year 6 - \$4.87 million

Can we stop giving new companies the tax break to help pay for the levee?

- ▶ In June of 2016, Governor John Bel Edwards issued an Executive Order allowing local government to determine the level of exemptions granted to companies. They also limited those exemptions to 8 years rather than 10 years.



Industry makes a lot of money in St. John why not let them get a tax increase to pay for the levee?

- ▶ Business and Industry currently pay the bulk of property and Ad Valorem taxes in the parish (84%). The 7 mil increase will also impact industry.
- ▶ Because Marathon is the largest taxpayer in the parish and has made the largest recent investment, their coming onto the tax rolls will be significant.
- ▶ Other industries coming onto the tax rolls over the next 5 years will have a lesser impact.

If all of the 30 year mills are not needed, can we get it reduced?

- ▶ In 2020, once Marathon's expansion is added to the tax rolls, there will be an opportunity to roll back millages in budgets carrying a healthy surplus. Also, after the 30 year millage, the parish will only be responsible for the \$5 million maintenance costs and there will be an opportunity to revisit the millage.

What is the environmental impact?

- ▶ There is an anticipated environmental impact to 719 acres of wetlands along the reach of the alignment located north of US-61. Since constructed, the impact of the levee in St. Charles Parish has had a positive influence on the LaBranch Wetlands.

Why can't we cut back on parish staff not needed to help pay for the cost of the levee?

- ▶ The number of staff has remained consistent over the past 5 years due to budgetary constraints and increasing costs related to benefits and retirement. A reduction in staff would not generate the \$50 million required for construction nor the \$5 million required annually for operation and maintenance.

Why can't we use the EDC money to pay for the levee?

- ▶ Economic Development funds are generated through a sales tax rather than a millage and it does not generate enough annually for this size project. In addition to Economic Development activities, a portion of that tax supports general government services related to economic development and growth.

Why is the map showing 2 pumps stations in Grayville and only 1 in Laplace?

- ▶ The original map has been revised to show 4 pump stations located near the Hope Canal, Reserve Relief Canal, Ridgefield Canal and Montz/Woodland Canal.



Will my property get re-assessed after the tax is passed to increase the value in an effort to help pay for the levee?

- ▶ By law, property must be re-assessed every four years and it was re-assessed in 2016. It will be re-assessed in 2020 along with spot checks until that time.

Who will manage and maintain the annual maintenance cost and maintenance of the levee and pump stations?

- ▶ The Pontchartrain Levee District is responsible for managing operations and maintenance of the levee and pump stations through an agreement with the Parish.
- ▶ Funds generated from this tax will be placed in a separate fund and used only for flood protection.

What about DOTD protecting I-10? Why doesn't the state help?

- ▶ The federal share of the project is 65% and the non-federal share is 35%. CPRA is the state entity responsible for flood protection and serves as the non-federal partner. The state in partnership with the Pontchartrain Levee District is responsible for 80% of the 35% non-federal cost-share.

Why spend money on the Mississippi River Trail/Recreation? That money can be used towards the levee protection.

- ▶ The Mississippi River Trail was funded through a grant from the state's Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) at a 95%/5% cost-share for Phases 1-3 but this changed to 80%/20% for Phase 4. The match for these projects was funded through bond issues and the Recreation budget.
- ▶ The Garyville Timbermill Trail was funded through a Recreational Trails Grant through the Federal Highway Administration with the match through the Recreation budget.

Why is Pin Oak getting a tax break? Their taxes can be used towards the levee protection.

- ▶ Pin Oak Terminals has entered into a PILOT (Payment in Lieu of Taxes) with the Port of South Louisiana to provide set payments to all taxing bodies over thirty (30) years as an alternative to full payment of Ad Valorem taxes. They continue to pay property taxes. This agreement was reached to allow the company to expand quicker, thus increasing the number of jobs and the amount inventory tax generated quicker.



Why can't the affected people only vote?

- ▶ By law, all homeowners are entitled to a \$75,000 Homestead Exemption (no taxes) and residents 65 years or older have their taxes frozen. Veterans who are 100% disabled received a double Homestead Exemption. All of this was considered when calculating the number of mills required for the levee.

What drainage improvements are we constructing now (i.e. Pump Stations)?

- ▶ Since 2010, more than \$38 million dollars has been dedicated to drainage improvements Parishwide.
- ▶ St. John received \$1.3 million dollars in Gustav/Ike CDBG funds that were used for canal cleaning and construction of the Foxwood Levee.
- ▶ The parish also allocated \$9.2 million in hazard mitigation funds following Hurricane Isaac at a 75%/25% cost- share for the following drainage improvements – Marigold St., McReine (LaPlace Heights), Belle Point, Homewood, Airport Rd. and bar screen cleaners. The parish's match is funded through the 2014 bond issue.
- ▶ Through the 2009, 2014 & 2015 bond issues, \$23.7 million was dedicated to drainage improvements, with \$1 million for drainage equipment.
- ▶ An additional \$4.4 million in drainage improvements are state funded.

When was the last time we had a tax (millage) increase?

- ▶ 2013, but voters rededicated or renewed several millages.
- ▶ All existing millages are dedicated to the following: School system, Sheriff's Office, Library, Public Health, Road Lighting, Mosquito, Animal control, Recreation, ARC, Senior Citizens, Courthouse Jail, Juvenile Detention, General Obligation Bonds (debt service) and Parishwide (Government Services).
- ▶ All existing bonds are dedicated to the purpose approved by the voters.