



Gulf Coast Authority  
Protecting the Waters of Texas

Strategic Plan 2022-26

# Visioning a Clean Water *Future*



# From the **Chair of the Board**

I am honored to chair Gulf Coast Authority's board and oversee its incredibly important mission of protecting the waters of Texas while supporting economic growth. I am especially proud that its storied legacy now has a blueprint for continuing and expanding this mission over the next 50 years. In lieu of our spring edition of the *Clarifier*, we are proud to share GCA's Strategic Plan 2022-2026.

Special thanks to our Board of Directors for leading this collaborative process and General Manager/CEO Liz Fazio Hale for spearheading the task on behalf of the Board. The scope of stakeholder engagement in the process – from our employees, leadership, external partners, and community – has ensured a robust plan to chart our future course. I would like to extend special kudos to the entire GCA strategic planning staff who were instrumental in pulling the input together into a thoughtful, comprehensive plan.

My charge to all at the start of 2021 was to stretch ourselves in terms of vision – how do we build on our achievements and core strengths to meet the challenges ahead? – and then establish a framework that will help us get there. Working together, the Board, leadership, and staff have delivered just that. Already, the staff is hard at work in developing the detailed implementation plan that will guide our day-to-day efforts in the months and years ahead.

GCA has such an amazing team. I am eagerly looking forward to building on our successes as we begin executing on the plan, reinvigorated and newly committed to our mission.



**Franklin D.R. Jones, Jr.**



# From the **General Manager/CEO**



It is an honor and a privilege to lead the diverse, professional staff of Gulf Coast Authority, especially during this pivotal point in the organization's history. Now more than ever, we are faced with incredible challenges: managing through a historic pandemic, executing succession planning and new hire development at a breakneck rate, playing an instrumental role in the creation of solutions for emerging regulatory regimes, and crafting financial solutions that will continue to support and grow economic development. To help navigate our path forward, the Authority has developed its first written strategic plan.

With great challenges come great opportunities, and our GCA Strategic Plan 2022-2026 aims to make the most of the opportunities available to us. Following the direction of our visionary Board of Directors, the strategic plan is the result of a truly collaborative effort which sought input from more than 175 employee team members and the 90-plus participants and customers whom we serve across the State of Texas.

The initiatives, objectives, and actions outlined in the pages that follow provide a roadmap for the next five years as we work to advance our mission and fulfill our vision for the next half-century. This planning tool will inform our decisions as we move into implementation, leveraging opportunities to address workforce development, infrastructure assessment, financial advancement, and stakeholder engagement. A living document, this plan brings to life our vision: "To lead in clean water and value-added initiatives with innovative, cost-effective, and reliable wastewater and water reuse management solutions and to serve as a provider of choice for national bond conduit financial services."

In leading, I also look forward to serving alongside our team of talented individuals – respected across industrial, environmental, and regulatory fields. With this plan in place and their enthusiastic support, I am confident of the initiatives we have created in this strategic plan and in our ability to successfully execute them – taking our mission to protect the waters of Texas to the next level.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Elizabeth Fazio Hale". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name being the most prominent.

**Elizabeth Fazio Hale**



# Introduction

In 2021, at the direction of the Board of Directors and under the leadership of the General Manager/CEO, Gulf Coast Authority engaged in a comprehensive strategic planning process to envision the next 50 years on a five-year cyclical planning basis. GCA's Strategic Plan 2022-2026 provides a collaborative approach to planning that builds on our past, prepares for our future, and performs in the present. The plan's initiatives form a roadmap for the entire Authority to unite behind in fulfilling its mission.

Building on the many accomplishments over a storied half-century legacy, this plan creates a springboard for accomplishing the next 50 years of work in protecting the waters of the state, providing financial governmental conduit resources, and supporting economic growth. With a newly created vision, GCA is well-positioned to fulfill its mission, respect its core values, and successfully execute on its key business strengths.



**\$192 Million**

Operating Budget FY 2022

**\$150 Million**

Capital Budget FY 2022-2026



**90+** Industries and Communities Served



**178** Current Employees



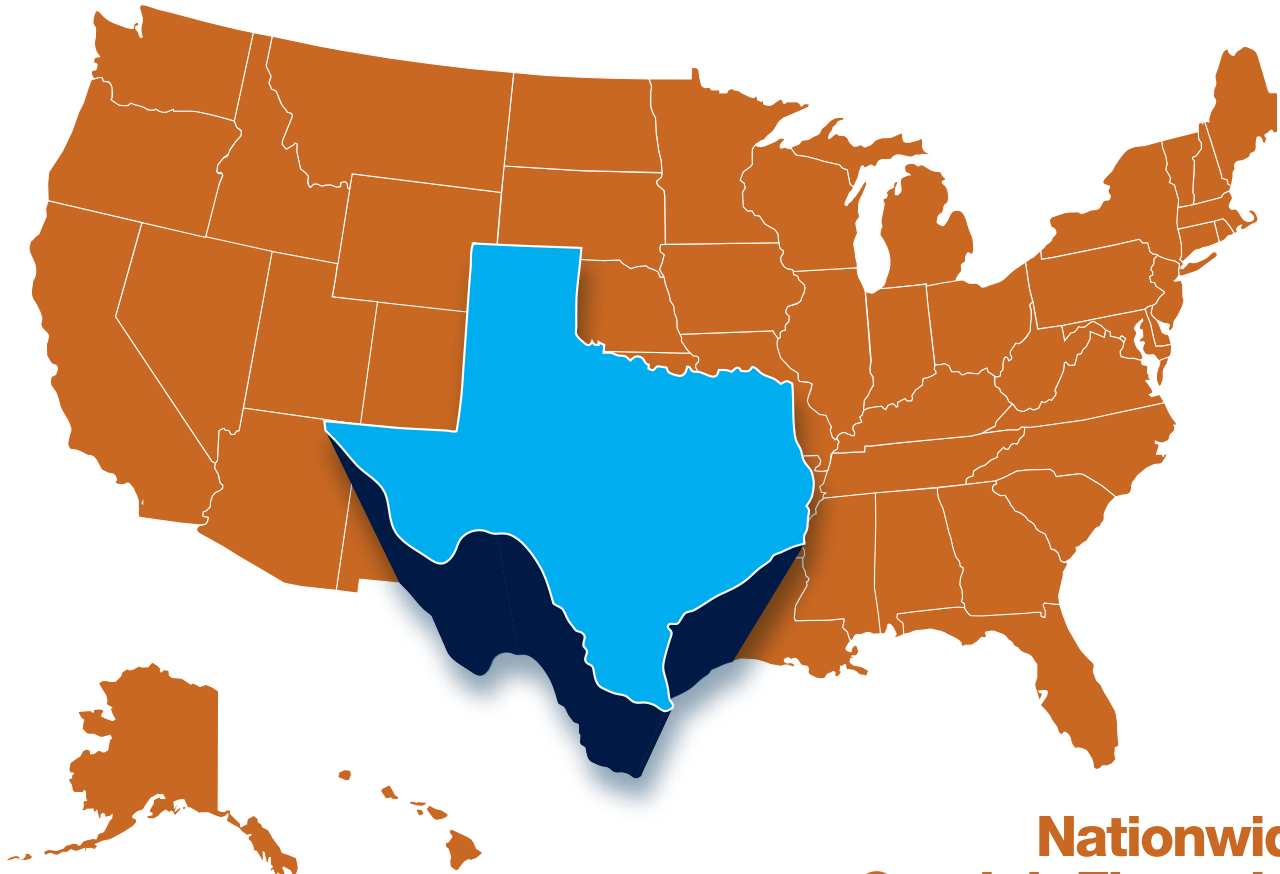
**~50 MGD** Treated Wastewater

# Services

Gulf Coast Authority is a political subdivision of the State of Texas created in 1969 to clean up Galveston Bay. Since that time, its ability to provide reliable, cost-effective regional wastewater and water reuse services has been expanded across the state.

GCA is a key component in creating and sustaining jobs and economic growth by providing essential, centralized regional waste management services that allow our customers to focus their attention, capital, and labor resources on their core business purposes while assuring compliance with environmental protection requirements. GCA also acts as a national financing entity for the issuance of conduit private activity bonds for qualified projects that help grow the economy.

## Statewide Wastewater and Water Reuse Services



**Nationwide  
Conduit Financing**



# *Vision*

To lead Texas in clean water and value-added initiatives with innovative, cost-effective, and reliable wastewater and water reuse management solutions and to serve as a provider of choice for national bond conduit financial services.

# *Mission*

To protect the waters of the State of Texas through environmentally sound, economically feasible, and technologically advanced wastewater and water management practices.

# **Key Business** *Strengths*

Our reputation for providing safe, reliable, cost-effective, and compliant services makes us a trusted resource for treating some of the hardest-to-treat wastewaters while protecting the environment and supporting economic development.







# *Initiatives*

**Maintain and Better  
GCA People and  
Business Practices**

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**Maintain and Develop  
GCA Regional Facilities**

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**Strengthen GCA  
Relationships and  
Partnerships**

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**Become a Leader in  
Providing GCA  
Financial Services**

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**Educate and Engage  
GCA Stakeholders**

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# Maintain and Better GCA *People*

The success of any organization centers around the growth and development of its people, as well as upholding best management practices. Like other utilities, GCA faces the challenges of a changing workforce and a limited qualified candidate pool. The pandemic has further exacerbated these challenges.

## Objectives

**Maintain and continue to develop the abilities of our staff.**

## Actions

- **Review and communicate organizational structure, identifying gaps/shortfalls, and regularly set expectations for moving forward in organizational development.**
  - Define and communicate career growth and progression paths.
  - Perform administrative gap analysis; improve and maintain branding; manage workload.
- **Recruit and retain top talent to support succession and growth.**
  - Improve recruitment and intern/extern efforts.
  - Create and enhance employee engagement.
- **Foster team communication, collaboration, and civility.**
  - Provide formal opportunities for respectful feedback.
  - Foster and support a collaborative work environment.
- **Continue to develop a robust safety culture through effective employee engagement.**





# and *Business Practices*

To effectively address the evolving workforce landscape, GCA is committed to recruiting and retaining top talent through training and mentorship and to regularly reviewing its policies and procedures to achieve and maintain operational efficiency.

## Objectives

**Deliver excellence and continuous improvement in business practices.**

## Actions

- Continue evaluation and implementation of new Enterprise Resource Planning tool to improve reliability and functionality.
- Develop financial and operational procedures that support future maintenance, expansion, and development.
- Regularly review, improve, and renew Authority policies, procedures, and legal agreements for internal and external uses.
- Ensure consistent communication and adherence to policies across all levels and facilities of the Authority.
- Develop internal communication strategies to support team development, business process improvement, and management of change.



# Maintain and Develop GCA

## *Regional Facilities*

With the Texas population expected to top 50 million by 2070, GCA plays a vital role in addressing sustainability in wastewater needs and water reuse management. This initiative requires us to build upon our key business strengths, improve the reliability and efficiency of our infrastructure, and support industry's energy transition and diversification. Our goal is to aid customers by creating cost-effective services while keeping pace with an ever-changing regulatory landscape.

### Objectives

### Actions

**Review and establish processes for improving key business strengths.**

- Develop a master plan for each facility, including asset management and life cycle analysis to improve rate predictability and stability.
- Explore and strategically apply technological innovations, including ways to optimize operations.

**Identify opportunities to support local, state, and national energy transitions as well as environmental, social, and governance (ESG) goals.**

- Evaluate and implement energy efficiencies that provide cost-savings and operational improvements.
- Utilize water reuse technologies to address water scarcity issues.
- Seek opportunities to facilitate clean water initiatives which address equity, accessibility, and affordability.
- Monitor and evaluate future business models for supporting ESG goals.

**Identify opportunities to support industries and communities through new and redeveloped facilities.**

- Evaluate regions of demand, working towards a draft wastewater master plan.
- Continue development of regional facilities across Texas.





# Strengthen GCA *Relationships and Partnerships*

Our Core Values (Safety, Communication, Reliability, Integrity, Planning, and Stewardship) provide a framework for how we do business among our team, with our customers, within our industry, and for our communities. Our goal is to work collaboratively and proactively with our partners to develop and share technological advances that help meet Texas' growing need for clean water while maintaining and facilitating economic success.

## Objectives

## Actions

**Identify and proactively engage external stakeholders and partnerships.**

- Involve community, industry, and professional organizations, as well as public agencies and other special district authorities.
- Identify and create opportunities to collaborate and serve in expert capacity on wastewater needs and water management practices.

**Consider and communicate opportunities for additional, non-traditional funding.**

- Partner with startups and public/private partnerships for new projects that further the mission and vision of the Authority.
- Monitor legislative and administrative programs for grant and/or low-interest funding opportunities.



# Become a Leader in Providing GCA *Financial Services*

Throughout its history, GCA has been an issuer of conduit public and private activity bonds. To date, we have issued more than \$3.5 billion in private activity bonds. In 2021, the Texas Legislature modernized GCA's ability to finance projects located outside of Texas and provided GCA with the ability to utilize the existing federal Property Assessed Clean Energy (PACE) program to reduce the redevelopment cost of current and future energy-efficient and water conservation projects. Today, GCA works tirelessly to support the development of projects to attract new industry to our state and improve water quality.

## Objectives

## Actions

**Develop robust public finance programs that support public and private government financial services at state and national levels.**

- Effectively communicate GCA financial programs, regularly reviewing opportunities for funding with current and future participants and customers.
- Position GCA on a national platform as the premier governmental conduit and proactively market those financial services for tax-exempt and taxable bond issuances.

**Consider and communicate opportunities for additional, non-traditional funding.**

- Enhance and market financing opportunities for Property Assessed Clean Energy projects.
- Continue to evaluate the need for additional financial tools and statutory authority that can assist the state in economic development.





# Educate and Engage GCA

## *Stakeholders*

GCA knows that delivering on our mission requires providing knowledge and building support across a broad range of stakeholders: team members, communities, customers, elected officials and other governmental entities, regulators, suppliers, wastewater and water management industry, and financial partners. We will build and maintain strong relationships through two-way, open communication and transparency with all of our constituencies.

### Objectives

**Proactively engage in advancing policies and educating the public about wastewater and water reuse technologies.**

### Actions

- Develop a strategic communications plan to support building relationships with external partners.
- Establish the Authority as “thought leaders” in wastewater treatment and water reuse management.
- Participate in community engagement programs to be a good community partner and neighbor.
- Encourage and support employees in stewardship initiatives.
- Promote GCA facilities as critical infrastructure that provide vital essential services.



# Strategic Planning Staff

**Lisa Brasher**  
**Elizabeth Fazio Hale**  
**Phyllis Frank**  
**Keith Hardcastle**  
**Charles Harris**  
**Scott Harris**  
**Doris Haydon**

**Carrie Latimer**  
**Leonard Levine**  
**Diane Maloy**  
**Shannon Miftari**  
**Kim Ontiveros**  
**Gordon Pederson**  
**Jonathan Sandhu**

The above individuals served as ambassadors in their management capacities, as well as employees representing both tenured and new hire employees. In addition to those listed above, the entire GCA Leadership Team has committed to providing their time and expertise to the implementation of this plan. We are incredibly thankful and appreciative to each of them for their outstanding commitment of time and work ethic in the creation of the GCA Strategic Plan 2022-2026.





# Board of Directors



Franklin D.R. Jones, Jr.  
Chairman of the Board,  
Harris County



Rita E. Standridge  
Vice Chair,  
Chambers County



W. Chris Peden  
Secretary,  
Galveston County



Kevin Scott  
Treasurer,  
Galveston County



Amber Batson  
Member,  
Harris County



Billy Enochs  
Member,  
Galveston County



Lamont E. Meaux  
Member,  
Chambers County



J.M. "Mark" Schultz  
Member,  
Chambers County

# Leadership Team



Elizabeth Fazio Hale  
General Manager/  
Chief Executive Officer



Scott Harris  
Chief Operating Officer



Gordon Pederson  
Chief Technical Officer



Phyllis Frank  
Chief Administrative and  
Strategic Projects Officer

## CORE VALUES

<b>S</b>	<b>SAFETY</b>
<b>C</b>	<b>COMMUNICATION</b>
<b>R</b>	<b>RELIABILITY</b>
<b>I</b>	<b>INTEGRITY</b>
<b>P</b>	<b>PLANNING</b>
<b>T</b>	<b>TEAMWORK</b>
<b>S</b>	<b>STEWARDSHIP</b>



Protecting the waters of the State of Texas through environmentally sound, economically feasible, and technologically advanced wastewater and water management practices.

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