U.S. Customs and Border Protection

United States Border Patrol

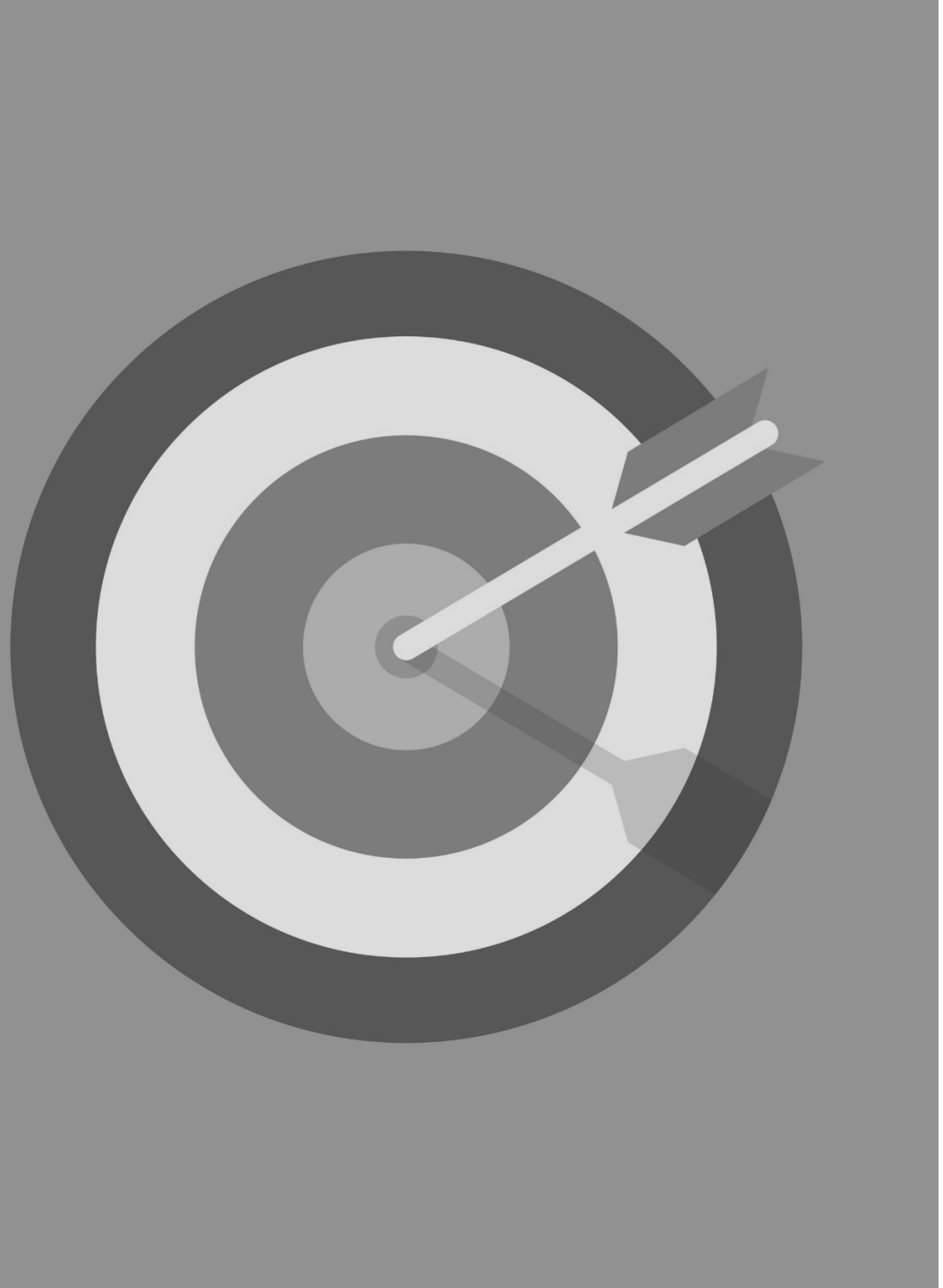
Rio Grande Valley (RGV) Border Barrier Status Update

June 15, 2022

Presentation Objective

The purpose of today's webinar is to inform participants of:

- Border barrier work and environmental planning in RGV
- How to receive more information about the project



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Levee Mitigation

Levee Mitigation Authorization and Rationale

Authorization

On **April 30, 2021**, DHS authorized CBP to resume construction activities to remediate the flood-control levees located within the U.S. Border Patrol's **RGV Sector.**

Rationale

If not repaired, the compromised levees posed several risks, including:

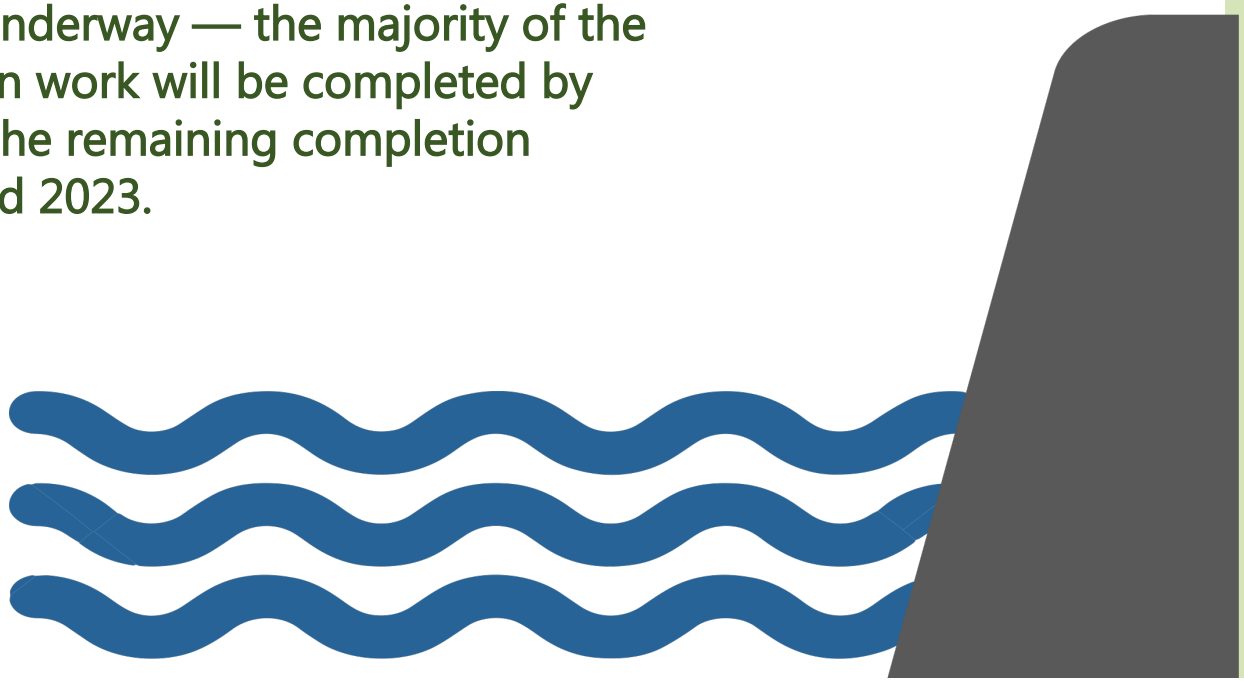
- inadequate flood protection;
- inadequate access and mobility for first responders, landowners, farmers, and ranchers; and
- increased risk of site erosion and floodplain degradation.

Levee Mitigation Ongoing and Planned Work

CBP is working to remediate the earthen flood-control levees in Hidalgo County, Texas. The earthen flood-control levees need to be remediated with new concrete levees.

The levee remediation work is continuing within the current project locations utilizing existing contracts.

Construction is underway — the majority of the levee remediation work will be completed by June 2022, with the remaining completion anticipated in mid 2023.



Environmental Protection

Environmental monitors, contracted by CBP, are onsite to ensure Best Management Practices are followed during construction.

Safety Guardrails

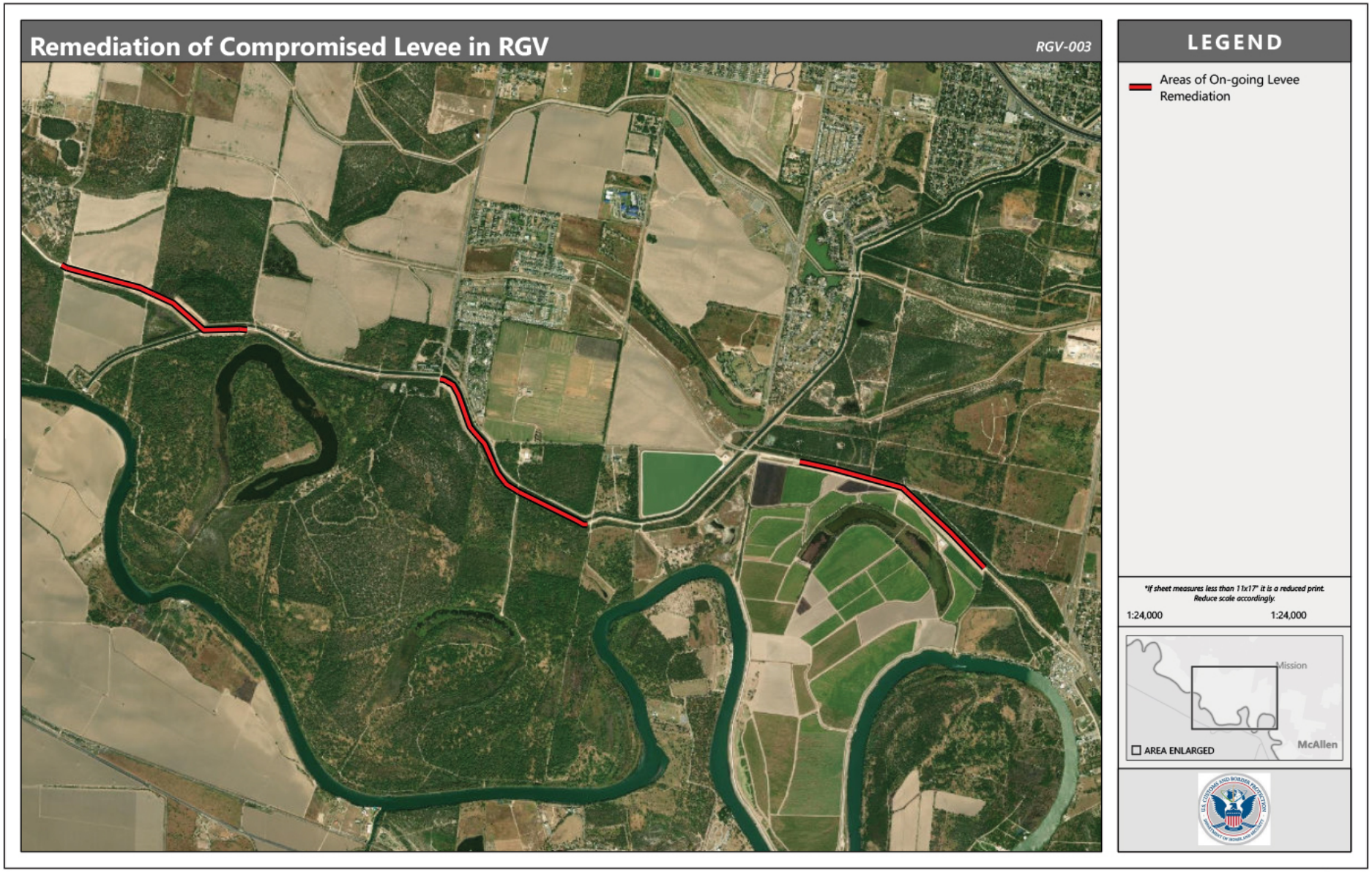
The previously planned levee barrier design included a concrete vertical wall, constructed to the height of the existing earthen levee, with an 18-foot-tall bollard barrier on top of the concrete levee.

The approved, modified design for the levee repairs includes a four-to-six–foot-high guardrail installed on the top of the concrete vertical flood control levee.

These guardrails are designed to protect agents, first responders, and anyone else who needs access to the levee area from accidentally falling over the concrete levee.

Above: The new safety guardrails in between the previously constructed 18 ft levee barrier

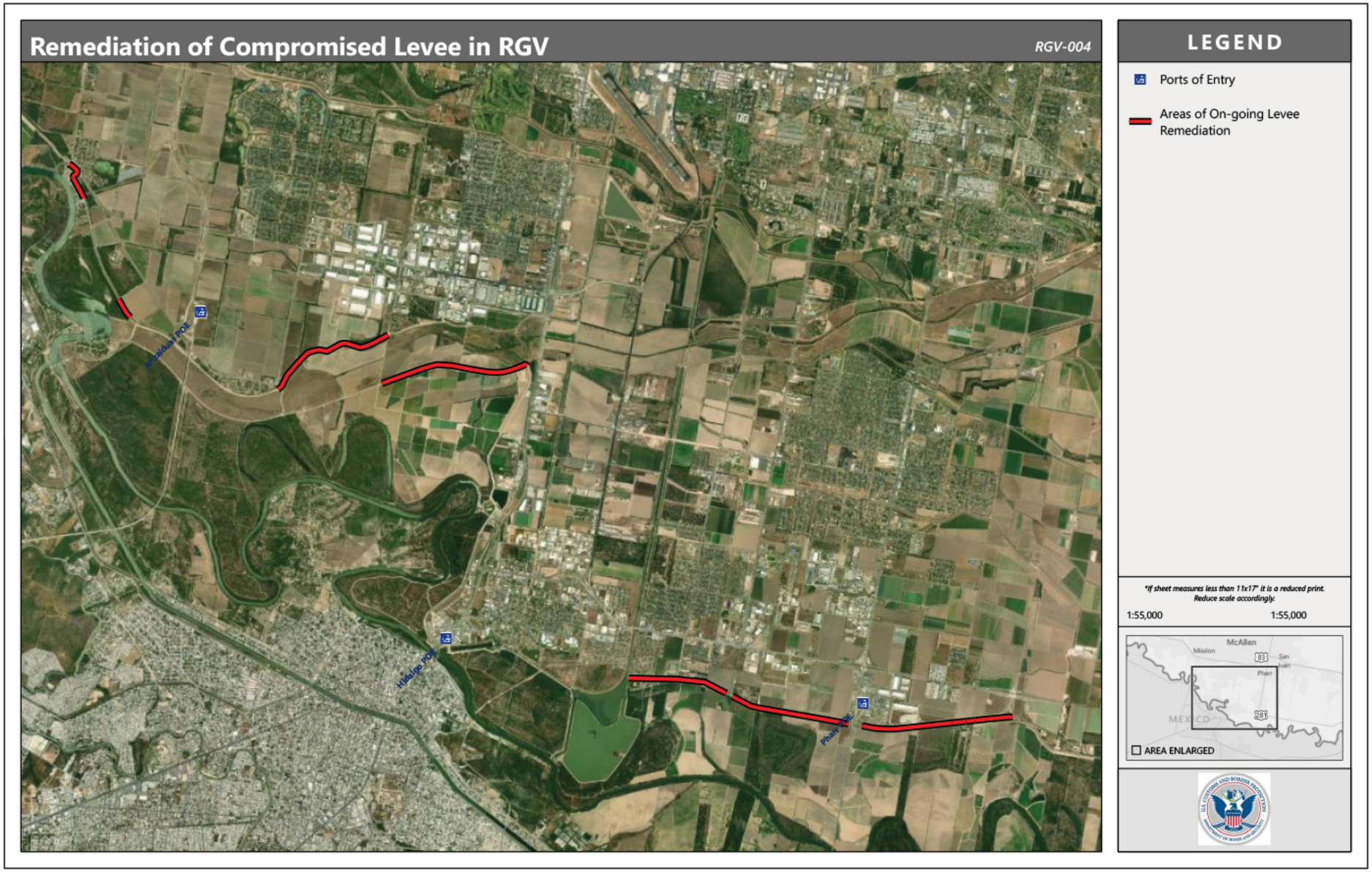
Areas of RGV Levee Remediation | Map 1



Map Request 737v2

December 3, 2021

Areas of RGV Levee Remediation | Map 2

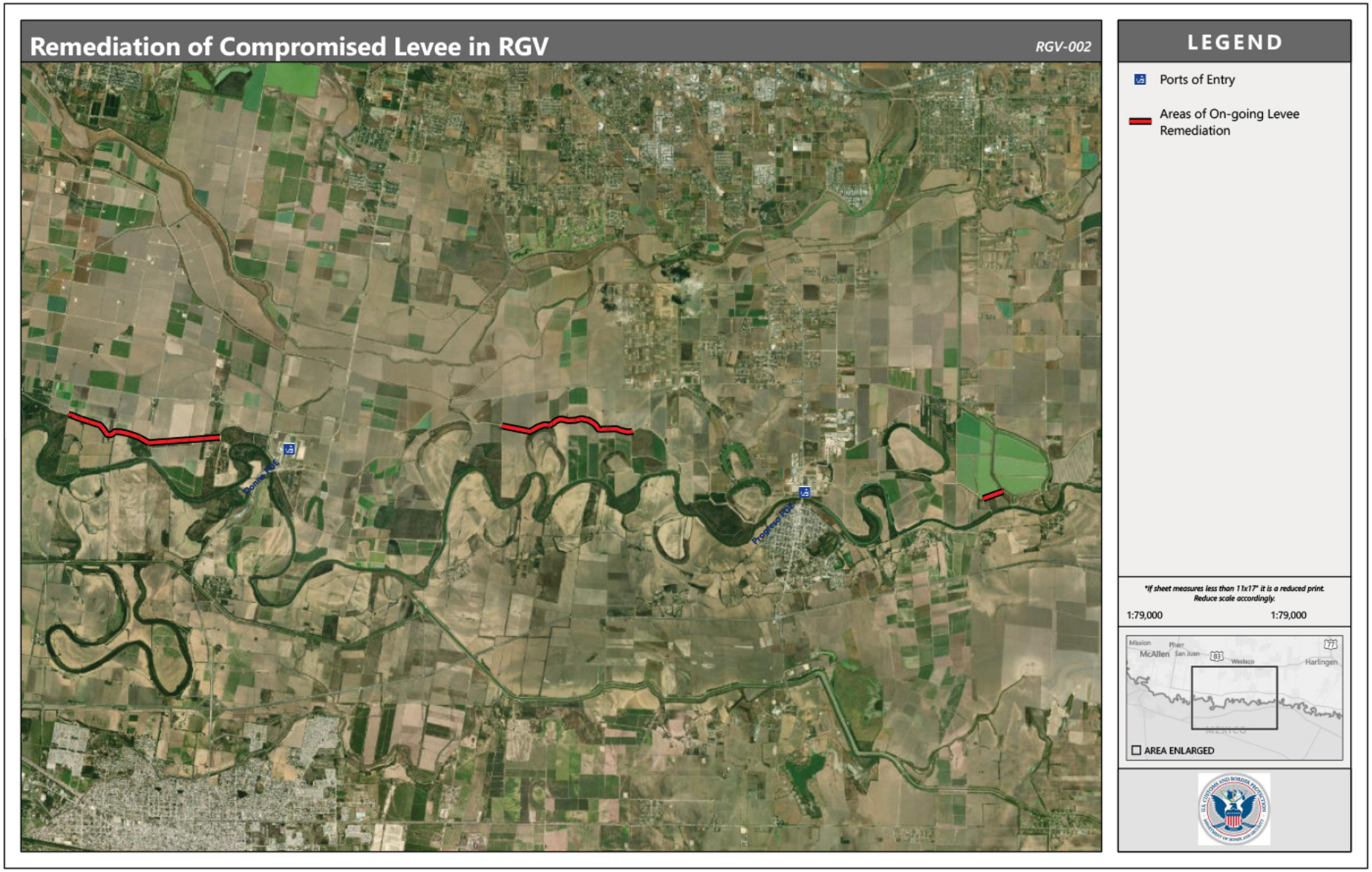


Areas of RGV Levee Remediation | Map 3

Map Request 737v2

December 3, 2021

Areas of RGV Levee Remediation | Map 4



Barrier Make-Safe Work

Barrier Make-Safe Work Authorization and Rationale

Authorization

On **July 27, 2021**, DHS authorized CBP to move forward with the completion of make-safe activities, punch list, and warranty items to include honoring existing real estate agreements at seven incomplete levee and border barrier projects located within the RGV Sector.

Rationale

The previously planned barrier projects in RGV Sector were left in various stages of completion at the time of the Jan. 20, 2021 pause.

While the sites were secured for a temporary suspension, they were not properly secured for a permanent suspension or termination. This has led to deteriorating site conditions and incomplete activities that pose serious safety and environmental risks.

Examples of make-safe activities and punch list items

Remediation

Activities requiring remediation include, but are not limited to:

- Completing roads
- Site grading
- Adding missing caps to bollards
- Mitigating impalement risks
- Relocating or completing access ramps
- Completing utility line relocations
- Installing required canal crossings
- Honoring existing real estate agreements

Additional barrier will not be constructed as part of the make-safe and punch list.

Access Gates Project

Access Gates Project Status

This project involves the completion of 17 gates in various stages of construction as a result of the construction pause.

These gates close gaps that are the result of 2007–2009 barrier construction.

- Eleven gates have been hung but are inoperable.
- Six gates have not yet been installed.

Above: Incomplete gate in RGV Sector

Environmental Planning / National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)

Canceled Projects and Border Barrier Environmental Planning

Border Barrier Cancelation

- On **Oct. 8, 2021**, DHS announced the cancellation of all border barrier contracts located within the Laredo and RGV Sectors and that CBP will begin environmental planning activities for incomplete border barrier system projects funded with DHS's prior year appropriations.

Environmental Planning for Proposed Border Barrier

- For activities or projects that will continue, subject to certain exceptions, DHS is engaging in environmental planning consistent with NEPA and other relevant statutes. **This includes approximately 86 miles of proposed new border barrier in the RGV Sector:**

On Jan. 20, 2022, CBP released a Notice of Scoping. The responses will inform the development of an Environmental Assessment (EA).

Permanent land acquisition is not required. Some locations may require a Right of Entry for Survey.

Environmental planning activities do not involve the construction of new border barrier.

Process

Begin Stakeholder Outreach and Engagement
Complete Natural, Biological, and Cultural Resource Surveys
Provide Agencies and Tribes the Opportunity to Review Draft Survey Reports
Analyze Potential Impacts to Natural, Biological and Cultural Resources
Develop Avoidance or Mitigation Measures, Best Management Practices (BMPs)
Develop NEPA Document
Use Environmental Monitors to Ensure Compliance with BMPs

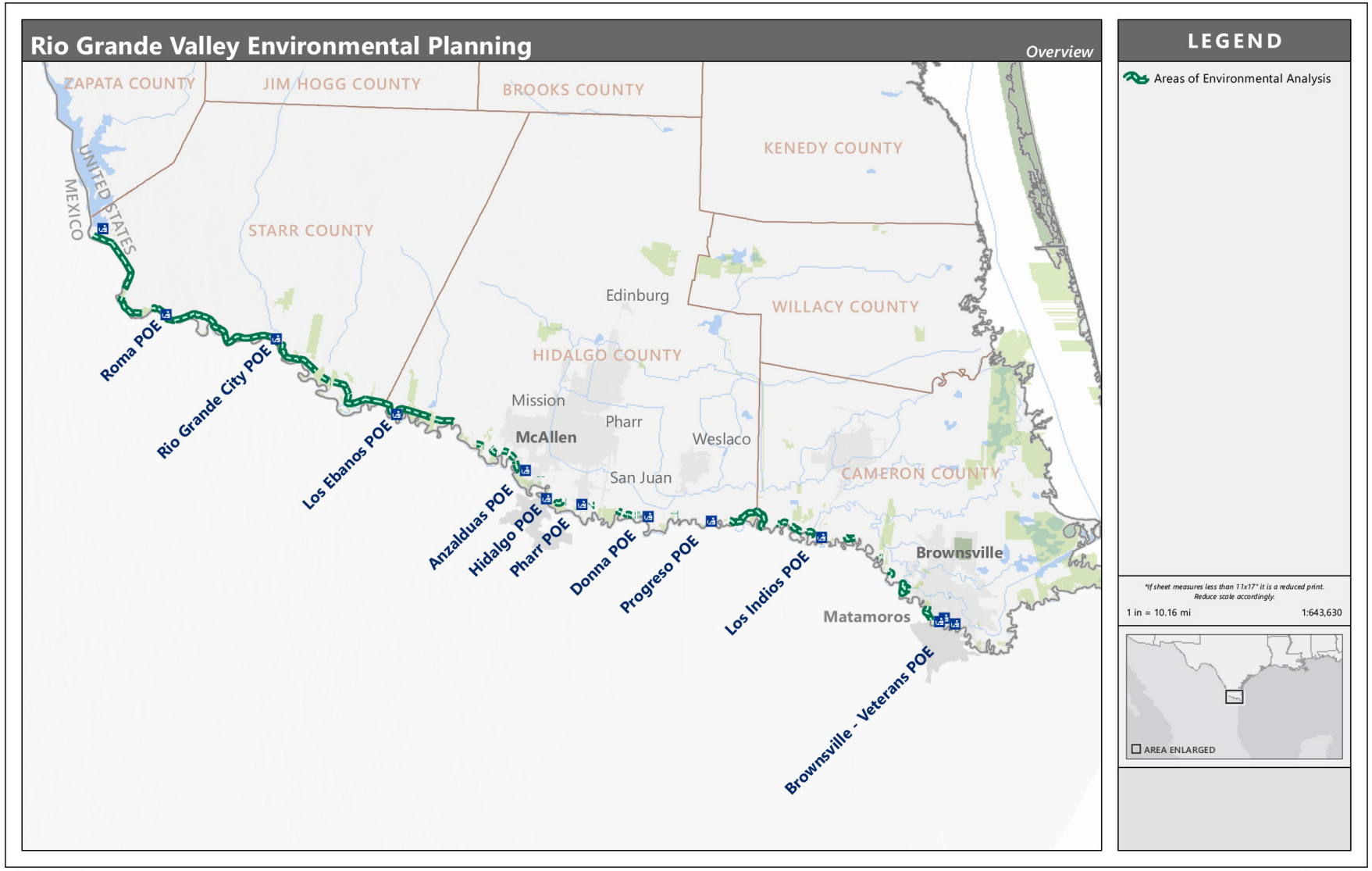
Outreach

On **Jan. 20, 2022,** CBP released a Notice of Scoping via:

- Emails and letters
- Public webinar
- Advertisements
- Media advisory
- CBP.gov

The information provided will inform the development of an Environmental Assessment.
The comment period closed on **March 7, 2022**, but CBP's outreach and coordination efforts with stakeholders will continue throughout the development of the EA.

Areas to Be Evaluated



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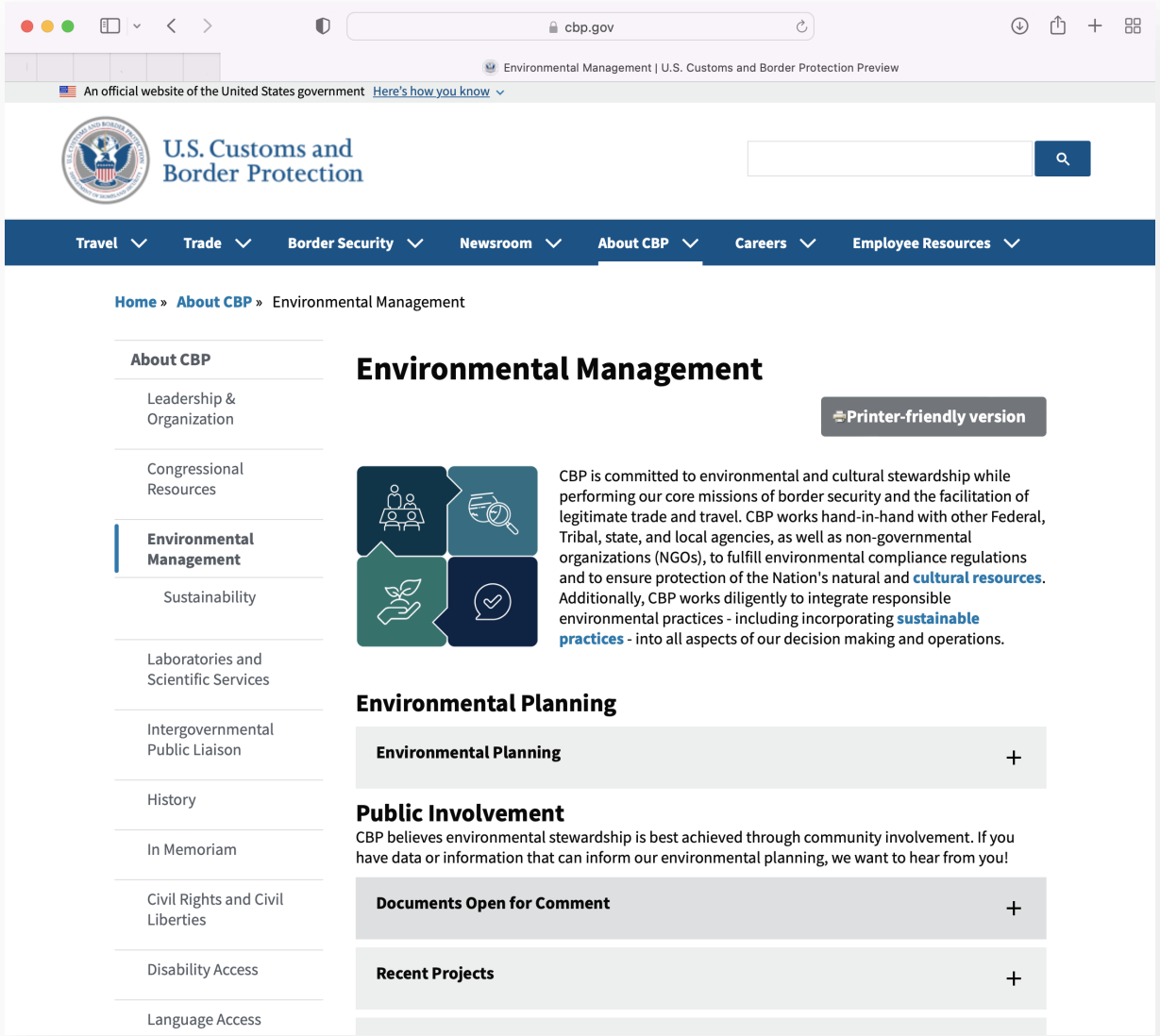
More Information

Further information and updates, including Spanish-language materials can be found on CBP.gov here: https://cbp.gov/document/environmental-assessments/border-barrier-environmental-planning-starr-county-hildalgo-county

Contact your local Border Community Liaison or email RGVComments@cbp.dhs.gov

Thank You!



Thank You!

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