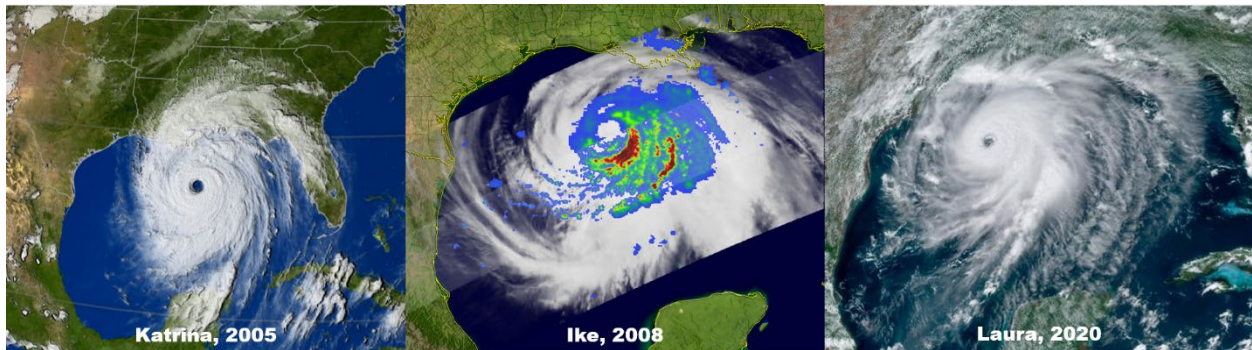




## SSPEED Center Release

August 27, 2020

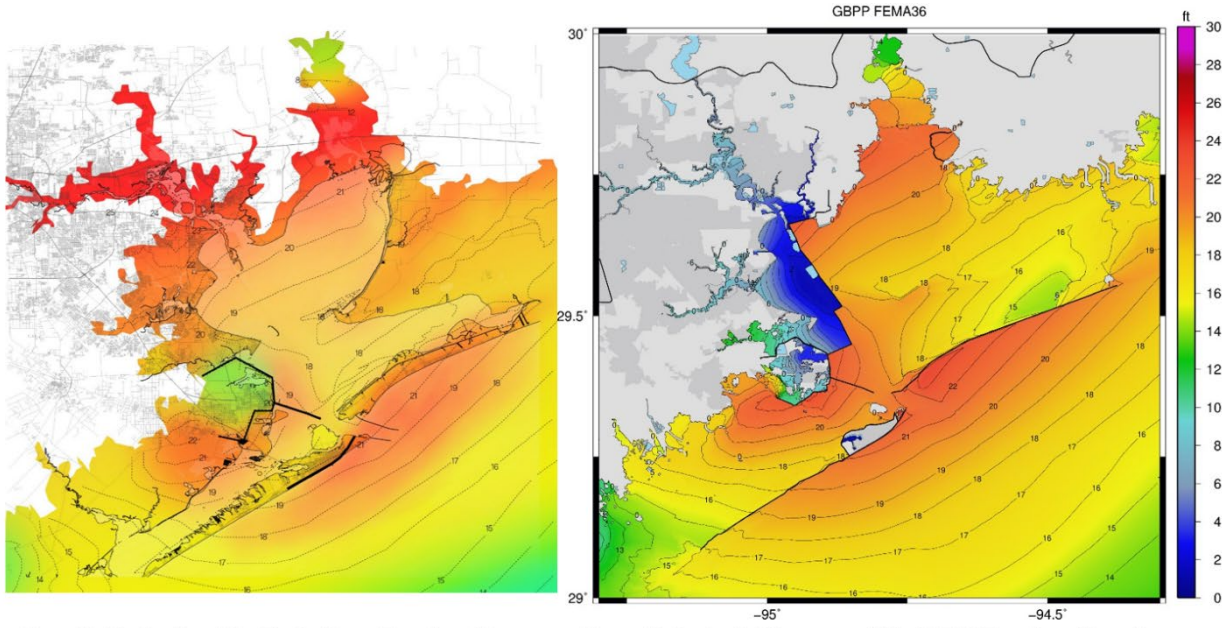
*Our thoughts are with our neighbors in east Texas and Louisiana who are still dealing with the impact of Hurricane Laura.*



The three images above show major hurricanes from the last fifteen years that could have impacted the Houston area with severe storm surge. Hurricane Katrina hit New Orleans in 2005 and was one of the most destructive storms in history with \$130 billion in damages and a massive death toll. Hurricane Ike hit near Galveston in 2008, and the major surge impact was to the east along Bolivar, with total damages around \$30 billion. Harvey was a rainfall event that hit Houston in 2017 as the largest inland flood in U.S. history, and surge was a minor factor in Houston. Recently, Hurricane Laura was headed towards Houston, and then tracked eastward making landfall just west of Lake Charles, LA, where damages are still unknown.

It is clear that we live in a region that is very prone to major strikes from hurricanes, and we must build coastal defenses as soon as possible. As the surge graphs below indicate, a direct hit from a 132 mph storm, with a track over San Luis Pass, would put up to 26 feet of storm surge in the Houston Ship Channel, and spill over 100 million gallons of oil and hazardous substances and destroy tens of thousands of homes and businesses and likely impact thousands. The coastal spine as a first line of defense has been talked about since 2009 and the Galveston Bay Park Plan, first proposed in 2016, is a 25 ft in-bay barrier that is complementary to the coastal spine according to the Corps of Engineers and the Texas GLO. The building of the coastal spine could be 15-20 years away according to the U.S. Army

COE, but it may be feasible to build the GBP in 5 to 7 years and provide an essential first step. The bottom line is that both are needed and as a community we should move on both of these projects as hard and as fast as we can. We cannot depend upon luck. We have to take this problem head-on. It is on all of us – we cannot depend on others to get it done.



**Small Cat. 4 with Existing Protection**

**Small Cat. 4 Storm with GBP Protection for HSC and West Side of Galveston Bay**

For more details on GBP and why it is such an important addition to the Houston region, please visit [SSPEED](#) and [AIA Houston 2020 Visions](#).