

# 2020 ASSEMBLY OF PLANNERS SYMPOSIUM

Public Access Stakeholder Engagement and Inventory

PURSUANT TO  
BSP GCMP RFP/ BSP 2019-002

Submitted by:  
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# Project Overview

In late summer, 2019, the Bureau of Statistics and Plans (BSP) and the Guam Coastal Management Program (GCMP) contracted with Market Research & Development, Inc. (MR&D) to conduct a stakeholder assessment and inventory of the regulations, statutes, programs, and legislation that impact coastal and shoreline access on Guam.

MR&D conducted the qualitative and quantitative research aspects of the project. Dr. Charles Lester, PhD, JD provided the the program inventory and developed a series of recommendations. Dr. Lester is the former Executive Director of the California Coastal Commission and is a lecturer and researcher at the University of California at Santa Barbara.

# Background

The project involved two tasks:

- *Task 1: Design and conduct stakeholder engagement events and surveys, specifically:*
  - To conduct interviews among 15 preselected government stakeholders (planners, policy makers and agency representatives);
  - Convene a focus group of community stakeholders (non-governmental organizations and concerned landowner concerned about coastal and seashore access policies);
  - Convene a structured brainstorming session among everyone interviewed to share what was learned; and,
  - Use those findings as the basis for a survey of local residents regarding coastal access issues.
- *Task 2: Conduct a detailed inventory of existing public access statutes, programs, regulations and policies with the goal of providing guidance and recommendations for the development of a comprehensive Public Access Management Plan.*

# Qualitative Research

## Research Methods:

- *A set of 15 interviews of government agencies and policy makers was conducted from July 7 to August 19, 2019.*
  - The respondents included
    - *BSP*
    - *Department of Agriculture*
    - *Department of Land Management*
    - *Department of Parks and Recreation*
    - *Department of Public Works*
    - *Guam EPA*
    - *Joint Region Marianas*
    - *Forestry and Soils Research Division*
    - *Mayors*
    - *The Guam Legislature*
- *A second set of interviews were conducted among non-governmental groups, landowners and property owners.*

# Qualitative Research

## Research Objectives:

- *Bureau of Statistics and Plans Planning staff identified five areas they were interested in exploring:*
  - Engagement: The governments outreach and engagement of the public in coastal access issues.
  - Behavior: How the behavior of government agencies is impacted by current coastal access rules, regulations and programs.
  - Enforcement: The current state of enforcement of coastal access rules and regulations.
  - Planning Controls: The impact coastal access issues have on planning activities of government agencies.
  - Data Access: The quality and availability of data required to properly plan and manage coastal access.

# Qualitative Research

## Significant Findings:

### ○ *Engagement*

- Respondents believe that more and more frequent public outreach and education is required, specifically in the schools
- The delineation of responsibilities in administering coastal access is not clear. There is no central authority providing leadership of the program.

### ○ *Behavior*

- Coastal access is not a high priority among agencies or policy makers and is not negatively impacting agency operations.
- The military has not been viewed as an impediment to coastal access as of now. There is concern about what the eventual administration of SDZs and the LFTRs will do to coastal access.

### ○ *Enforcement*

- Enforcement during the development process is viewed as effective. After the award of occupancy the priority of coastal access is so low and resources so few that ongoing enforcement is ineffective.
- Signage for coastal access points are insufficient and should be reengineered.

# Qualitative Research

## Significant Findings:

### ○ *Planning Controls*

- Respondents indicated there is a need for central repository of data.
- The priority of coastal access is very low among agencies and in the legislature because:
  - *Lack of measured public concern*
  - *The lack of leadership in managing coastal access.*

### ○ *Data Access*

- Locational data about coastal access points is insufficient.
- Historical/cultural information within developed zones on Guam is sufficient, but not in areas that are undeveloped.

# Quantitative Research

## Methods:

- *A computer Aided Telephone Interview (CATI) survey of 417 randomly selected residents over the age of 18.*
- *A two-stage probability sampling method was employed. All residential land line numbers (80%) and postpaid account cellphone numbers (20%) were pooled and then randomly selected and called. The household member with the most recent birthday was interviewed.*
- *The survey was conducted over a ten-day period and yielded results accurate to within  $\pm 5\%$  at the 95% confidence level. That is to say if the survey were replicated, similar results would be obtained 95 times out of 100.*

# Quantitative Research

The survey was designed to attain the following information objectives:

- *Identify how frequently residents visit the shoreline*
- *Determine the way they normally get to coastal areas*
- *Establish the importance of having coastal access*
- *Ascertain what sorts of activities they engage in at coastal areas*
- *Identify ratings for coastal areas on the basis of accessibility, parking, safety and cleanliness*
- *Establish the last coastal area they visited*
- *Identify if any problem or incident and its type that was encountered on their last visit*
- *Establish if there is sufficient shoreline or coastal access*
- *Determine how satisfied residents are with the amount of coastal access signs*
- *Determine the importance of government investment in improving coastal access*
- *Identify what the government should do to improve coastal access on Guam*
- *Perceptions on the military realignment and the reasons for or against the buildup*
- *Perceptions of the impact of the Live Fire Training Ranges/Safety Danger Zones on coastal access*

# Quantitative Research

## Significant Findings:

- *Two-thirds of the island (66%) visit a beach/ coastal area once a month or less.*
- *Most of the island (82%) drive up to a beach/ coastal area.*
- *Even though a third of the island visits a beach/ coastal area regularly, 90% feel coastal access is important.*
- *When rating the beach/ coastal areas residents visited, parking and cleanliness were given the lowest ratings.*
- *Nearly half (47%) of those who visited a beach/ coastal area, visited Tumon.*

# Quantitative Research

## Significant Findings:

- *Most (71%) respondents feel there are not a sufficient number of beach/ coastal access points on Guam.*
- *Nearly two-thirds (65%) had seen a beach/ coastal access sign and 52% believed there were a sufficient number of signs identifying beach/ coastal areas.*
- *Eighty-seven percent believed that the government should invest in coastal areas and focus on maintaining cleanliness and security.*
- *Fifty-three percent supported the military realignment. Of the 25% that did not support the military realignment, their main concern was the military's impact on the environment and culture.*
- *Fifty-eight percent believed that the military is restricting access to beach/ coastal areas.*

# Policy and Program Recommendations

Guam has hundreds of public access points:

- *Formal beach parks*
- *Informally-accessed shoreline areas*
- *Coastal vista points*
- *Boating piers and fishing points, and*
- *Trails both to and along the coast.*

There is no single consolidated source of information about where and what these access resources may be, how accessible they are to the general public, or the type of amenities (e.g. restrooms, water, parking) that may be found at each point.

# Policy and Program Recommendations

Issues regarding public access are inevitably going to grow, both in terms of resident population, development, and in the total number of visitors to the island.

If nothing is done to address the issues of growth the quality of access will decline even further. Public access must be addressed as an important component when planning for growth.

# Policy and Program Recommendations

A number of fundamental issues stand in the way of improving coastal access, such as:

- *Signage should be improved so that it is more visible.*
- *Many accessways are difficult to find, are unsigned, or signage is confusing.*
- *Parking areas, also, are generally not well-signed in the hotel districts, though many urban accessways do have signs.*
- *There is lack of clarity about the general management responsibilities regarding coastal access, including where local village mayors may be responsible for shoreline park management.*
- *There is a lack of enforcement due to confused lines of authority and responsibility as well as a lack of resource commitment.*
- *Existing land use and regulatory authority is under utilized to ensure that required access is maintained.*
- *Climate change and erosion are not being monitored or factored as a key land use concern. If Guam loses its beaches it will lose much of its economy.*

# Policy and Program Recommendations

## Recommendations:

- *Complete an Updated Inventory of Public Access Resources.*
- *Provide the Shoreline Access Inventory to the Public through website and cellular phone applications.*
- *Complete a Public Access Management Plan.*
- *Establish an ‘Access Program’ and ‘Coordinator/Manager’ position in BSP/GCMP.*
- *Update Development Application materials and Review Checklists with Specific Access Requirements and Findings.*
- *Establish a Public Access Enforcement Task Force.*
- *Implement a Comprehensive Public Access Signage Program.*
- *Address Public Access Parking Supply and Demand/Transportation.*
- *Conduct a Sea Level Rise Vulnerability Assessment of Coastal Access Resources.*
- *Seek additional funding to support new Public Access Program activities.*
- *Leverage Coastal Clean-up Day Activities to Increase Support for Shoreline Accessway Management and Maintenance; Build Public Awareness.*
- *Develop Public Access Brochure/Online Materials address Public Access Rights.*