Addressing Blight in Disaster Impacted Neighborhoods

Disaster Recovery in Distressed Communities

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22NEWS REMEMBERS
JUNE 1ST TORNADO PATH

June 1, 2011
Springfield, MA
Search & Rescue
Search & Rescue
Search & Rescue
Protection of Life & Property
Damage Assessment
Cleanup
Emergency Demolitions
In more stable neighborhoods, property owners typically have adequate insurance, resources and motivation to initiate recovery relatively quickly.
In economically distressed communities, disasters exacerbate and accelerate the process of decline...
...resulting in more vacant lots and buildings
Decreased economic activity
Increased disinvestment
Loss of community
Decreased public safety
More vacant residential lots
And vacant commercial lots
Main Street Near Union – July 2014
Illegal Dumping
Vacant Buildings
Survived the tornado – lost to fire
Tornado damaged Low-income housing co-op now in foreclosure
Rehab started – then stopped
Main Street- July 2014
So what do we do now?
Identify new opportunities
Coordinate Volunteers
Engage the community
Reimagine Neighborhood Centers
Reimagine Intersections
Envision new streetscapes...
...and new street standards
Neighborhood Stabilization Strategy

* Demolition of unsalvageable buildings
* Strategic rehabilitation of salvageable damaged and vacant buildings
* Business retention strategy
* Vacant lot clean-up and reuse – expedited abutter lot sale program community gardens pocket parks temporary art installations & murals parking infill development
* Engage neighborhood residents, business and property owners in the process
Vacant Property Analysis
Selective Demolitions
Partner with Nonprofit Partners & Volunteers
Rebuild Together on Tyler Street
Strategic Acquisitions
Leverage Existing Business Assistance Programs

François Improvement Grants & RLF Loans
Façade Improvement Grants & RLF Loans
Re-purpose Vacant Lots
Community Gardens
Re-purpose Vacant Lots
Pocket Park - Philadelphia
Re-purpose Vacant Lots
Small Infill parking lots for businesses and residents
Vacant lots expose blank walls
Mural on Walnut Street - Cincinnati, Ohio
Infill Parking Lot with mural, Cincinnati, OH
Groundbreaking for New Housing
Funded through NSP and CDBG DR Funds
Celebrate Every Success

• Create Events – groundbreakings, ribbon cuttings, etc.

• Issue press releases and use social media to broadcast events, business re-openings and other milestones.

• Encourage broad community participation
Tree Planting
Groundbreaking for New School
Plan now because you never know what the next disaster will be or when it will strike...
Gas explosion - Springfield, MA - November 23, 2012

over 60 downtown buildings damaged or destroyed
Worthington Street Area Redevelopment Plan – 2014
Strategies "Addressing Blight in Disaster Impacted Neighborhoods"

Presented by:
Jeremey Newberg

July 29, 2014
If Communities do not plan ahead of a Storm, Other forces may plan for them, sometimes on their own terms.
Bounce Back
or Bounce Forward?
Storm Resilience, Relief, Recovery & Revitalization Objectives

1. Preserve Safety of People, Property, Businesses and Community Assets;

2. Position People, Property, Businesses and Community Assets to withstand a storm and return to functionality with minimal disruption and cost;

3. Engage businesses and residents in planning and execution of relief response, recovery & revitalization.
Remember: Storms are Unpredictable and Chaotic.
Your Community Needs a Plan for:

1. **Resilience** to better withstand the ravages of a storm

2. **Relief and Recovery** to return to safety and functionality;

3. **Revitalization** to systematically remove blight and position businesses and neighborhoods for sustained prosperity for existing *and* new residents in a changing environment.

What Role can Economic Developers Play in **Resilience**, **Relief**, **Recovery** and **Revitalization** Planning and Implementation?
CDBG Disaster Recovery Appropriations 1993-2013

- FY 1993: $16.7 Billion (Katrina, Rita, Wilma)
- FY 1994: $6.1 Billion (Ike, Gustav, Dolly)
- FY 1995:
- FY 1996:
- FY 1997:
- FY 1998:
- FY 1999:
- FY 2000:
- FY 2001:
- FY 2002:
- FY 2003:
- FY 2004:
- FY 2005: $16 Billion ($15.18 after sequester) (Sandy)
- FY 2006:
- FY 2007:
- FY 2008:
- FY 2009:
- FY 2010:
- FY 2011:
- FY 2012:
- FY 2013:

Source: IEM, HORNE CPAs & Business Advisors
CDBG DR Funding: de facto Stimulus if managed within the context of a Revitalization Plan

- Approximately $47.8 Billion in Federal Funds have been distributed by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) through the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program since 1993.

- Currently serving 32 CDBG-DR grantees (27 states, 5 local governments) for approximately $29.8 Billion.
Components of a Storm Resilience, Relief, Recovery & Revitalization Plan for Communities

The Goal is Safety, Functionality & Sustained Prosperity for:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>People:</th>
<th>Neighbors: Young, Able, Elderly and with Special Needs</th>
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<tr>
<td>Infrastructure:</td>
<td>Safety and Functionality</td>
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<td>Housing:</td>
<td>Homeowners and Renters</td>
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<td>Businesses:</td>
<td>Owners, Work Spaces &amp; Workers</td>
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<tr>
<td>Quality of life:</td>
<td>Community and Identity</td>
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Plans Need to be Flexible and Scalable

1. Where?
2. For Whom?
3. What?
4. When and How?
5. With What Resources?

For a under-resourced community, your greatest assets are:

✓ Ability to Communicate and Organize
✓ Your knowledge of the Community and where and how to direct assistance
✓ Your time and your energy.
People: Be Informed and Prepared to Navigate Chaos

- Identify who are the frail and vulnerable. What do they need for safety and how best to get them there.
- Backup generators or access to stable power for people who dependent on electricity to survive (ventilators)
- Pre-Storm Evacuation Checklist
- Waterproof Legal Documents (lease, deed, ID, pay stub, birth certificate, will, insurance coverage)
- Encourage people to take pictures of their homes inside and out
- Use Social Media and neighborhood networks to educate on how to access Relief and Recovery Assistance.
Infrastructure: **Power, Transportation, Sustenance**
Infrastructure: Power, Transportation, Sustenance

• Trimmed trees prevent power outages
• Backup generators for power and communications
• Coordination with Local Government Emergency Management Services
• Transportation alternatives if public transit fails
• How to minimize disruption of Debris Removal, Roads, Bridges, Power & Communication, Water and Treatment, industrial facilities

What infrastructure needs modernization to support your envisioned revitalized economy and community?
Housing: Protect, Stabilize and Improve

House built on concrete 'honeycomb' foundation allowing it to float.

The house can rise by up to 9 ft.

THE DOCK: Made of reinforced concrete with four poles. House slowly rises as dock fills with water.
Housing: Protect, Stabilize and Improve

- Emergency shelters. Coordination with Red Cross, Salvation Army, United Way and Local Government Emergency Management Services

- Integrate resiliency requirements in building and safety code (eg: required elevated HVAC in flood zones)

- Renter Services: Temporary, Medium & Long Term

- Homeowner Services

- Housing for People with Special Needs

Do you want to rebuild your housing stock for as you were or as you want to be?
Neighborhood Businesses
Neighborhood Businesses: Be Prepared to Protect and Serve

• Pre-Storm Checklist: Identify areas of risk of damage for water, wind, exposure to elements and/or loss of power.
• Communications Plan with Workers for safety and transportation
• Access to Power, Fuel and Supplies
• Waterproof Legal Documents (lease, deed, ID, contracts, incorporation, tax, insurance coverage)
• Accounting of Inventory & Assets via pictures and paper inside and out
• Identify how your business can serve resident needs during relief and recovery phases.
CDBG DR and Neighborhood Businesses: 
* A Cautionary Tale *

- Over-underwriting businesses during recovery leads under-use of CDBG DR Recovery Funds
- Remember it is a DISASTER.

1. Give grants to stay in business and keep workers employed first
2. Underwrite and issue loans to help businesses grow for sustained revitalization after they have recovered from the ravages of the storm.
Community Assets: Protect and Enhance Quality of Life

• What are the physical and/or intangible Community Assets that define Quality of Life to Preserve?

• What is your plan to protect and/or enhance these Assets and/or Qualities in the context of a storm?

• Government and Philanthropic Assistance and private investment work better when you have a plan that makes their missions easier to achieve.
Economic Revitalization

focuses on how to grow from within and increase the capital base of a community

Our Strategy Prioritizes Investments In:

Marketing | Infrastructure | Businesses | Work Spaces | Quality of Life Services | Housing
Capital for Revitalization Investments

**Seed Capital**
- Deep Market Analysis
- Planning
- Acquisitions
- Site Preparation
- Strategic Marketing
- Additional Incentives

**Harvest Capital**
- Build out the Projects
  - Housing
  - Infrastructure
  - Quality of Life Services
  - Work Spaces
  - Marketing
  - Businesses
Approach a Resilience Plan like a Community Organizer

- Identify Needs and Services to be provided;
- Assign roles and functions to your neighbors;
- Communicate and Organize to be prepared for assistance if it comes;
- Be ready to solve problems on your own if assistance does not come in a manner that you need.
No One Can Do It Alone

Partners need to Re-define, Re-invigorate and Re-commit to the Practice of Partnership to implement economic revitalization strategies.
“Don't underestimate the Force.”

While the Forces of a Storm presents the power to do damage;

it also presents Opportunities to Organize and Improve a Community.
Thank you!

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