
OVERVIEW

The two-day symposium that occurred in APA's Burnham Conference Center in Chicago November 1-2, 2007, performed its intended function. It brought a team of talented, experienced, and creative problem solvers together to discuss a challenging problem, and it turned on the spigots of their imaginations. What follows below is merely a synopsis of the numerous ideas and insights they shared with us while they were here, helping us to frame and reframe our thinking about the mission of this project, what was achievable, and how we might best go about seeking to achieve it. We sought to identify our audience for the resulting PAS Report, define the problems we are trying to solve, delineate the planning principles that should guide our work, and tap everyone's knowledge for suggestions of communities that could be examined more closely for best practices examples. One caution about the case study list is that it is just that—a partial list that we have sought to enhance since the symposium by interviewing state hazard mitigation officers, leading consultants, and others who could point out communities that they think are doing an exemplary job of integrating hazard mitigation into local plan making.

Jim Schwab, Manager
APA Hazards Planning Research Center

AUDIENCE

Being clear about the intended audience of the report is an important first step for the symposium. This section displays the participants' responses when determining the readership for which this report is being prepared.

1. Build coalition of support extending beyond planners.
 - Some local planners do not understand how mitigation can open doors to involve other departments and groups. Mitigation is an opportunity for others to understand the relevance of planning in their daily lives.
 - A list of the possible audience follows. In no way is this list inclusive.
 - Floodplain Managers
 - Watershed Planners
 - Environmental Managers (also as advocates for mitigation)
 - Private Sector (Urban Land Institute, focus group for business community)
 - Local Public Officials, Political Infrastructure
 - Also engineers, architects, transportation, decision makers, landscape architects

- Important to seek out nontraditional allies/stakeholders with multiple goals and objectives to form common outcome
2. Ways of targeting and informing planning boards
 - Quick Notes
 - Training/Workshops
 - Videos

PROBLEMS

This section introduces problems that we are trying to solve by discussing the integration of hazard mitigation into local planning. By defining the problem first, we should be better able to define the solutions around which guiding principles can be developed.

1. The assumption that mitigation is equivalent to a comprehensive plan is problematic when explaining the value unique to mitigation.
2. Planning currently lacks techniques to integrate hazard mitigation into local planning, creating a disconnect.
3. The planning field is event-dependent when addressing mitigation.
 - FEMA's Pre-Disaster Mitigation Grant Program (PDM) is a breakthrough, but communities still procrastinate
4. Are we making it easier to live in hazardous areas? Points to consider.
 - In places where hazards are inevitable, how do we adapt development?
 - What is the moral issue of risky behavior regarding development?
 - Equity issues accompany
 - Is it better to have strong state laws or capabilities for dealing with hazards and mitigation?
 - Land jurisdiction problem can force development into bad locations
 - Hazard areas often undeveloped for a reason
5. Difficult to reverse previously established property rights with a land-use plan.

PRINCIPLES

The following principles should help guide the integration of hazard mitigation into current and comprehensive municipal planning activities, including effective implementation.

-
1. Act before a disaster.
 2. Mitigation requires patience, monitoring, and continuing evaluation.
 - Need to critique ongoing plans and ordinances for loopholes
 3. Be strategic and opportunistic so that you are ready when events or partnerships come along as catalysts.
 4. Evaluate opportunities in comprehensive plan for density reallocation.
 - It is possible to downzone
 5. Emulate the green building trend by maximizing current programs and/or developing new ones.
 - The Community Rating System through the National Flood Insurance Policy (NFIP) is a starting point for flood prone communities
 - The Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED and LEED-ND) should add hazard mitigation
 6. It is necessary to communicate to localities the risk for hazards in their area, and advise about consequences.
 - Planning staff must be able to communicate risk to planning boards
 - Public education is an effective way to inform a wide audience, answer questions, and guide future research to address local concerns
 - Is there enough outreach and awareness?
 - Breakdown hazard mitigation and risk elements at local level when people don't understand
 - Need to promote discussion of how to avoid losses
 - "Mitigation pays" is an important slogan
 - California is setting up a loss avoidance tracking mechanism
 7. The local implementation of state laws depends on the political will.
 - Political will needs a champion, either groups or individual advocates
 - Know your institutions
 - The role of the law is very important
 - The Disaster Mitigation Act has added technique and process
 - Planners can give decision makers cover by acting as facilitators to ease politics

8. Planners must account for stakeholder values in light of hazard mitigation.
 - Perform a stakeholder analysis
 - Identify and compare priorities and conflicts for all stakeholders
 - Take responsibility for addressing hazards in local plans
 - Note: California now mandates incorporation of flood hazards in comprehensive plan safety element
 - Emphasize multi-objective planning
 - Make sure that subdivision control is in lockstep with comprehensive plan elements
 - Involve developers in modeling of build-out analysis in hazardous areas

BEST PRACTICES

The following section provides suggestions of successful methods to effectively integrate hazard mitigation into local planning (i.e., programs, projects, relationships...).

1. Make the hazard mitigation and comprehensive plan complementary.
 - Integrate vertically
 - Both state and federal
 - Federal policy should encourage disclosure
 - Local government opportunities to integrate
 - Require hazard notice on building permit
 - Link disclosure of hazards and risks to moral issue
 - Insurance industry should be ally
 - Floodplain manager checks plans
 - City engineer works with storm water controls
 - Site plan review is a fundamental tool
 - System should be established to not let bad plans get that far
 - Good ex.: Berkeley, California
2. Routinely implement participatory planning.
 - Take the time to listen prior to a disaster
 - “Time is the enemy in recovery”

- Consider public investment
 - Green infrastructure to improve environmental quality
 - Rethink infrastructure during rebuilding
 - Schools/critical facilities/Emergency Operation Centers (EOC)
 - Water resource council on executive order 11988

3. Visioning

- Visualization used for:
 - Storm scenarios
 - Scale of analysis (neighborhood, regional)
 - Before and after scenarios
- Have hazards expert present during visioning process in order to provide essential input

4. Tools to aid in the integration of hazard mitigation into local planning.

- Analytical tools
 - Risk management audit (expert review of plans and ordinances)
 - Resiliency index (measure of community's ability to bounce back after disaster)
 - Update model hazards element from American Planning Association publication "Growing Smart"
 - Complete content analysis of plans
- Implementation tools
 - Hazard scan of all ordinances
 - Pre-event tool of building moratorium
 - Financial tools available with mortgages or insurance

5. Tools and resources for further integration.

- Sub-area and functional plans
 - The neighborhood is where people respond and mobilize
- Include/require public improvements content to development proposals
- Specify and enforce what the developer must submit for to receive development approval
 - Ex: Site plan reviews require wildfire mitigation in Colorado and Florida

- Provide Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) for hazard removal
- Disclose risk and consider consumer point of view
 - Most states don't require this
 - A general practice in California, but in escrow papers (too late to back out)
- Planned Development Rights (PDR) to buy open space
 - Ex.: Provides major recharge for central Florida aquifer with green swamp
 - Helps Florida Keys meet Rate of Growth Ordinance (ROGO)

CASE STUDIES

The following communities were suggested as places that have done innovative or highly effective work regarding planning and hazard mitigation.

Bell Haven, NC

Berkeley, CA

Charlotte/Mecklenburg, NC

Kinsley, KS

Kinston, NC

Los Angeles, CA

Roseville, CA

Tulsa, OK

Hanover Twp., PA

Lee County, FL

Medina County, OH

Pierce County, WA

Teller County, CO

Front Range Fuels Treatment Partnership (CO)

Hoopa Valley, CA (Tribal)