

Impediments to a Sustainable Recovery

Objectives:

- 10.1 Discuss federal disaster recovery programs as an entitlement
- 10.2 Discuss whether disaster recovery programs are creating more vulnerable communities
- 10.3 Discuss local capability and commitment to sustainable recovery

Factors Contributing to Recovery Programs as an Entitlement

- Supplemental assistance
 - Assistance beyond the Stafford Act
 - Lobbying members of Congress
- Limited restrictions on development in high hazard areas
 - Failure to use existing governmental authority
 - Increased disaster costs

Factors Contributing to Recovery Programs as an Entitlement

- Public expectations
 - Limited financial contribution of local governments
 - Improved notification and delivery
- Limited disincentives / penalties
 - Repetitive damage cycle
 - Moral hazard (Platt 1999)

Factors Contributing to Recovery Programs as an Entitlement

- Additional factors to consider (Platt 1999)
 - The scope of disaster assistance
 - Federal assistance as a means to supplement state and local capabilities
 - Rising disaster costs
 - Disaster Relief Act of 1950
 - Disaster Relief Act of 1970
 - Robert T. Stafford Act
 - Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000

Factors Contributing to Recovery Programs as an Entitlement

- Over reliance on supplemental appropriations
 - Ad-hoc creation of rules
 - Rules and special interests
 - Pork barrel politics
 - Challenging disaster assistance requests

Ability to Garner Supplemental Appropriations

- The size and scope of a disaster
 - Larger disasters create an increased level of public concern and publicity
- The timing of a disaster
 - Disasters forgotten over time
 - Omnibus funding packages
 - Pork barrel spending

Ability to Garner Supplemental Appropriations

- The ability of state and local officials to develop a thorough and data-driven request package
 - Federal agency review
- The political power of those members of Congress whose districts were affected
 - Members of appropriation committees
 - Powerful members of Congress

Supplemental Appropriations

- Supplemental appropriations and disaster relief needs
 - Gross estimates of state needs
 - Recapturing allocated funds

Rising Disaster Costs

- Rapid growth in areas subject to repeated disasters
- An increased willingness to declare federal disaster areas
- The reliance on the use of politicized supplemental appropriations

Rising Disaster Costs

- The unwillingness of the federal government to limit disaster assistance to those that undertake meaningful mitigation measures
- Reliance on “engineering approaches”
- Existing federal recovery programs that repair at-risk infrastructure with limited emphasis on mitigation measures

Supplemental Consideration

- Should current disaster relief programs be revised? If so, what specific changes should be made?
 - Evaluating state and local capability
 - Capability and federal aid
 - Disaster assistance and proactive mitigation
 - Current programs and sustainable recovery

Disaster Recovery Programs and Increased Hazard Vulnerability

- Replacing at-risk infrastructure, housing and critical facilities to their pre-disaster condition
- Upgrading damaged infrastructure
- Public expectations
 - Limited incentives

Disaster Recovery Programs and Increased Hazard Vulnerability

- Cost-sharing
- Commitment to hazard mitigation
 - Hazard Mitigation Grant Program
 - 406 mitigation
- Over reliance on engineering solutions
 - Underutilization of land use measures

Disaster Recovery Programs and Increased Hazard Vulnerability

- Repair of hazard-prone structures
 - Balancing decisions
 - Funding emphasizes repair versus mitigation
 - Individual Assistance
 - Existing codes
 - Building code
 - Local Flood Damage Prevention Ordinance
 - National Flood Insurance Program
 - No adverse impact

Disaster Recovery Programs and Increased Hazard Vulnerability

- Construction of flood control levees
 - History of Flood control levees in the U.S.
 - Channeling floodwaters downstream
 - Negative effects
 - Altering the natural functions of floodplains
 - Worsening flooding downstream
 - Encouraging development
 - False sense of security

Disaster Recovery Programs and Increased Hazard Vulnerability

- Beach renourishment
 - Modification of the natural environment
 - Barrier island migration
 - Intensive development patterns
 - Beach renourishment as a primary means to protect at-risk property
 - Costs
 - Federal funding
 - Encouraging intensive development
 - Maintaining projects over time

Disaster Recovery Programs and Increased Hazard Vulnerability

- Post-disaster community infrastructure reconstruction
 - Post-disaster public infrastructure reconstruction
 - Guiding development patterns
 - Shaping future vulnerability
 - Federal assistance and the rapid repair of communities
 - Short-versus long-term perspectives

Post-disaster Community Infrastructure Reconstruction

- Examples of post-disaster reconstruction techniques affecting community vulnerability
 - Relocating public facilities
 - Rebuilding at-risk facilities to their pre-disaster condition
 - Public Assistance
 - Encouraging additional development
 - 406 mitigation

Disaster Recovery Programs and Increased Hazard Vulnerability

- Taking a short versus long term perspective
 - Rapid growth in high hazard areas
 - Investment of public infrastructure
 - Federal assistance
 - Bearing the costs of disasters

Class Discussion

- How should communities balance the use of engineering solutions with land use measures to facilitate a sustainable recovery?
- Can engineering solutions be part of a sustainable recovery?
 - Guiding redevelopment
 - Alternatives
 - Preserving existing structures, communities or neighborhoods
 - Selecting the most cost-effective action

Class Discussion

- How should communities balance the use of engineering solutions with land use measures to facilitate a sustainable recovery?
- Can engineering solutions be part of a sustainable recovery?
 - Development decisions and long-term vulnerability
 - Engineering solutions and altering the environment

Class Discussion

- Additional questions
 - Discuss specific post-disaster steps to reduce hazard vulnerability
 - Limiting federal expenditures for the repeated repair of public infrastructure
 - Limiting repeated flood insurance claims
 - Local cost sharing
 - Insurance-based incentives
 - Rewarding communities

Class Discussion

- Identifying examples of reconstruction in high hazard areas and specific mitigation measures that could be adopted
 - Rebuilding homes, roads and other public infrastructure on steep sloped areas
 - Retrofitting techniques
 - Technical and political feasibility
 - Rebuilding of oceanfront property
 - Relocation, elevation, dune repair, beach renourishment, etc.
 - Technical and political feasibility

Local Capability and Commitment to a Sustainable Recovery

- Capability Indicators
 - Fiscal capability
 - Local resources
 - Pre-disaster wealth
 - Savvy local governments and post-disaster aid
 - Capitalizing on mitigation funding
 - Use of local funds
 - Allocation of funds

Local Capability and Commitment to a Sustainable Recovery

- Capability Indicators
 - Technical capability
 - Gathering and analyzing information
 - Geographic Information Systems
 - Technical experts
 - Political Capability
 - Limiting or slowing reconstruction
 - Reconstruction pressures
 - Reviewing recovery options
 - Local growth machine
 - Role of technical experts

Local Capability and Commitment to a Sustainable Recovery

- Commitment
 - Recovery advocate
 - Building local capacity / seeking assistance
 - Expansion of recovery options
 - Lack of a recovery advocate
 - Effect on most needy victims
 - Local power
 - Technical experts
 - Religious leaders

Commitment to a Sustainable Recovery

- Commitment is closely linked with the identification of problems and seeking creative solutions
 - Wide ranging proficiencies of local government officials
 - Linking existing programs
 - Identifying alternative resources
 - Individuals, small groups and organizations
 - Magnified social problems