

PRE-DISASTER PLANNING



Source: Nathan Slaughter

HAZARDS ADDRESSED



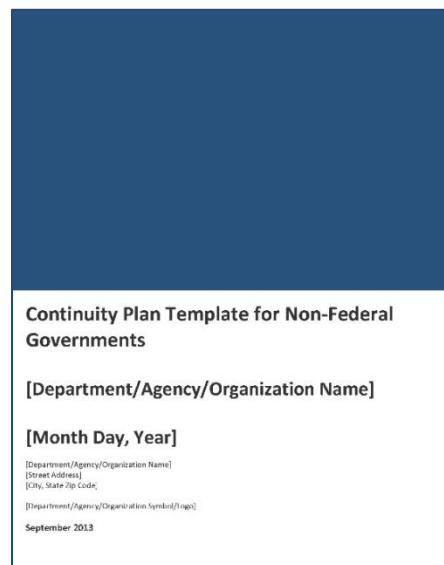
HOW IT WORKS

The post-disaster environment should not be the first time a community begins identifying and managing critically important issues such as how to keep the government and essential services up and running in times of crisis, how to deal with temporary housing, or how to reestablish essential economic activity. Communities can, and should, take steps before being impacted by a disaster to ensure that the aftermath of the disaster will not become a disastrous and chaotic situation in itself.

Three tools available to local governments are particularly important for helping smooth the road to post-disaster recovery.

- 1. Continuity of Operations Plans (COOP)** can be developed in order to ensure that citizens do not experience significant disruption of services during and following times of emergencies and or disasters. FEMA states that:

“Continuity of Operations is an effort within individual executive departments and agencies to ensure that Primary Mission Essential Functions (PMEFs) continue to be performed during a wide range of emergencies, including localized acts of



FEMA Guidance Document for Developing COOP plan.

Source: FEMA

nature, accidents and technological or attack-related emergencies” (Continuity of Operations, 2015).

2. A **Continuity of Government (COG) Plan** is similar to a COOP, although its primary focus is to establish defined procedures for allowing a government entity to continue its essential operations following a catastrophic event. COG plans set procedures for preserving facilities, equipment, and records. Many times a COG plan is part of a more comprehensive COOP.
3. **Recovery Plans** can be developed either pre- or post-disaster (although they are most effective when developed pre-disaster) and are designed to help communities address critical land use issues that arise following disasters. One definition of a recovery plan states that such plans can be used to:

“Identify policies, operational strategies, and roles and responsibilities for implementation that will guide decisions that affect long-term recovery and redevelopment of the community after a disaster. The plan emphasizes seizing opportunities for hazard mitigation and community improvement consistent with the goals of the local comprehensive plan and with full participation of the citizens. Recovery topics addressed in the plan should include business resumption and economic redevelopment, housing repair and reconstruction, infrastructure restoration and mitigation, short-term recovery actions that affect long-term redevelopment, sustainable land use, environmental restoration, and financial considerations as well as other long-term recovery issues identified by the community” (Post-Disaster Redevelopment, 2011).

Recovery plans can lead to a much more organized and efficient approach to a community’s post disaster recovery.

IMPLEMENTATION

In many communities, these types of plans are developed by Emergency Management staff; however, the planner has an important role to play in the development of each of these plans. For example, planners can help establish continuity of operations procedures for the Planning Department to be included in the COOP and there are many planning/land use issues that must be addressed in pre- or post-recovery plans.

Though the recovery plan could be developed after a disaster to guide recovery decisions, these three highlighted plans should ideally be prepared in advance of a disaster. Making the investment in pre-disaster plans that address post-disaster issues will pay dividends for the communities that take the time and initiative to do the planning. These plans should be regularly revisited, especially following an event that would require activation of such plans.

WHERE IT’S BEEN DONE

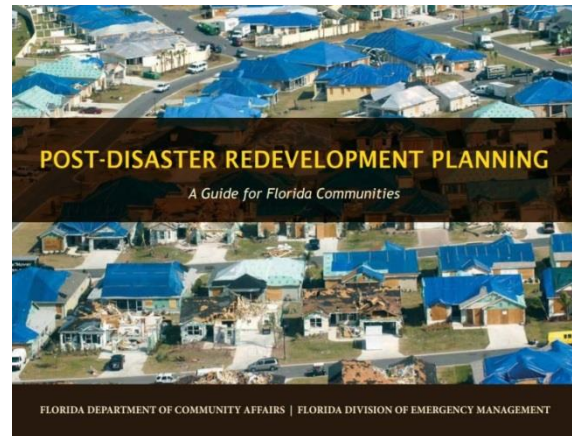
In 2015, officials in **Douglas County** adopted the County’s first Disaster Recovery Plan. The plan establishes the County’s comprehensive framework for managing recovery efforts following a major disaster.

“Having been through our own wildfires, floods, and other local emergencies, as well as having witnessed other counties navigate their own incidents, our staff had the foresight to recognize the importance of collaboration among our partners to assemble a recovery plan,” said

Commissioner David Weaver. “By focusing on what could occur instead of what is or already has happened, places Douglas County in the best possible shape to react to any potential disaster, be it man-made or natural” (County adopts Disaster, 2015).

The County had also previously developed a Continuity of Operations Plan that is referenced throughout the Disaster Recovery Plan. This helps emphasize the importance of having both types of plans to facilitate successful disaster preparedness and recovery efforts for Douglas County.

Some of the nation’s most progressive pre-disaster planning examples and resources come from the **State of Florida’s Post-Disaster Redevelopment Planning (PDRP) Initiative** (2010, October). The purpose of the Initiative, which began in 2007, was to develop and test guidelines for a planning process to be applied in the pre-disaster environment to ensure the effective and timely implementation of post-disaster policies that result in more sustainable, resilient communities. While the resulting guidebook can certainly be helpful to Colorado communities, the subsequent plans and policies from the initial pilot PDRP communities provide real-world examples for a variety of local governments dealing with a variety of post-disaster scenarios. This includes the adoption of some advanced and fairly bold planning strategies designed to disinvest and steer redevelopment from known hazard areas to safer locations as opportunities arise through future disaster events. For instance, **Hillsborough County** established the concept of Priority Redevelopment Areas (PRAs) which essentially pre-identifies locations within the community to receive focused and prioritized attention for redevelopment to promote rapid recovery and facilitate the growth of disaster resilient centers of activity. The implementation of this concept would likely rely on the transfer of development rights (TDR) and similar tools as a means of shifting growth and development from one area of a community to another.



State of Florida’s Post-Disaster Redevelopment Planning Initiative.

Source: State of Florida Division of Emergency Management

ADVANTAGES AND KEY TALKING POINTS

- Each of these plans can help a community more effectively and efficiently respond to disasters and shocks. These plans can inform decision-makers and reduce reactionary decisions (and thus, lead to less confusion) in the post-disaster environment.
- Adopting a plan puts a community in an excellent position to maintain essential services at the time of a disaster.
- Helps ensure a community has discussed how recovery should take place prior to a disaster.
- Can strengthen application for post-disaster funding, as it demonstrates a clear and carefully considered path to recovery.

CHALLENGES

- Each of these plans requires considerable coordination with multiple government departments and often partner organizations and community members. Once developed, the plans will need to be “exercised” (i.e., routinely tested and communicated) so that everyone understands their roles as defined in these plans.
- Keeping COOPs and COGs accurate and updated is imperative and requires initiative. Updates should be conducted consistently and thoroughly.
- As for recovery plans, at this time there is no dedicated federal funding source for communities seeking financial assistance in developing their recovery plan. There are also no official regulations for what needs to be included in a recovery plan. However, there are many useful resources that can be referenced when developing a recovery plan (see additional resources below).

KEY FACTS

Administrative capacity	Emergency manager (lead for COOP/COG), planner (lead for recovery plan), department heads, executive-level government staff
Mapping	COOP: Minimal/ N/A COG: Minimal/N/A Recovery plan: Dependent on whether or not there is a risk assessment or scenario-driven analyses that are done to support the plan
Regulatory requirements	COOP/COG: National Security Presidential Directive-51 (NSPD-51)/Homeland Security Presidential Directive-20 (HSPD-20) Recovery plan: N/A
Maintenance	COOP/COG/Recovery plan: Should be annually updated and exercised. Plan effectiveness should be evaluated after any type of event that would be require the plans to be put in place or tested
Adoption required	COOP/COG/Recovery plan: Adoption is not required but some sort of official acknowledgement of support of the plans by the local governing body can help give greater power to these plans
Statutory reference	See regulatory requirements
Associated costs	Dependent on the level of effort, level of public outreach, and the type of plan (hard copy, digital, web-based, etc.)

EXAMPLES

Douglas County Disaster Recovery Plan	douglas.co.us/documents/douglas-county-recovery-plan.pdf http://www.floridadisaster.org/Recovery/IndividualAssistance/pdredevelopmentplan/Index.htm
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State of Florida floridadisaster.org/Recovery/IndividualAssistance/pdredevelopmentplan/Index.htm
Post-Disaster
Redevelopment Planning
Initiative

FOR MORE INFORMATION

COOPs/COGs: National Security Presidential Directive-51/Homeland Security Presidential Directive-20 (NSPD-51/HSPD-20)

fema.gov/pdf/about/org/ncp/nspd_51.pdf

National Continuity Policy Implementation Plan (NCPIP)

fema.gov/media-library/assets/documents/85665

FEMA Continuity of Operations Page

fema.gov/continuity-operations

FEMA Continuity Resources Page

fema.gov/additional-resources-and-videos-continuity-operations

PDRPs: National Disaster Recovery Framework

fema.gov/national-disaster-recovery-framework

FEMA Community Planning and Capacity Building (CPCG) Recovery Support Function (RSF)

fema.gov/media-library/resources-documents/collections/493

American Planning Association, Recovery Planning Blog

blogs.planning.org/postdisaster

American Planning Association, Planning for Post-Disaster Recovery: Next Generation

planning.org/research/postdisaster