

Disaster Recovery: Faster, Better, Safer?

Public Forum Recovery from Catastrophic Disasters

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Disaster Recovery -- Two Levels

Community Level

- Recovery of housing and employment, with the infrastructure to support them.

Household Level

- Recovery of homes and jobs, and the social interaction patterns of families with others

Traditional View – Recovery = Back to “Normal”

Household Level Recovery

Research looked at what households use in order to recover from losses and disruptions of disasters.

- Sources of recovery resources vary by society and by households within same society.
 - use own resources
 - receive assistance from relatives
 - use assistance from formal aid programs
- Sometimes ignored in recovery program design

Household Level Recovery

Objective recovery=

job same or better; house same or better

Subjective recovery=

a feeling of things being normal again

- daily routines
- social activities
- neighborhood feels familiar
- city seems familiar

Household Level Recovery

- Most important factor for household recovery:
--continuous employment--
- Enables households to be independent and self-reliant during the process of recovery.
- At the same time:
Many aspects of subjective recovery depend on the nature of recovery at the community level.
For example: when routines can be re-established and the city seems livable, familiar

Goals at the Household Level

After the disaster—

Households want something difficult to achieve;

They want to have housing that is:

- quickly available

and

- socially habitable

(i.e., matches their values and status)

and

- affordable over time

- "safer" is good, but lower priority

Community Level Recovery

- The goal of “safer” has to be promoted at the community level as a development goal.
- It is commonly accepted among international and national agencies that:
 - Post-disaster reconstruction presents a time to reduce future vulnerability.
- It is commonly accepted among scientists and engineers that this can be done.
 - Technically, a safer city is possible.

Goals at the Community Level

After the disaster--

Community leaders and planners want something difficult to achieve;

--They want recovery and the city to be:

Fast = as soon as possible, have normal functions of the city back to normal so daily life can be back to normal, **and**

Better = have a city that is more pleasant or prettier or more efficient into the future, **and**

Safer = reduced vulnerability to a future disaster through changes in construction practices and land use.

Trade-offs in City and Housing Recovery Goals

<u>If City Reconstruction Priority is:</u>	<u>Housing Recovery Outcome</u>			
	Quickly Available	Socially habitable	Affordable	Safer from Future Disasters
Fast Re-establish Functions Rapidly	+	—	+	—
Better More Efficient And Pleasant	—	+	—	?
Safer Reduced Vulnerability To the hazard	—	?	—	+

From Studies of Reconstruction

Faster	--Just let everyone put things back the way they want and with very few changes from before.
Better	--Careful urban planning and citizen input on the changes, post-disaster.
Better and Faster	--Acceptable development plans for the urban future already exist
Safer	--Scientists determine risks; engineers determine codes; officials design permits, post-disaster
Safer and Faster	--Have building and repair codes in place and ready to be efficiently applied.