**CHAPTER 11**

**COMMUNITY DISASTER RECOVERY**

# This chapter defines disaster recovery in terms of its distinctive activities and explains how it differs from activities that take place during other phases of the emergency management cycle. The chapter begins with a brief description of the routine functioning of US communities and then turns to the housing, economic, and psychological recovery of households and the operational recovery of businesses. The chapter then turns to the recovery assistance that can be expected from state and federal government and from insurance. The chapter concludes with a discussion of local government’s preimpact recovery planning and the implementation and improvisation of that plan during a disaster’s aftermath.

**The Routine Functioning of US Communities**

The process of community recovery from disaster cannot be properly understood without understanding how communities function before a disaster strikes. First, a *community* is commonly understood to be a specific geographic area and is frequently considered to be equivalent to a political jurisdiction such as a town, city, or county. However, a community also has two additional elements—psychological ties and social interaction (Poplin, 1972). Psychological ties involve a sense of shared identity that arises from common goals, values, and behavioral norms (shared expectations of appropriate behavior) that lead “insiders” to distinguish themselves from “outsiders” (Lindell & Perry, 2004). Moreover, insiders interact with each other more frequently with each other than they do with outsiders and these interactions involve differentiated roles (e.g., parent-child, supplier-customer, citizen-bureaucrat) that involve the exchange of resources. Communities are ecological networks (Bates & Pelanda, 1994; Peacock & Ragsdale, 1997) in which the basic types of units are households, businesses, and government agencies. Each social unit has people (family members in the case of households and employees in the case of businesses and government agencies) and resources. As Figure 11-1 indicates, households supply labor to businesses in exchange for money. In turn, households pay money to obtain goods and services from private suppliers (ranging from grocers to doctors), infrastructure (water, sewer, electric power, fuel, transportation, telecommunications), and government services (e.g., fire protection, education, parks). In addition to these economic exchanges, households engage in behavioral interaction with peers such as friend, relatives, neighbors, and coworkers. These exchanges sometimes involve goods and services, but they are more frequently characterized by exchanges of affection and emotional support.

Businesses use the labor they receive from households to produce goods or services, which they then sell (to the degree they are more successful than their competitors) to their customers. As is the case with households, businesses use the money they obtain from customers to pay suppliers, infrastructure, and government. (For-profit) businesses provide goods and services for a fee and government provides them in exchange for taxes. However, there are also (nonprofit) NGOs that provide goods and services at or below cost—and sometimes free. For example, Habitat for Humanity relies substantially on donated materials and volunteer labor to construct affordable housing. The American Red Cross and other NGOs use donated money, goods, and services to provide shelter, food, clothing, medicine, and financial grants to those in distress. The steady flow of money in exchange for goods and services, known as *cash flow*, is critically important to social units that have insufficient savings.

In a free market economy, government establishes broad rules within which individual parties can freely establish contracts for the exchange of resources. For example, government declares certain goods (e.g., heroin) and services (e.g., prostitution) to be unacceptable and, therefore, illegal. It also requires private parties to undertake certain activities (e.g., obtain a license to practice medicine; provide an accurate accounting and annual statement of corporate assets) and provides some services that the private sector cannot or will not otherwise provide at acceptable cost (e.g., rural electrification, routine mail delivery). It is important to recognize that the units in the community network differ in their resources and, thus, their power. Thus, units with more social, economic, and political power can force less powerful units to accept less favorable outcomes.

**Figure 11-1**.Routine Relationships Among Social Units.

Moreover, these basic community units act in cooperation, competition, and conflict (Poplin, 1972; Thomas, 1992). *Cooperation* refers to activities that result in mutual benefit. A prime economic example is a business relationship in which a supplier provides a good or service to a customer in exchange for money. *Competition* exists when two parties strive toward a goal that only one can achieve. In fair competition, the parties abide by methods of goal achievement that are mutually accepted as legitimate. For example, two businesses compete to sell a product to customers on the basis of quality and price. *Conflict* occurs when one party attempts to directly frustrate the goal achievement of another. For example, one business might attempt to use its greater resources to force its suppliers to refuse to serve its competitor. There are many social institutions, such as schools and churches, that seek to promote agreement on basic values and legitimate methods of goal achievement by socializing their members. Complete consensus is never reached, so political institutions exist to resolve differences and to provide an authoritative allocation of public resources.

Within each of these three categories, social units vary in their assets. Households, businesses, and government agencies have *human assets* such as cognitive, psychomotor, physical abilities, and personality characteristics which, together with their time and effort, constitute what economists consider to be *labor* (Schneider & Schmitt, 1986). In addition, they have *physical assets* such as land, buildings, equipment, furniture, clothes, vehicles, crops, and animals, which economists classify as *goods*. Finally, they have *financial (capital) assets* such as cash, stocks, bonds, savings, insurance. In many cases, these assets were accumulated by incurring *financial liabilities* such as loans, mortgages, and credit card debt. However, the assets they have accumulated generate *income* from employment, rental of physical assets, interest or dividends from financial assets. (Of course, government derives most of its income from taxes.) This income must be balanced against expenses for *consumption* (e.g., households’ purchases of shelter, food, clothing, medical care, entertainment and other goods and services), and *production* (e.g., businesses’ and government agencies’ payments for raw materials, infrastructure, and employees’ labor), as well as *investment* in additional assets (e.g., training/education to increase human assets, equipment to provide more efficient production). Finally, social units vary in the amounts of resources they possess. As noted in Chapter 6, households with certain demographic characteristics such as ethnic minorities, aged, and female-headed status frequently have fewer resources. Similarly, small businesses (i.e., those with few employees) and small local jurisdictions (i.e., those with small tax revenues) also have fewer resources. This makes it difficult for them to withstand an extended disruption of the community system that is, as Chapter 6 indicated, precisely what a major disaster produces.

*Household Activities*

Households engage in a variety of activities over the course of the day and the amount of time spent in different activities can be described in term of their *time budgets.* Table 11-1 reports the results of a recent time budget study conducted by Wiley, et al. (1991). The table lists 26 different categories of activities that were combined from a larger list of nearly 100. The activities are listed in terms of their population means (averages) for minutes per day. Some activities are performed by all people (e.g., sleeping) whereas others are performed by only a small part of the population (e.g., singing and dancing), so the mean number of minutes per day is listed separately for the entire population and doers (i.e., those who engage in the activity).

**Table 11-1**.Community Residents’ Activities.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Activity | Population mean (min) | Doer  mean (min)\* | Activity | Population mean (min) | Doer  mean (min)\* |
| Sleeping | 504 | 506 | Child care | 18 | 79 |
| Working | 194 | 424 | Active sports | 16 | 88 |
| Electronic media | 143 | 184 | Outdoor recreation | 11 | 134 |
| Travel | 109 | 118 | Cultural events | 10 | 143 |
| Eating | 89 | 93 | Errands | 8 | 41 |
| Socializing | 56 | 115 | Car repair | 6 | 48 |
| Personal care | 50 | 58 | Hobbies | 5 | 114 |
| Reading/writing | 48 | 104 | Bars/lounges | 4 | 101 |
| Education | 46 | 237 | Animal care | 3 | 33 |
| Cooking | 38 | 73 | Singing/dancing | 3 | 106 |
| House cleaning | 34 | 87 | Other | 2 | 29 |
| Shopping | 25 | 66 | Dry cleaners | 1 | 73 |
| Yard work | 20 | 111 | Services | 1 | 83 |

Adapted from Wiley, et al. (1991).

These time budget data reveal two significant aspects of people’s daily activities. First, some activities such as sleeping and eating are essential, as indicated by small differences between population means and doer means. By contrast, other activities such as cultural events and singing/dancing are highly discretionary, as indicated by large differences between population means and doer means. Discretionary activities can be substantially reduced or eliminated when the need arises. Second, some of the activities with large differences between population means and doer means arise from the household division of labor in which some activities are age or gender stereotyped. For example, adult males are more likely to be the household members involved in yard work and car repair, whereas adult females are more likely to be the ones involved in shopping and child care. In recent years, it is increasingly likely for both adult males and females to be involved in work outside the home. However, children of both genders participate in education. As will be seen later, households attempt to maintain their normal patterns of daily activities in the face of disasters—especially what are considered to be the most essential activities—as well as household members’ division of labor in performing those activities.

*Business Activities*

The businesses in most towns and cities produce a wide variety of goods and services. The Bureau of the Census devised the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS, revised in 2002), which was formerly known as the Standard Industrial Classification (SIC). NAICS categorizes all businesses into 20 industries and assigns a numerical code to each. Table 11-2 shows the two digit codes for these industries, but this is a very coarse grouping. These broad industrial classes are divided into finer categories that are identified by six digit codes (see www.census.gov/epcd/naics02/).

**Table 11-2**. North American Industry Classification System (2002).

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Code | Activity | Code | Activity |
| 11 | Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing & Hunting | 53 | Real Estate & Rental & Leasing |
| 21 | Mining | 54 | Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services |
| 22 | Utilities | 55 | Management of Companies and Enterprises |
| 23 | Construction | 56 | Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services |
| 31-33 | Manufacturing | 61 | Educational Services |
| 42 | Wholesale Trade | 62 | Health Care and Social Assistance |
| 44-45 | Retail Trade | 71 | Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation |
| 48-49 | Transportation & Warehousing | 72 | Accommodation and Food Services |
| 51 | Information | 81 | Other Services  (except Public Administration) |
| 52 | Finance and Insurance | 92 | Public Administration |

Each community has its own pattern of reliance on these 20 industries, which can be assessed in terms of its location quotient,

LQ = (ei/et)/(Ei/Et)

where *ei* is local employment in industry *i*, *et* is total local employment, *Ei* is national employment in industry *i*, and *Et* is total national employment (Blair & Bingham, 2000). Some of the industries in Table 11-2 generate more exports from the community to other areas of the country and, thus, define its *economic base*.

More specifically, the economic base model identifies the relative amount of the community’s production of goods and services that is derived from basic (export) economic activities, internal investment, and internal consumption (Chapin & Kaiser, 1985). More money is available for internal investment and consumption when exports, the sale of goods and services outside the community, exceed imports. Indeed, a *multiplier effect* is set in motion when money that is received from outside the community is spent inside the community. As a result, urban areas obtain between $1.50 and $2.50 in induced local income for every dollar of revenue from exports (Blair & Bingham, 2000). The size of the multiplier for any given region can be determined from input-output analyses that use detailed information about the degree to which the firms in each sector obtain their inputs (raw materials and infrastructure) from inside the community and export their outputs to firms outside the community. This is modified by the size of each economic sector in that region. In general, mining, manufacturing, wholesale and retail trade, banking and finance, and high quality service facilities (e.g., nationally renowned medical clinics) are considered to be significant contributors to a community’s economic base. However, there can be exceptions to this rule and it can be difficult to clearly classify businesses as basic or service activities, to define the base area, and to measure the size of the base and service sectors (Chapin & Kaiser, 1985).

These economic concepts also have significant implications for disaster recovery. First, communities having a weak economic base characterized by low exports, low investments, and high internal consumption will need considerable assistance in recovering from a disaster. Second, basic industries that produce exports should receive immediate attention in the disaster aftermath so they can generate income whose multiplier effect will stimulate local investment and consumption. This will spread the recovery to other community industries.

*Government activities*. The governments of most local jurisdictions—towns, cities, and counties—perform a variety of functions that cannot reasonably be performed by businesses in the private sector (Caiden, 1982; Graham & Hays, 1993; Nigro & Nigro, 1980). Each function is assigned to governmental subunit called an agency or department. All of the departments report to the jurisdiction’s CAO, who might be a mayor, city manager, or Chair of the County Board of Supervisors. Figure 11-2 displays an organization chart listing the departments typically found in local jurisdictions and indicates the direct reporting relationship by the solid line connecting each department directly to the CAO.

**Figure 11-2**.Sample Jurisdictional Organization Chart.

The seven departments at the bottom are usually called *line agencies,* whereas the six departments at the top of the organization chart are labeled *staff agencies*. In general, line agencies deliver services directly to the public, whereas staff agencies provide services to the line agencies and each other. By this point, it should be clear what *Emergency Management* does, so that department will not be discussed further. Among the other staff agencies, *Intergovernmental/Public Relations* provides information about the jurisdiction’s activities to those outside the organization. The *Human Resources* department develops and oversees the jurisdiction’s systems for personnel recruitment, selection, training, and performance evaluation. *Finance & Administration* is responsible for budget preparation and control, accounting, property assessment, taxes and licenses, procurement, and property and records management. *Planning* assesses population and economic trends, develops the comprehensive plan and the capital improvements plan, formulates policies for land use regulation, and grants permits for land development. *Legal Counsel* is responsible for drafting ordinances, resolutions, and business contracts, as well as rendering legal opinions about proposed administrative actions and representing the jurisdiction in lawsuits.

Among the line agencies, *Law Enforcement* conducts patrols and criminal investigations, and operates jails. *Fire/Rescue* is responsible for fire prevention, fire suppression, hazmat response, and EMS. *Public Works* is responsible for constructing and maintaining public buildings, streets, and lights; traffic engineering; sewers and storm drains; and garbage and trash collection. The *Social Services* department administers public housing and welfare programs such as Aid to Families with Dependent Children and food stamps. *Public Health* monitors environmental contamination, epidemics, and immunizations. *Parks & Recreation* maintains public parks and administers programs for children’s athletics and some noncredit adult education. The department of *Building Construction* reviews and approves building blueprints, inspects new construction at critical points in the construction process, and inspects existing buildings to determine if they must be condemned as unsafe for habitation. In some communities, an *Electric Utility* that purchases power and operates the electric distribution system would be added to this organization chart. The figure includes no *Education* department because this function is usually performed by an independent school district.

**An Overview of Community Disaster Recovery**

Disaster recovery is the phase of the emergency management cycle that begins with the stabilization of the incident and ends when the community has recovered from the disaster’s impacts. The term *incident stabilization* refers to the point in time at which the immediate threats to human safety and property resulting from the physical impacts of the primary and secondary hazard agents have been resolved. Thus, the sense of uncertainty and urgency that is the hallmark of the emergency response is beginning to be replaced by thoughts about how to rebuild damaged structures, restore infrastructure services, and return the community to its normal patterns of activity. For example, earthquake recovery could be said to begin after most buried victims have been extricated, buildings in danger of collapse have been shored up, and fires have been extinguished.

As Chapter 6 indicated, most people’s objective in disaster recovery is to restore the patterns of household, business, and government activity exactly as they existed before the disaster struck. To do this, they typically assume they must rebuild the buildings and infrastructure as it was. Of course, it is now understood that restoring the community to its previous status will also reproduce the hazard exposure, physical vulnerability, and social vulnerability that led to the disaster. Thus, there are four questions that must be addressed. First, do stricken communities recover from disasters and, if so, how do they acquire the resources needed to replace those that were destroyed? Second, what happens to households, businesses, and government agencies as they struggle to recover? Third, can communities do to promote a more rapid, complete, and equitable recovery? Finally, what can communities do to reduce their hazard exposure and make themselves more resilient when extreme environmental events occur?

The answer to the first question is that US communities clearly do recover relatively quickly from disasters. There is general agreement with the explanation offered by Friesma, et al. (1979) that the local economic costs of disasters are redistributed over the entire country by means of an extensive network of social, economic, and political linkages. The paths to recovery appear to be determined by the physical characteristics of the disaster agent, the types and quantities of community resources that survive the disaster, the external aid the community can obtain, and the reconstruction strategies these communities adopt and implement. However, the fact that communities *as a whole* recover does not mean that specific neighborhoods or households within those neighborhoods recover at the same rate or even at all. Similarly, it does not mean specific economic sectors or individual businesses within those sectors will be able to maintain or even resume operations. Thus, it is important to anticipate which population segments and economic sectors will have the most difficulty in recovering. This will enable community authorities to intervene with technical and financial assistance when it is needed, monitor their recovery, and encourage them to adopt hazard mitigation measures to reduce their hazard vulnerability.

Disaster recovery has both physical and social dimensions that arise from the physical and social impacts described in Chapter 6. Thus, disaster recovery includes actions taken to cope with casualties—households must find emotion focused strategies for dealing with the loss of affective support from loved ones, as well as problem focused strategies for coping with the loss of physical resources needed to generate an income, manage the home, and rear the children. Moreover, injuries can add the emotional strain of reassuring those who have been hurt and the financial strain of their medical care. Similarly, businesses must cope with the unavailability of trained personnel who might be dead, injured, overwhelmed with caring for families and friends, or simply trying to find a place for their households to eat, sleep, and resume a semblance of a normal life.

Disaster recovery also includes actions taken to cope with property damage. Thus, households must repair minor damage and rebuild substantially damaged property. Businesses and government agencies repair commercial and industrial structures, critical facilities such as hospitals, police stations and fire stations, and infrastructure such as water, sewer, electric power, fuel, transportation, and telecommunications.

Perhaps the most distinctive, but unfortunately elusive, aspect of disaster recovery is the restoration of disrupted community social routines and economic activities. The process of “getting back to normal” involves restoring people’s psychological stability, learning positive lessons from the disaster experience, and restoring satisfying patterns of interaction with family, friends, relatives, neighbors, and coworkers. It also involves returning to full-time employment that provides at least a preimpact level of income and reestablishing normal patterns of community governance.

Unfortunately, “normal” is almost inevitably what got the community in trouble in the first place. When cities allow too much development in floodplains, or in fireprone foothills, or allow substandard housing to be built that collapses in an earthquake, “normal” is an unsustainable condition. Consequently, a disaster resilient community learns from its harsh experience which areas of the community have excessive levels of hazard exposure. It also identifies the types of buildings, infrastructure, and critical facilities that have inadequate designs, construction methods, and construction materials. Finally, it recognizes which households, businesses, and government agencies have inadequate resources, lifestyles, or operational patterns that make them unable to recover effectively from a disaster.

Moreover, a disaster resilient community learns how to use the disaster as a focusing event that changes people’s beliefs about their hazard vulnerability, the availability of hazard adjustments to reduce that vulnerability, and the portfolio of hazard adjustments that is likely to be most suitable for their community. In addition, a disaster resilient community develops effective mechanisms for mobilizing

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Week 1 | | | | Week 2 and beyond | | | |
| Emer-gency Shelter | Temp-orary Shelter | Temp-orary Housing | Perm-anent Housing | Emer-gency Shelter | Temp-orary Shelter | Temp-orary Housing | Perm-anent Housing |
| Emergency  Shelter | .60 | .40 | .00 | .00 | .50 | .50 | .00 | .00 |
| Temporary  Shelter | .00 | .90 | .10 | .00 | .00 | .90 | .10 | .00 |
| Temporary  Housing | .00 | .00 | .95 | .05 | .00 | .00 | .95 | .05 |
| Permanent  Housing | .03 | .05 | .00 | .92 | .00 | .00 | .00 | 1.00 |

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Problem Perceived To Be Large | Anglo | Black | Hispanic | Total |
| Dealing with mortgage companies about insurance money | 68 | 49 | 68 | 64\* |
| Dealing with building inspectors | 52 | 38 | 76 | 63\* |
| Living in damaged home | 59 | 63 | 59 | 60 |
| Neighborhood conditions | 55 | 60 | 39 | 47\* |
| Living in temporary quarters | 45 | 61 | 38 | 46\* |
| Dealing with insurance companies | 33 | 26 | 48 | 40\* |
| Dealing with contractors | 38 | 18 | 45 | 37\* |
| Unemployment | 11 | 29 | 30 | 25\* |
| Household finances | 14 | 40 | 20 | 22\* |
| Neighborhood crime | 34 | 23 | 16 | 22\* |
| Transportation | 2 | 28 | 17 | 16\* |
| Job relocation | 7 | 21 | 17 | 15 |
| Dealing with agencies | 11 | 20 | 13 | 15 |
| Behavioral problems with children | 19 | 18 | 10 | 14 |
| Family violence | 17 | 11 | 5 | 9\* |
| Gain of member(s) | 14 | 0 | 4 | 5\* |
| Loss of member(s) | 4 | 0 | 13 | 4 |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Businesses Change (%) | | Employees Change (%) | | Sales Volume Change (%) | |
| Industry | Florida City | Homestead | Florida City | Homestead | Florida City | Homestead |
| Agriculture | -71 | +4 | -92 | +74 | -93 | +66 |
| Construction | 0 | -20 | +12 | -20 | +12 | -59 |
| Manufacturing | 0 | -12 | -67 | -19 | -59 | -32 |
| Transportation/  communication | -50 | +9 | -100 | +4 | -26 | +51 |
| Wholesale trade | -60 | -4 | -50 | +6 | -84 | +57 |
| Retail trade | -64 | -2 | -84 | +16 | -84 | -5 |
| Finance/  insurance/real estate | -20 | 0 | -59 | -1 | -32 | -32 |
| Business services | -63 | +6 | -94 | -5 | -65 | -14 |
| Professional services | -45 | -3 | -73 | +16 | -69 | +1 |
| Public administration | -50 | +38 | -69 | +7 | n/a\* | n/a\* |

ements, and integrate these into a comprehensive program of disaster assistance. The committee should also develop a financial plan for responding to the disaster. Bolin (1993) reported that city revenues from a heavily damaged central business district were 5% of total revenues before the earthquake, declined sharply in the year after the earthquake, and took about four years to return to previous level. This clearly affects the jurisdiction’s tax revenues.

Moreover, the committee should establish agreements with NGOs and CBOs (especially local churches, neighborhood associations, and other citizens’ groups) for support in disaster recovery because these organizations provide financial and in-kind support, as well as legal and technical assistance. After a disaster strikes, the Recovery/Mitigation Committee should ensure that organizations respond within the scope of their responsibilities to implement the ROP.

*Envisioning a Community Recovery Strategy*

The Recovery/Mitigation Committee needs to work with the community before and after a disaster to articulate a vision of community disaster recovery. The recovery process needs to strike a balance between corporate centered and community based economic development (Bingham, 2000). According to a *corporate centered economic development*, usually advocated by the local business community, government provides resources such as land and money to the private sector to invest without any restrictions. This market based strategy tends to produce results that are good in aggregate but produces an inequitable recovery. By contrast, *community based economic development* involves active participation by government to ensure that the benefits of recovery will also be shared by economically disadvantaged segments of the community.

The short term recovery following a major disaster can generate an economic boom as state and federal money flows into the community to reconstruct damaged buildings and infrastructure. These funds are used to pay for construction materials and the construction workforce and, to the extent that the materials and labor are acquired locally, they generate local revenues. In addition, the building suppliers hire additional workers and these, along with the construction workers, spend their wages on places to live, food to eat, and entertainment. Unless there are undamaged communities within commuting distance that can compete for this money, it will all be spent within the community.

Communities must also consider the long term economic consequences of disaster recovery. What will happen after the reconstruction boom is over? They can attract new businesses if they have a skilled labor pool and good schools—especially colleges whose faculty and students can support knowledge based industries. Other assets include low crime rates, low cost of living, good housing, and environmental amenities such as mountains, rivers, or lakes (Blakely, 2000). A community can also enhance its economic base if it can attract businesses that are compatible with the ones that are already there. Such firms can be identified by asking existing firms to identify their suppliers and distributors. These new firms might be attracted by the newer buildings and enhanced infrastructure that has been produced during disaster reconstruction.

If a disaster stricken community does not already have such assets, they can invest in four fundamental components of economic development—locality development, business development, human resources development, and community development. *Locality development* enhances a community’s existing physical assets by improving roads or establishing parks on river and lakefronts. *Business development* involves efforts to retain existing businesses or attract new ones. Although it is not easy, this can be accomplished working with businesses to identify their critical needs. In some cases, this might involve establishing a business incubator that allows startup companies to obtain low cost space and share meetings rooms. *Human resources development* expands the skilled workforce, possibly through customized worker training. Finally, *community development* utilizes NGOs, CBOs, and local firms that will hire current residents of the community whose household incomes are below the poverty level. For example, a comprehensive program for developing small businesses, affordable housing, community health clinics, and inexpensive child care can help to eliminate some of what new businesses might consider to be one of the risks of relocating to the community.

*Developing a Recovery Operations Plan*

As was the case with emergency response, the demands of disaster recovery imply that specific functions be performed. Table 11-6 identifies four principal disaster recovery functions—disaster assessment, short term recovery, long term reconstruction, and recovery management. The recovery phase’s disaster assessment function should be integrated with the emergency response phase’s emergency assessment function in identifying the physical impacts of the disaster. Short term recovery focuses on the immediate tasks of securing the impact area, housing victims, and establishing conditions under which households and businesses can begin the process of recovery. Long term reconstruction actually implements the reconstruction of the disaster impact area and manages the disaster’s psychological, demographic, economic, and political impacts. Finally, recovery management monitors the performance of the disaster assessment, short term recovery, and long term reconstruction functions. It also ensures they are coordinated and provides the resources needed to accomplish them. The following section describes each of these functions in greater detail.

**Table 11-6**.Disaster Recovery Functions.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| *Disaster Assessment* |  |
| Rapid assessment | Victims’ needs assessments |
| Preliminary damage assessment | “Lessons learned” |
| Site assessment |  |
| *Short Term Recovery* |  |
| Impact area security | Emergency demolition |
| Temporary shelter/housing | Repair permitting |
| Infrastructure restoration | Donations management |
| Debris management | Disaster assistance |
| *Long Term Reconstruction* |  |
| Hazard source control and area protection | Infrastructure resilience |
| Land use practices | Historic preservation |
| Building construction practices | Environmental recovery |
| Public health/mental health recovery | Disaster memorialization |
| Economic development |  |
| *Recovery Management* |  |
| Agency notification and mobilization | Public information |
| Mobilization of recovery facilities and equipment | Recovery legal authority and financing |
| Internal direction and control | Administrative and logistical support |
| External coordination | Documentation |

*Disaster Assessment*

Disaster assessment includes both physical and social impact assessment. Physical impact assessment, which is usually called *damage assessment*, must address residential, commercial, and industrial buildings. In addition, there is a need to conduct damage assessment for infrastructure such as water, sewer, electric power, fuel, transportation, and telecommunications systems. Finally, damage assessment also must address critical facilities such as hospitals, police stations, and fire stations. In addition, there is a need for social impact assessment, usually called victims’ needs assessment to assure that the available recovery programs are meeting victims’ needs. Finally, “lessons learned” examines the disaster’s physical and social impacts to identify ways in which the mitigation actions can be taken to reduce the community’s hazard vulnerability.

*Damage assessment*. There are three basic types of damage assessment (FEMA, 1995c). The first type, *rapid assessment*, is usually conducted during the emergency response, preferably within the first 24 hours (Schwab, et al., 1998). The purpose of rapid assessment is to identify the areas affected by the disaster and the approximate magnitude of the disaster’s physical impacts. It is especially important to assess the need for lifesaving activities very quickly, so rapid assessment should be completed within one to three hours after disaster impact. In turn, this allows emergency managers to determine where there are collapsed buildings requiring search and rescue operations and whether there is a potential for secondary impacts such as hazmat releases after an earthquake. Rapid assessment also provides information about the status of infrastructure and critical facilities, as well as whether there is likely to be a need for assistance from other local jurisdictions or other levels of government. A rapid assessment is performed by available police, fire, and public works personnel—both on shift and recalled to duty—to conduct assessments in predetermined geographic sectors of the community. Supplementary data can be provided for a rapid assessment from the private sector organizations that own or operate lifelines and critical facilities.

The second type of assessment is the *preliminary damage assessment*, which is designed to produce counts of destroyed, severely damaged, moderately damaged, and slightly damaged structures. This level of assessment should be completed within a 3-4 days, depending on the size and accessibility of the impact area and the number and prior training of the damage assessment teams. The data from the preliminary damage assessment are used to support requests for state and federal disaster declarations. A preliminary damage assessment is performed by having local government personnel perform *windshield surveys* by driving along all of the streets in the impact area (as the name suggests, they do not get out of their cars). Inspectors tally counts of damaged structures, with residential structures being classified by income levels and structural categories (single family, mobile home, multifamily residential structures). Buildings can then be tagged red, yellow, or green depending on the level of damage and occupant safety, with red tagged buildings being unsuitable for occupancy. A preliminary damage assessment should also include estimates of percentages of households with insurance coverage because this will affect the speed with which affected individuals and communities are able to replace their housing.

Finally, a *site assessment* is meant to produce detailed estimates of the cost to repair or replace each affected structure. This information is used to support requests for federal assistance to the owners of the damaged property. It includes estimates of losses to residential properties in order to understand both the level of need for temporary shelter and temporary housing and for repair assistance. Losses to commercial and industrial structures are assessed in order to understand the level of need for repair assistance and economic injury assistance. Losses to public property must be assessed in order for the community to apply for repair assistance. Site assessments require technically trained personnel such as architects, structural engineers, and building inspectors for multistory structures such as apartment buildings. These personnel can usually be drawn from city staff, but additional personnel might be recruited from other local organizations or obtained from outside the community (e.g., through mutual aid agreements with other jurisdictions or memoranda of agreement with professional societies). Skilled construction professionals can be supplemented by volunteers who can conduct site assessments for most single family residences if they have been trained in the use of well designed checklists. A site assessment might take weeks to complete, depending on the size and accessibility of the impact area as well as the number and training level of the assessment personnel. These methods of damage assessment can be compared to the procedures of cost estimation that are used in routine construction projects, as shown in Table 11-7.

**Table 11-7**. Types of Postdisaster Damage Assessments.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Damage Assessment | Routine Construction Cost Estimation |
| Rapid Damage Assessment |  |
| Preliminary Damage Assessment |  |
| Site Assessment | Preliminary Cost Estimate |
|  | Detailed Cost Estimate |

In preparing for the necessary damage assessments, staff from local government departments should be assigned to Damage Assessment Teams (DATs). Their numbers should be augmented as needed by staff from local private sector organizations and neighboring jurisdictions through memoranda of agreement (MOAs) or other contractual arrangements. All DAT members should be trained in a common assessment procedure in order to speed up the process and generate results that are comparable across all DATs within the jurisdiction.

*Victims’ needs assessment*. The effects of disasters are not confined to physical damage. In addition, affected communities must assess the needs of those individuals and groups who have lost property, been injured, or lost family members. This procedure, called a *victims’ needs assessment*, should begin during the preimpact recovery planning process. The first step is to identify the community’s vulnerable segments, which may be defined as specific locations and neighborhoods, or types of households and businesses. The local jurisdiction should assign staff to Victims’ Needs Assessment Teams (VNATs) and supplement them with staff from other organizations. These supplementary staff should be assigned by contract with NGOs and CBOs and trained together with the government staff in methods of victims’ needs assessment.

The need for public assistance to finance household and business recovery is inversely related to the savings rate. That is, the lower the savings rate, the higher the need for public assistance. Unfortunately, the savings rate in the US has been extremely low for the past decade, so the VNATs should be prepared to find large numbers of households and businesses needing recovery assistance. In addition to housing needs, VNATs should also be prepared to identify households’ needs for employment and other economic assistance (e.g., food, clothing, and other basic needs), as well as their psychological needs. If they are given adequate preimpact training, VNAT team members will be knowledgeable about the availability of local, state, federal, and NGO disaster recovery programs. In turn, this will enable them to accurately diagnose victims’ needs and refer them to the appropriate recovery programs.

*“Lessons learned”*. Unless the Recovery/Mitigation Committee establishes evaluation procedures, few lessons are likely to be learned and applied to improving the community’s resilience. Therefore, it should establish a “Lessons Learned” subcommittee, procedures for studying the event, and a well defined scope for its report. The recovery team should use the damage assessment as an opportunity to determine what are the ways, if any, that the jurisdiction should modify its land use plan, building code, and other community operations in the light of the disaster impact. Other issues to be considered should include infrastructure location and replacement, the capital improvements program, and the provisions of the ROP itself. The delivery date of the report should be set fairly early in the recovery process, perhaps 30 days after the disaster, so its recommendations can be incorporated into the recovery process. This should be an adequate amount of time to collect data, deliberate the implications, and make recommendations for policy revision if the jurisdiction has declared a 30 day moratorium on reconstruction.

*Short Term Recovery*

*Impact area security and reentry.* First, there is a need to maintain security in the impact area to ensure residents do not return before it is safe to do so and also to protect vulnerable property from the threat of looting. Addressing these issues requires jurisdictions to develop procedures for residents’ reentry. Unfortunately, there is little research on ending evacuations to guide the planning process (Stallings, 1991), but there is anecdotal evidence of problems that have arisen after disasters. The available evidence indicates a need to provide for temporary reentry to remove essential items (e.g., clothing and medications) and permanent reentry for continuous habitation. In both cases, hazardous conditions must have abated sufficiently to allow people to enter safely. In some cases, hazard abatement might include the demolition of severely damaged buildings and the removal of heavy debris. In addition, proper identification listing a local address is needed to ensure only residents or authorized reconstruction personnel are allowed to enter. Finally, a jurisdiction must establish basic habitability criteria, such as the restoration of transportation and sewer systems. It is possible to allow people to return before electric power is available because some people have their own generators, but the criteria should be established ahead of time. If the disaster has had a regional impact, reentry should be coordinated with neighboring jurisdictions.

*Temporary population shelter/housing*. As indicated in the discussion of households’ housing recovery, victims first find temporary shelter in the homes of friends and relatives, commercial facilities such hotels and motels, or mass care facilities such as auditoriums and gymnasiums. The evidence is clear that the majority of evacuees prefer the homes of friends and relatives. Among those whose friends and relatives are either too far away or are themselves victims, the more affluent choose commercial facilities and the poor—usually 10-25% of the evacuees—stay in mass care facilities (Mileti, et al., 1992).

Mass care facilities must accommodate differences due to age (elderly and children), ethnicity, and physical limitations (e.g., mobility). Such facilities make it difficult to accommodate household differences in such behaviors as personal sanitation, privacy, child rearing, and hours and loudness of social interaction. They also place increased demands on time for other tasks, which reduces time for child care, resulting in loss of control over children. Lack of personal space and privacy consistently generate ethnic and class tensions among those in mass shelters and closely spaced semiprivate shelters such as tents (Yelvington, 1997). Operation of mass care facilities can be especially complex after major disasters in urban areas. In such cases, there will be a need for a large contingent of local multilingual volunteers to assist in multiethnic communities and enough people to provide continued staffing for a long duration displacement. Emergency managers can expect thousands of volunteers in first few weeks, but there are likely to be dramatic drops in volunteerism after the second week (Yelvington, 1997). Crowding and stress make it important to maintain transparency in making decisions about facility operation and to establish procedures for coping with predisaster homeless, construction workers, and others who do not qualify for shelter and housing (Bolin, 1993).

The incentives for moving from temporary shelter to temporary housing should be obvious. “Doubling up” with friends and relatives eventually causes friction in interpersonal relationships, commercial facilities are a drain on family finances, and mass care facilities are crowded, noisy, and lack the privacy to which people are accustomed. When the number of displaced households is less than the vacancy rate for affordable housing within commuting time of jobs, the existing housing market can accommodate the relocation. To the degree that there are few vacancies, the rental rates are high, or the commuting time is excessive (either because of the travel distance or because crowded routes decrease average driving speed), government is likely to be called upon to increase the stock of temporary housing by bringing in mobile homes.

The ROP should recognize that the need for temporary housing increases in importance as the size of the socially vulnerable population increases, especially when there is a limited amount of affordable housing outside the impact area. The number of displaced households will be compounded by those evicted from undamaged homes because they lost their jobs and could not make rental or mortgage payments. In a major urban area struck by a large scope disaster, this could be thousands of mobile homes. Where will these be located—on victims’ lots (utilities already installed, maintains neighborhood integrity, allows supervision of reconstruction) or in mobile home parks? If trailer parks are established, local officials should try to reduce social friction by locating people within kin and friendship networks to the greatest extent possible.

*Temporary business operation*. Just as households need temporary housing, so too do businesses need temporary operating locations when their normal locations have been severely damaged or destroyed. Many small businesses have customers who are loyal enough to travel an extra distance, but loyalty does have its limits. Consequently, government might need to permit the establishment of temporary business operations in parking lots or other open spaces that are close to the displaced businesses’ normal locations. The ROP should also identify sites for temporary housing and temporary business operations, which may be needed for as much as a year (and even longer in some cases).

*Infrastructure restoration*. There are often many households and businesses that cannot resume normal functioning simply because of the lack of potable water, sewer, electric power, fuel, telecommunications, or transportation—not because of damage to their homes or places of business. Consequently, there is a need to inspect and repair any damage to pipelines and power lines, as well as streets, bridges, street signs, and street lights. In addition to returning these households and businesses to normal functioning, restoration of infrastructure to these areas also provides places where emergency workers and construction crews can live while they are rebuilding the structures that have been damaged or destroyed. On the other hand, generating a rapid economic recovery might suggest a different set of priorities—emphasizing the restoration of infrastructure for the area’s dominant export industries. Thus, there are likely to be conflicting priorities and few easy decisions. Consequently, priorities must be established in the preimpact recovery plan with links to the damage assessment procedures that allow the recovery managers to adapt the predetermined infrastructure restoration priorities to the needs of each specific situation.

*Critical facility operation*. It should be quite obvious that there will be a need to quickly repair critical facilities such as hospitals, police stations, and fire stations. However, a community’s public infrastructure is also served by other critical facilities such as water treatment plants, transit bus barns, public works equipment yards, and government offices. There is also privately operated infrastructure that includes electric power stations, television and radio facilities (both stations and broadcast towers), and telephone switching facilities. An inventory of these facilities should be available from the hazard/vulnerability analysis.

*Debris management*. Most of the natural disasters, and explosions among the technological disasters, can destroy a substantial number of structures. In turn, this can produce an enormous amount of debris that must be removed. Debris management should designate temporary sites for sorting recyclable from nonrecyclable materials, with the latter being moved to permanent sites for disposal. Debris management is complicated in situations where evidence must be gathered in a systematic manner as in investigations of accidents (e.g., National Transportation Safety Board investigations of airline crashes or train derailments) or when the site is be considered a possible crime scene (e.g., the bombing of the Murrah Federal building Oklahoma City). In such cases, debris removal is likely to be delayed, so temporary sorting sites will be needed to separate out material evidence from useless debris. Ultimately, a catastrophic event such as the World Trade Center collapse or Hurricane Katrina can produce millions of tons of debris that can overwhelm landfill capacity.

*Emergency demolition*. It is likely that some structures will be damaged severely enough to pose a threat of collapse, so procedures are needed to rapidly assess their stability and determine if they should be reinforced and rebuilt or demolished. This assessment clearly requires competent structural engineering assistance, but historic preservationists should also be consulted if the building has cultural significance (Donaldson, 1998). Indeed, historic structures should be surveyed and inventoried before disaster strikes and postimpact damage assessment procedures should be developed to avoid unnecessary demolition of damaged historic structures (Kariotis, 1998; Kimmelman, 1998). The ROP should establish policies that include criteria for emergency demolition of severely damaged structures and adequate notification for owners who might have evacuated. In addition, the implementing procedures should contain samples of the contracts to be signed with demolition companies. These contracts require the involvement of the jurisdiction’s legal counsel to ensure the administrative process respects personal property rights.

*Repair permitting*. The ROP should contain criteria for determining which structures will be eligible for reoccupancy based upon the percent damage to the different elements of the building—foundation, wall, and roof systems, exterior walls, interior walls, floors and flooring materials, plumbing, electrical systems, HVAC systems. The large number of requests for building repair permits following a disaster can overwhelm a local code enforcement department (Schwab, et al., 1998). In preparation for this eventuality, the permit office staff should be augmented with staff from other jurisdictions and the private sector as needed. In addition, the ROP should establish an emergency permitting process that includes 10 day moratorium on minor repairs and a 30 day moratorium on permits for substantial repairs involving 50% or more of the preimpact property assessment. This allows time for the city to acquire enough staff to evaluate the properties and areas involved and establish policies for improving the building stock as needed. Of course, exemptions may be needed for reconstruction of critical facilities. The process should be streamlined as much as possible by, for example, placing permit staff in a DAC. The streamlined process should be continued for a limited time period, often 90 days after impact, that has been defined in the ROP. Local jurisdictions should consider deferring application fees during this period.

ROPs for urban areas should anticipate the possibility of developers purchasing many damaged single family residences in the expectation of replacing them with apartment buildings. To avoid this problem, one city established a five month moratorium on applications for construction of new apartments. It also established restrictions on new buildings to ensure a Design Review Board could exclude building designs that were incompatible with the character of the neighborhoods in which they were to be constructed.

*Donations management*. Major disasters frequently produce an outpouring of material (rather than financial) assistance from households and businesses outside the impact area. There is usually a substantial amount of useful material in these donations, but there also is a substantial amount of junk. Dynes (1970) and others have listed donations such as women’s formal gowns, parkas (after summer disasters in the South), outdated medicines, and other items that impede the recovery by diverting personnel to the task of sorting through the donations. Even useful items must be sorted. For example, donated clothing must be sorted by category, gender appropriateness, and size. It is common for victims to reject food donations because these items are incompatible with local tastes and to refuse specific types of temporary housing because the buildings are incompatible with local cultural preferences or climatic conditions. Another problem with donations is that an influx of useful material resources precludes the need to buy from local businesses, thus threatening their revenues. Thus, in most cases, financial donations are preferable to material donations. Since material donations will inevitably arrive, local emergency managers need procedures to manage them. One important component of a donations management procedure is to establish a staging area outside the impact area where incoming donations can be received, sorted, and prepared for delivery to locations where they will be made available to disaster victims.

*Disaster assistance*. Under normal circumstances, people rarely need to visit government agencies. Moreover, when they do make these visits, they only need to visit one agency. During disaster recovery, however, people often need to contact multiple agencies within a short period of time. Moreover, the large number of other people attempting to visit each of those agencies and the small number of staff available to process the contacts results in long lines. In some disasters, these problems have been compounded by the periodic movement of agencies field offices from one location to another during the course of the disaster recovery. Consequently, it is important for local emergency managers to provide “one-stop shopping” so victims can resolve all of their needs at a single location that is maintained throughout the short term recovery period. It is also important that the location be readily accessible by public transportation and that additional staff be recruited and trained to minimize victims’ processing delays. The ROP should also designate DAC sites that are capable of housing financial aid assistance (including grants, loans, and tax deductions/deferrals), in-kind assistance (food, clothes, bedding), and legal and technical assistance. The ROP should identify primary and augmentation staff for all of these sites, including the donations management, debris sorting, debris disposal sites, and the DACs.

*Long Term Reconstruction*

As Chapter 3 indicated, a disaster usually opens a window of opportunity for changes in environmental hazard management policy (Prater & Lindell, 2000). If the Recovery/Mitigation Committee has “done its homework”, it will already have assessed the community’s hazard exposure, physical vulnerability, and social vulnerability. In addition, it will be well prepared with suggestions for ways in which to reduce future risks by integrating hazard mitigation into disaster recovery (Schwab, et al., 1998; Wu & Lindell, 2004). Finally, the committee should identify sources of funding for the mitigation projects they propose.

*Hazard source control and area protection*. The Recovery/Mitigation Committee should have begun to examine the prospects for hazard source control and area protection before a disaster strikes and continue this effort in the immediate aftermath. As indicated in Chapter 7, these mitigation strategies are not feasible for some hazards. The committee should anticipate induced growth in the protected area if hazard source control or area protection measures are implemented. However, linking the new source control or area protection measures to changes in the land use and building construction practices within the affected areas can avoid the expected increase in future vulnerability.

*Land use practices*. Implementation of long term reconstruction planning means setting in motion any changes in land use policies that were developed during the preimpact recovery planning process. This is also an opportune time to reexamine the community’s existing land use plans and to pass new ordinances that will reduce hazard exposure. Alternative land uses can reduce the total population and property at risk, sometimes by reducing development in high hazard areas. This can be accomplished by purchasing private property, purchasing development rights, relocating public facilities and other infrastructure away from hazardous areas, and redirecting new capital improvements away from hazardous areas. Road width and access regulations might also need to be established or revised at this stage. Lot restrictions can be used to reduce population densities by downzoning and setbacks can be used to maximize distances from hazards. Landscaping and vegetation requirements can be established to reduce the potential for flooding, landslides, or fires. Moreover, as discussed in Chapter 7, the ROP should provide guidance on the reconstruction of *nonconforming uses*, which are structures that do not meet the zoning requirements for their geographic areas. Usually these are older structures whose construction preceded the establishment of the current zoning requirements and, thus, are “grandfathered”.

*Building construction practices*. The ROP should also address the implementation of new mitigation requirements such as elevating structures located in floodplains. Other building codes can also reduce the physical impact of a disaster on structures located in risk areas. These include increasing disaster resistance of the building structure and increasing the resistance of “soft spots” in the structure. In addition to addressing new code requirements, the ROP should also address the building construction process. In particular, virtually every disaster produces complaints about out of area building contractors who receive advance payment for work that never performed. Thus, the ROP should address the need to monitor them—especially by registering out-of-area contractors and providing contract advice to owners of damaged property. Care should be taken to ensure regulation of outside contractors and construction workers does not impede the ability of NGOs such as Habitat for Humanity to use volunteer labor from out of the area to assist in the reconstruction effort. The ROP needs to balance the legitimate interests of local contractors against the needs of the community for rapid provision of affordable housing for low income residents (Peacock & Ragsdale, 1997).

*Public health/mental health recovery*. Most natural disasters in the US have had minimal public health consequences because the country has few endemic diseases whose incidence is likely to increase after a disaster. Contrary to many people’s beliefs, dead bodies are a public health threat only if those who died had communicable diseases when they were alive. Death itself does not spontaneously generate disease. Waterborne illnesses are a problem if survivors drink from, wash food in, or bathe in water sources that have been contaminated by raw sewage or chemical spills. Of course, such exposures can be avoided by having survivors use bottled water or by evacuating the impact area until infrastructure has been restored. Disease vectors other than ingestion must also be controlled in areas where pests harbor diseases. For example, mosquito control has become increasingly important as mosquito transmitted diseases, such as West Nile virus, have become increasingly prevalent.

Similarly, natural disasters produce minimal mental health consequences. Clinical psychologists found nearly 20 years ago that few victims use formal psychological services in the aftermath of disaster (Gist & Stolz, 1982). Since that time, an extensive research has confirmed that finding (Salzer & Bickman, 1999). This has led many psychologists examine the typical problems victims face and, in so doing, found that the two most prominent are material resource loss (Freedy, et al., 1992) and disruption of social networks (Kaniasty & Norris, 1995). The first of these problems, material resource loss, is addressed by the programs for housing and economic recovery. However, mental health professionals can facilitate the recovery process by acting as victim advocates, especially for victims who are unaccustomed to working with white collar bureaucracies (Salzer & Bickman, 1999). Other recommendations include designing community interventions to provide social support by establishing victim locator systems, facilitating self-help groups, and community organizing (Salzer & Bickman, 1999)

Nonetheless, others have concluded that the failure to seek formal psychological counseling is a potential threat to the mental health of victims and even first responders. In connection with the latter, Mitchell (1983) developed a system called the *Critical Incident Stress Debriefing*, which involves preincident training, individual crisis support, demobilization (e.g., informational debriefings as personnel rotate off duty), defusing (small group discussions about the emotional significance of the event), family support, and referral to other support services (e.g., psychiatric, psychological, legal, career). Despite its proponents claims of empirical support for this method, the most rigorous scientific evaluations have found no evidence of its effectiveness (McNally, Bryant & Ehlers, 2003). One problem seems to be that establishing a rigid schedule for victims to discuss traumatic events disrupts their ability to control the alternation between psychological phases of active processing and avoidance (Pennebaker & Harber, 1993). A related problem is the requirement for group discussion with their professional peers shortly after the event (usually within 12 hours). In the case of emergency responders, this conflicts with their preference for seeking support from spouses and others outside the workplace (Gist, et al., 1999). Thus, there appears to be no scientific justification to plan for anything other than routine referrals for psychological distress.

*Economic development*. The ROP should provide guidance on the economic development of the disaster stricken areas. The basic strategy for redevelopment should have been planned during the process of envisioning the community recovery strategy. Thus, this is the time at which the strategy is implemented. In communities that are highly dependent on tourism, active promotion is needed to assure prospective visitors that all facilities are back in operation.

*Infrastructure resilience*. One opportunity that is likely to arise during disaster recovery is an opportunity to decrease the physical vulnerability of community infrastructure. In most cases, roads and bridges can be strengthened. Similarly, aboveground lines can be undergrounded to reduce their vulnerability to wind and ice. In some cases, pipelines for water, sewer, and fuel and major transmission lines for electric power and telephone can be rerouted to reduce vulnerability. However, most of these lifelines must pass through high hazard exposure areas at some point. For example, all lifelines must cross seismic faults to serve customers on the other side. All of these lifelines are critical to a community’s disaster resilience, so preimpact planning or postimpact improvisation should provide for rerouting and strengthening infrastructure to decrease its vulnerability to future disasters.

*Historic preservation*. The disaster recovery period is an opportune time to examine the physical vulnerability of undamaged historic structures to determine how to protect them from future disasters (Cliver, 1998). The federal government has funds, as do many states, for the preservation of historic buildings. However, the affected community must initiate the process by recognizing the value of these structures and investing time and money into their preservation (Alfaro, 1998).

*Environmental remediation*. Hazmat spills are an increasing problem during natural disasters and the process of cleaning up oil and chemical spills could take months (Lindell & Perry, 1997b; Showalter & Myers, 1994). In most cases, such work will be performed by specialized contractors hired by state or federal government. However, such efforts should be coordinated with local personnel from the department of public health, land use planning, or fire/hazmat response.

*Disaster memorialization*. Disaster recovery is a critical time in the life of a community. In the case of major loss of life or of major damage to a community’s stock of historic buildings, the sense of loss can be tremendous. Communities frequently derive some collective solace from the establishment of a memorial structure or for the definition of a memorial day to be commemorated annually. These disaster memorials can play an important part in the recovery of a community’s sense of identity and pride. Thus, they should be considered when a community has suffered a traumatic event. They must be planned and developed in a carefully designed, transparent, and participatory process in order to be effective instruments of community healing. In most disasters, the Recovery/Mitigation Committee should seek representation from a wide range of religious and secular groups. In some cases, the 9/11 World Trade Center attack being one of many examples, a committee of victims’ families has exerted substantial influence on the memorialization process.

*Recovery Management*

*Agency notification and mobilization*. Unlike the incident management function performed during emergency response, the recovery management function performed during the disaster recovery does not require special procedures for agency notification and mobilization because agencies will be well aware of the disaster by the time recovery is initiated. The rapid assessment noted earlier might seem like a counterexample, but this task is actually part of the emergency response.

*Mobilization of recovery facilities and equipment*. Recovery management does require the mobilization of recovery facilities for donations management, debris management, and disaster assistance (the DACs). As noted earlier, a community with a large population of displaced victims and a small housing vacancy rate might need to develop one or more mobile home parks to provide enough temporary housing. Rapid mobilization of such facilities requires preimpact screening to identify appropriate sites. Site selection criteria should, of course, include suitable zoning and access to utilities such as water/sewer, fuel and electricity. In addition, planners should also focus on sites that have access to public transportation and close proximity to the types of jobs that will be held by a low income population.

*Internal direction and control*. There is a need for internal direction and control among agencies within the jurisdiction because many aspects of the recovery process require multiagency coordination. Disaster recovery typically involves local government agencies in tasks that are more like their normal duties than is the case for the emergency response. Thus, the ROP’s allocation of recovery functions to agencies will be relatively simple. In addition, disaster recovery does not require an equivalent to the Incident Commander who oversees the emergency response. Instead, different departments will usually be coordinated by the Recovery/Mitigation Committee. Finally, there is less time pressure during the disaster recovery than during the emergency response, so this committee’s meetings can be scheduled for daily or, later, weekly frequency. Nonetheless, decisions about recovery programs must often be made while victims still focused on satisfying basic needs such as food and shelter. Thus, recovery decisions may need to be made before citizens are ready to participate in a planning process (Smith, 2004).

*External coordination*. There is a need for external coordination, especially in presidentially declared disasters, because of the presence of personnel from other jurisdictions and other levels of government. As is the case for internal direction and control, there should be a relatively clear understanding of which agencies will address each disaster response function. In addition, local agencies need to understand what are the restrictions associated with different state, federal, NGO, and CBO programs.

*Public information*. There is also a need for public information, especially to inform disaster victims about recovery policies and procedures. However, there is also a need to inform other citizens about the progress of the recovery. Thus, the ROP should describe the procedure for disseminating public information during disaster recovery. The procedure should describe which agencies will be the source of each type of information, what will be the general content of their messages, and what communication channels they will use. As indicated in Chapter 4, general information about the recovery process and sources of additional information can be distributed through the mass media. Brochures can be targeted at individuals and organizations located in vulnerable zones (before a disaster strikes) or impact areas (after a disaster strikes). Telephone hotlines can be useful for answering questions about the recovery process, and a full time PIO should be on staff at the DAC during short term recovery. Public meetings should be held frequently to involve community residents in the reconstruction planning process.

Research on disaster recovery has reported that some victims believe there is favoritism toward business interests at the expense of households. Similar concerns have arisen in other disasters where historic preservation, neighborhood, and ethnic organizations mobilized public demonstrations, pressured administrators in hearings, and filed lawsuits (Bolin, 1993). These organizations can slow recovery and make it more expensive (Bolin, 1993) unless there is a transparent process as well as clear and consistent answers to questions such as “Who is eligible for assistance?” and “How will land use change in the impact area and how will this affect adjacent areas?”

*Recovery legal authority and financing*. The Recovery/Mitigation Committee needs to obtain legal authority for a wide range of short term recovery actions including a development moratorium, temporary repair permits, demolition regulations, and zoning for temporary housing (Schwab, et al., 1998). They also need to explore the feasibility of an *adequate public facility ordinance* requiring developers to pay for extending infrastructure to locations where it does not already exist, *increased participation in the National Flood Insurance Program*, and revising *annexation procedures* for incorporating additional land. In addition, the Recovery/Mitigation Committee should examine the adequacy of existing zoning tools including *development density controls* that limit the number of lots per acre of developed land, *overlay districts* that add special restrictions to the customary limitations of type (residential, commercial, and industrial) of construction, and *setback requirements* for minimum distances from hazardous terrain or landscape features. In addition to ensuing adequate legal authority, the Recovery/Mitigation Committee must identify financial tools for achieving mitigation objectives. Financing can be obtained by *directing Community Development Block Grant funds* to mitigation activities, *establishing special assessment districts*, and *charging impact fees* for new development— especially when it is in a hazard prone area.

*Administrative and logistical support*. During the recovery period, the pace of operations decreases so the management of specific emergency response and recovery functions does not need to be focused at incident scenes or centralized in the EOC. Thus, the activities performed by the Planning, Logistics, and Administration Sections within the IMS are gradually dispersed back to the jurisdiction’s normal departments listed in Figure 11-2. Nonetheless, special provisions are required to support the additional staff generated by obtaining mutual aid personnel from other jurisdictions and volunteer personnel such as architects and engineers used as building inspectors. Moreover, records accumulated by the Finance Section must be available to provide a justification for expenditures on disaster recovery and hazard mitigation that are reimbursable by state and federal agencies.

*Documentation*. As is the case in the emergency response, documentation is needed during disaster recovery to provide the basis for organizational learning. Maintaining an event log of who took what actions in response to what conditions will provide the Recovery/ Mitigation Committee with the information it needs to produce the “Lessons Learned” document and, later, to revise the ROP. In addition, detailed documentation provides the jurisdiction’s legal counsel with the information that might be needed to defend against any lawsuits.

**Case Study: Disaster Recovery in Wichita Falls**

An F-4 tornado struck Wichita Falls on April 10, 1979 that killed 46 people and injured another 3245 (Bolin, 1982). The tornado also destroyed 2500 homes, seriously damaged 879, and slightly damaged 1659. In addition, it destroyed 1274 apartment units, 85 mobile homes, and 81 businesses. In the aftermath of the storm, nearly one fifth of the city’s population of 100,000 was homeless. Temporary housing began to be delivered after four days, telephone service was restored after nine days, and debris clearance from private lots had begun within two weeks. Although the EOC was deactivated five days after the storm, the emergency declaration was not lifted for a month. By that time, basic services (water, sewer, electric power, fuel, telecommunications, and transportation) were restored. Debris clearance was delayed by the need to obtain permission from property owners who were, understandably, not readily accessible due to relocation elsewhere. Nearly 50% of all homeless families had temporary housing within 45 days after the storm and almost all had temporary housing within 90 days. Most major commercial businesses had resumed operations within 120 days. Housing reconstruction was delayed by Small Business Administration funding problems, some victims’ lack of insurance and inability to qualify for federal aid, and the scarcity of building contractors and building materials. Nearly 90% of the lost housing had been rebuilt by the end of two years, but there were problems in the interim. First, the influx of construction workers increased pressure on the tight housing market. Second, reconstruction in lower socioeconomic neighborhoods was only 30% at 18 months when reconstruction in higher socioeconomic neighborhoods reached 80%. The community faced a number of foreseeable recovery issues for which it was unprepared. First, the city council reversed itself twice on the issue of siting mobile homes on lots where owners were attempting to rebuild. Second, the council imposed rent and price controls, but these only delayed increases that skyrocketed as soon as they were terminated. Third, the city incurred substantial costs for rebuilding infrastructure at a time when its revenues were down because of the losses in the property tax base.