

The Florida Department of Community Affairs (DCA) and Division of Emergency Management have begun a three-year post-disaster redevelopment planning initiative that will culminate in a guidebook that can be used by local governments to prepare a Post-Disaster Redevelopment Plan (PDRP) for their community. All of Florida's coastal counties and municipalities, a total of 203 communities, are required to adopt a PDRP and most have stated their intent to do so in their comprehensive plan. The state recommends that "these plans should, at minimum, establish long-term policies regarding redevelopment, infrastructure, densities, nonconforming uses, and future land use patterns (§163.3177(7)(l) F.S.). In addition, inland communities are also encouraged under Florida Statutes to prepare PDRPs. In the aftermath of the 2004 and 2005 hurricane seasons, there has been an increased awareness of the need for sound and feasible guidance for both coastal and inland jurisdictions undertaking this planning process. The state has commenced this essential initiative with funding from the Federal Emergency Management Agency and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration through the Coastal Management Program of the Florida Department of Environmental Protection. The program is being overseen by a focus group comprised of knowledgeable individuals representing federal, state, regional, and local organizations, as well as the academic community.

The initiative is being conducted in three phases, spanning from 2007 to 2009. The goal of the **first phase**, which has just recently been completed, was to develop draft guidelines for post-disaster redevelopment planning. These guidelines are based on an extensive literature review, assessment of existing PDRPs, and focus group input. During this research phase, the focus group developed the following definition of a PDRP:

*A post-disaster redevelopment plan identifies 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.*

The key component of the initiative lies in the **second phase** where the draft PDRP Guidelines will be tested on pilot communities to determine their effectiveness in providing assistance to local governments preparing PDRPs. Each community will be provided a planning consultant that will guide the community in their planning process and develop the PDRP based on community inputs as well as the draft guidelines. The pilot communities will be models for the rest of the state, possibly even the nation, and will also assist in creating realistic planning guidance that is flexible enough to meet the needs of all of Florida's diverse communities.

The **third phase** will provide an objective analysis of the draft PDRP Guidelines as tested on the pilot communities and will result in lessons learned to be incorporated into the final PDRP Guidebook. This guidebook will be the latest addition to the Best Practices Series published by the DCA. In addition, recommendations for legislative changes that will complement the guidebook will be developed to clarify the minimum requirements of a PDRP for those communities who are required to develop a plan. Regional workshops will be conducted to educate local communities on the new guidebook and to announce grant opportunities for communities interested in developing PDRPs according to the guidance.

## Terms that will be used throughout this project

**Post-Disaster Redevelopment Plan (PDRP).** A post-disaster redevelopment plan identifies 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.

(Florida PDRP Focus Group, 2007)

**Disaster.** "Disaster" means any natural, technological, or civil emergency that causes damage of sufficient severity and magnitude to result in a declaration of a state of emergency by a county, the Governor, or the President of the United States. Disasters shall be identified by the severity of resulting damage, as follows:

- (a) "Catastrophic disaster" means a disaster that will require massive state and federal assistance, including immediate military involvement.
- (b) "Major disaster" means a disaster that will likely exceed local capabilities and require a broad range of state and federal assistance.
- (c) "Minor disaster" means a disaster that is likely to be within the response capabilities of local government and to result in only a minimal need for state or federal assistance.

(F.S. § 252.34, 2005)

**Response.** Activities that address the immediate and short-term effects of an emergency or disaster. Response activities are contained within the Emergency Support Functions of the Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan and include immediate actions to save lives, protect property, meet basic human needs, and restore water, sewer, and other essential services.

**Short-term recovery.** Encompass such activities as damage assessments, public information, temporary housing, utility restoration and debris clearance. Short-term recovery does not include the redevelopment of the built environment, economic sector, or normal social networks. Emergency repairs and minor reconstruction however, will occur during this phase as well as decisions that may affect long-term redevelopment.

**Reconstruction/ Long-term Recovery.** The long-term process of rebuilding a community's destroyed or damaged housing stock, commercial and industrial buildings, public facilities, and infrastructure to similar levels and standards as existed before the disaster.

**Long-term Redevelopment.** The process of going beyond restoring all aspects of the community to normal functions by creating conditions improved over those that existed before the disaster. Long-term redevelopment is characterized by activities such as implementing hazard mitigation projects during rebuilding, strengthening building codes, changing land use and zoning designations, improving transportation corridors, building more affordable housing, and developing new economic opportunities.

**Preparedness.** Pre-disaster activities that ensure people are ready for a disaster and will respond to it effectively. It includes steps taken to decide what to do if essential services break down, how redevelopment should occur, developing a plan for contingencies, and practicing that plan.

**Mitigation.** Sustained actions taken to reduce or eliminate long-term risk to people and property from hazards and their effects.

**Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan (CEMP).** Operations plan required under Chapter 252.38(1), Florida Statutes, that defines the organizational structure, chain of command, and operational procedure for the preparation, response and recovery and mitigation efforts associated with an emergency. The CEMP includes a basic plan as well as a recovery annex and a mitigation annex.

**Local Mitigation Strategy (LMS).** The term used in Florida for the multi-jurisdictional pre-disaster hazard mitigation plans required by the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act as a condition of federal grant assistance. The LMS is implemented by a countywide stakeholder committee.