Thinking Regionally about Resilience and the CEDS

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One of the victims of a region-wide natural disaster is often regionalism itself

- Doug Elliott, Executive Director, East Central Iowa Council of Governments
The Roots of “Resilience”

From the Oxford English Dictionary:

- “Elasticity; the power of resuming an original shape or position after compression, bending, etc.”

- “The action or an act of rebounding or springing back; rebound, recoil.”

- The term emerged from the scientific community, particularly physics and mathematics

- First used in the 1970s to describe ecological systems’ responses to change

- 400 percent citation increase in the social sciences between 1997 and 2007

- 20+ definitions of community resilience to disasters

Source: US Department of Housing and Urban Development Evidence Matters (Winter 2012)
A Broad Definition of Resilience

The ability of a region or community to anticipate, withstand, and bounce back from shocks and disruptions, including:

- Natural disasters or hazards
- Climate change impacts
- The closure of a large employer
- The decline of an important industry
- Changes in the workforce
“Another way of looking at resilience is the ability not only to bounce back but also to “bounce forward” - to recover and at the same time to enhance the capacities of the community or organization to better withstand future stresses.”

- Urban Land Institute, *After Sandy*
Why *Regional* Resilience?

- Nearby communities often share similar risks/hazards
- Disaster impacts cross jurisdictional boundaries
- Communities are interdependent
  - Vulnerabilities in one community could impact another.
  - Mitigation investments in one community could impact another (positively or negatively).
- Economies are regional in nature
- Communities can accomplish more when they work together
COG Roles in Promoting Regional Resilience

• Regional planning and analysis
  • Hazard mitigation planning
  • Vulnerability assessments
  • Economic development/resilience
  • GIS mapping

• Building/enhancing local capacity
  • Technical assistance
  • Grant writing
  • Revolving loan funds
  • Sharing staff

• Coordinating federal, state, and local government partners
  • Allocate funding (i.e. recovery)
  • Connect local governments with assistance opportunities
  • Translate national and local priorities

• Convening stakeholders in a neutral forum

• Contributing regional, long-term perspectives
Snapshots of Best Practices for Infusing Resilience into the CEDS
Sonoma-Mendocino Economic Development District (CA)

- “Sonoma-Mendocino must diversify its economic drivers to build resilience against downturns that impact consumer confidence, discretionary spending, and real estate investment.”
- Focuses on cluster development, green economy, human capital, workforce development, education, and entrepreneurship
- Emphasis on equitable economic development that benefits all residents
East Central Iowa Council of Governments

- Flood in Iowa in 2008 served as a catalyst for collaboration and integration
- Comprehensive Regional Development Strategy (CREDS) = combined CEDS and Long Range Transportation Plan
- Process resulted in better plans and also improved internal COG staff collaboration around economic development, transportation, and housing.
After a series of natural disasters in the Pioneer Valley in 2011, including a tornado, tropical storm, and severe snowstorm, it became clear that there was a need to better address the needs of the business community in disaster response, recovery, and resiliency.

Covers the existing recovery framework and shares best practices and lessons learned.

Provides top three final recommendations to a) businesses and b) chambers, business service providers, and local economic development staff.
“The goal is to develop more diversity to improve the number, quality, and variety of jobs that are available to local residents through the retention and growth of existing businesses as well as the recruitment of new businesses.”

Focus on post-disaster economic recovery

Thoughtful planning in advance well-positioned the district to respond to the 2015 Gold King Mine disaster that polluted the Animus River
• “The rising number of natural and man-made disasters demands that families, businesses, and government agencies have a plan in place to prepare for and respond to disasters. Disaster preparedness is a crucial component affecting the region’s economic health.”

• Identifies regional assets, details pre- and post-disaster planning and implementation, and defines the role of district in these processes

• SCEDD as an analyst, catalyst, gap filler, educator, and visionary
Make Resilience the New Normal

Look for ways of building resilience into your day-to-day decisions, programs, and investments in:

- Planning
- Zoning
- Policymaking
- Capital investment
- Lending
- Economic development
- Other routine services
The Most Effective CEDS Are:

- Creative
- Engaging
- Driven by data
- Storytellers
Resilience Resources Available at the CEDS Resource Library on www.nado.org

• Lessons from the Storm: Case Studies on Economic Resilience and Recovery

• Resilient Regions: Integrating Economic Development Strategies, Sustainability Principles, and Hazard Mitigation Planning

• Regional Resilience: Research and Policy Brief

• Building Economic Resilience in the Kerr Tar Region: Recommendations for Linking Comprehensive Economic Development Strategies and Hazard Mitigation Plans

• Lessons Learned from Irene: Vermont RPCs Address Transportation System Recovery

• [Webinar]: Innovation and Opportunity: A Closer Look at the New CEDS Content Guidelines

• [Webinar]: Building Economic Resilience in Your Community: Linking Economic Development and Hazard Mitigation Planning

• [Webinar]: The Regional Development Organization’s Role in Disaster Recovery
Planning for a More Resilient Future: A Guide to Regional Approaches

- Planning for a More Resilient Future: A Guide to Regional Approaches is a report and website that summarizes the rapidly-growing body of research on resilience, describing the main ideas that are driving policy and practice across the country and examining current thinking on regional and economic resilience.

- Available at: www.planningforresilience.com and www.NADO.org
Stay in touch!

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