



Meeting Summary

Southeast Brooklyn Waterfront Planning Committee (includes Bergen Beach, Marine Park, Mill Basin, Mill Island, Georgetown)

Wednesday, October 1st, 7pm to 9pm
Carmine Carro Community Center, 3000 Fillmore Ave., Brooklyn, NY 11229

Attendance: (Members, Planner, Firm Representatives, Invited Guests)

Joe Dai	Committee Co-Chair	Chris Gorman	NYS GOSR
John Piccirillo	Committee Member	Jee Mee Kim	Planning Team
Ike Sinesi	Committee Member	Jaclyn Sachs	Planning Team
Shea Rubenstein	Committee Member	Sam Saliba	Planning Team
Tom Whitford	Committee Member	Ayres Bradford	NYS GOSR Implementation Team
Jim Ivalioitis	Committee Member		

Agenda Item: Presentation by HGA implementation representative

Presenter: Ayres Bradford (HGA)

Summary of Discussion:

- Through the CDBG-DR program, GOSR must justify use of funding from HUD.
- In order for projects ultimately to be awarded funding, they must meet certain eligibility criteria and meet a national objective.
- “National objective” refers to benefitting low- to moderate-income people, preventing or eliminating slums/blight, or addressing urgent needs – in this case, recovery from the storm.
 - Implementation representative notes that it is rare to see slum and blight used. Applicants typically cite low- and moderate-income persons.
 - Committee member notes that this area is not low- to moderate-income – is that an issue?
 - Implementation representative notes that this is merely one consideration and is OK.
 - Implementation representative indicates that “Urgent needs” is the easiest to use. This means that demonstrating a relationship to the storm is really important.
- Basic categories of eligibility in Section 105(a) of the HCDA:
 - Committee member notes that the Committee has spent time talking about measures like solar-powered lighting. Where would that fit in under this criteria, and is a project like this thus possible?
 - Implementation representative responds: depending on where you’re installing the lighting, it could be “Public Facilities.” Further, it is absolutely possible if it can be related to the storm. HUD likes to see initiatives that are related to resiliency needs.
- In terms of planning and program assistance, we can think of costs in terms of project delivery costs and project administration costs.
 - Project administration costs are anything high-level – i.e., overall costs that are not project-specific. For example, if the Committee proposed a project to add funding onto an existing Army Corps project, the project administration costs could entail working out the different requirements that the Army Corps has vs. HUD.
 - Project delivery is a similar cost, but for project-specific costs.

- Committee member asks: what if, for example, we wanted to propose a bulkhead and hire a company to assess its feasibility – would that be a project delivery cost?
 - Implementation team responds that, yes, that would be a project delivery cost, and additionally notes that these costs typically amount to 15% or less of the total cost.
- Committee member indicates that they want the funds to go directly to projects, and not to be spent on administrative or personnel costs. Is that possible?
 - Implementation representative notes that sometimes the City is the subrecipient for some of these grants. Let's say the City is the subrecipient for some riprap at a park. Based on the subrecipient contract with the City, possible for the funds to not go toward staff, but toward project delivery costs.
- Review of ineligible activities:
 - Purchase of equipment. This does not mean can never be done, though. For example, fire equipment is OK.
 - Committee asks: what about generators?
 - Implementation representative responds: HUD does not like portability, but fixed (installed) generators are OK. HUD really encourages mitigation and preparedness that is part of the rebuilding effort
- Additional Committee questions
 - Committee member asks: How does the application process work? Can you walk us through that?
 - Implementation representative responds: You'll build your plan and propose projects at a high level. This will entail demonstrating that the projects relate to the storm, and providing a general cost estimate and brief project description. Once the projects are approved by the State, they go to application and through approval processes (e.g., environmental review, go out, have to procure certain services
 - In terms of projects, much of it is how you say it in terms of making a case, vs. what you say.
 - Committee member asks: What is the program's pass rate for Round I?
 - Implementation representative responds: We're not there yet – we're in the pre-application phase.
 - Committee member asks: From your Louisiana experience, what kind of results have you seen?
 - Implementation representative responds: I've done this exact process before, noting that State or local bureaucracy often varies.
 - Committee member asks: What kinds of projects have you seen locally?
 - Implementation representative responds: Just about everything. If you can fit inside the national objective, you can make it happen.
 - Committee member asks: What does "national objective" mean?
 - Implementation representative responds: It means the goal the project is satisfying to help the Community, in line with HUD's federal mandate.
 - Committee member asks about how to augment volunteer ambulance service. Through this program, we cannot fund flashlights or portable emergency devices, so need to figure out another way of helping people. Trucks could only be taken to a certain depth of water, but boats could help residents manage impacts better. Would it be possible to fund a boat for SEBW?
 - Implementation representative responds that, in Louisiana, there was a situation where they were able to purchase a boat, but only due to specific circumstances. It was difficult to pass through regulations. Additionally, many of the subrecipients are citywide agencies, not community-based organizations (CBOs), so if SEBW got a boat, it couldn't necessarily guarantee that the boat would be used by a CBO.
 - GOSR notes that this may not be a wise use of funds. The Committee could identify it in the plan, but NYPD and FDNY already have these types of assets in their possession.

- Committee member responds that it is important to the Committee that assets stay within the Community.
- Committee member comments that it may be interesting to think about helping local hospitals. What kinds of projects could help do that?
 - Implementation representative notes that entire brand-new hospitals have been funded.
 - GOSR adds that Coney Island Hospital got very badly damaged during Sandy, and the Planning Committee there wanted to enhance its resiliency as a project.
 - Committee member notes that that is a great point, and that New York Community Hospital took a lot of patients from Coney Island Hospital after the storm. That is something we can identify even though it is not in our Planning Area.
 - GOSR and implementation representative add that a project could be to elevate generators in critical health facilities.

Agenda Item: Calendar check-in and updates

Presenter: **Jee Mee Kim (HR&A)**

Summary of Discussion:

- Calendar check-in
 - Planning Team has met with DOT and OEM, and tomorrow, we have a joint meeting with the Canarsie Planning Committee scheduled. We have sent a long list to GOSR, and can add to it. Table the rest of the DEP-related conversation for the end of the meeting.
 - At the next PC meeting, we will discuss Drainage, Housing, and Economic Development.
- Planning Team briefly reviews project types: there are Proposed and Featured Projects and Additional Resiliency Recommendations.
- Planning Team reviews a revised list of strategies and notes that they refined the language slightly on the coastal protection-related strategy to make it a bit clearer. If Committee members have any further comments on the strategies, please let the Planning Team know.

Agenda Item: Emergency preparedness and response

Presenter: **Jaclyn Sachs (HR&A)**

Summary of Discussion:

- The Planning Team notes that, as with the coastal protection-related meeting previously, the goal of this session is to present some considerations the Committee may want to take into account when developing emergency preparedness and response projects.
- Planning Team provides an overview of the major actors involved in emergency preparedness and response in NYC, including FEMA, NYC OEM, and CBOs.
- Planning Team reviews some of the actors involved in emergency preparedness and response in the Planning Area, as expressed by the Health and Social Services asset map.
 - Committee notes that we should add hospitals that are outside of the Planning Area to the asset map: Beth Israel, New York Community Hospital on Kings Avenue, and Kings County Hospital. Veterinary clinics are important, too. Many community members did not leave their homes because evacuation shelters did not allow pets, and they did not want to leave their pets at home.
 - Should also add Kings Plaza, which is completely off the grid and could be served as a staging ground. Planning Team indicates that it is on the Economic Assets map, but we can add it to the Health and Social Services asset map, too.

- Committee member suggests that Marine Park Junior High School also be added to the Health and Social Services asset map.
- The JCC of Marine Park should also be added to the Health and Social Services asset map.
- Review of communication and information
 - Committee member notes that he went to the GOSR-sponsored Citizens' Preparedness Training the night before, where they were given a Go Bag, which is useful. Would funding allow for program that funds Go Bags and a flu shot?
 - Implementation representative responds that this might be challenging for two reasons: 1) portability; and 2) tie to rebuilding (solely preparation). It sounds like a program already exists, however – can make a recommendation, or create a project that aims to enhance access to the program, such as an education program that informs community members where to get Go Bags.
 - Committee member affirms that education is very important. For example, they did not know to turn off electricity and gas before the storm. There definitely needs to be an education process – maybe leaflets or pamphlets to hand out to people.
 - Planning Team notes that OEM produces a lot of information on emergency preparedness and response for residents around New York City. It is worthwhile to consider leveraging these existing resources and enhancing Community access to them, especially since OEM is interested in enhancing community access to the information they produce. They are looking for other people to supplement the City's overall effort, creating more capacity through residents who already know the community well.
 - There are different types of emergency notification systems to consider.
 - There are certain issues to take into account with an audible system at the neighborhood scale like an alarm: typically done in more geographically isolated areas, and at a much larger (citywide) scale. It can cause confusion for adjacent areas that hear the alarm, yet face different levels of risk.
 - Committee member notes that we need to get creative on how to implement a system that lets people know when the water is coming. Residents had no notice that surge was approaching – they had no view of the water and had no idea it was that close until it was there. One way or the other, it's an important part of what we need to do.
 - Another Committee member adds that there are particular signs that can be measured by a meteorologist. One typical example is that, the day before, the tide did not go out when it was supposed to. Also, the barometric pressure was low.
 - Planning Team agrees and notes that they will look into potential approaches for notification when a high tide or surge is coming that poses flood risk.
 - Planning Team adds that an emergency notification system could tie to "Notify NYC" – the City already has an alert system that sends texts when an extreme event is coming – yet acknowledges that it is important to have very locally-specific information.
 - Committee member comments that an attendee at a Public Engagement Event mentioned a FEMA program called Integrated Public Alert Warning System (IPAWS).
 - OEM has told the Planning Team that they do not use this system, and thus it is limited in viability.
 - Committee notes another option: all the schools have air raid sirens on them that could be set off in the event of an emergency; should explore civil defense system and tailoring them to natural emergencies.
 - Evacuation routes
 - This is OEM's map. An evacuation order is timed in order to give residents ample time – a "blue sky period" – to evacuate well in advance of the storm's arrival.

- Planning Team comments that residents seem to lack information around where the closest evacuation shelter is. OEM hopes that their “Know Your Zone” campaign will increase awareness. There is widespread belief in the Community that Brooklyn College is the closest evacuation shelter, but in fact, it has not been one since before Hurricane Irene. FDR High is the nearest evacuation shelter, which is still not that close by.
 - Committee member adds that Fort Hamilton is another, more easily-accessible shelter. [Planning Team research note: Fort Hamilton is not currently identified as an evacuation shelter.]
 - Committee member comments that we should find out where the evacuation shelters are and make recommendations to OEM as to how to make the whole process better.
 - Planning Team indicates that this is where resource/recovery centers came in in the last round – people may just need a place to go for temporary relief and to access basic supplies and information. There is a difference between evacuation shelters, which provide overnight lodging, and the resource/recovery center concept, which does not provide lodging, but distributes supplies.
 - Committee member suggests that the Committee make recommendations to the City on evacuation centers and routes, but focus its energy and funds on resource centers that can triage you if you need a place to stay.
 - OEM organized some shuttles after Sandy that took people to evacuation centers, but likely on a small scale. Some communities in New Orleans developed their own shuttle systems, particularly to pick up vulnerable populations.
 - Local coordination: Block- and neighborhood level
 - CERT
 - Committee comments that Community Board 18 has teams for Canarsie, Georgetown (?), and Bergen Beach, and that no one from the Committee is on a CERT.
 - Committee thinks a limitation with CERTs is that residents are focused on addressing their needs first. It would be useful to consider a model like a “regional CERT,” in which people from less at-risk, upland areas come help lower-lying areas.
 - Block captain / Leveraging block associations
 - Committee member comments that he does not like the formality of a “captain” of emergency response, and that having a hierarchy in these types of models could be problematic.
 - Coordination isn’t an issue as much as supplies/equipment, such as pumps. What if the Committee could identify a network of private pump suppliers, and have access to them in the event of an emergency? Had called FDNY to ask for pumps in Sandy’s wake, but they didn’t even have access to pumps. Need to leverage private assets, such as plumbing companies with pumps to spare, or electricians.
 - Vulnerable populations
 - Planning Team notes that vulnerable populations are important to consider in the development of emergency preparedness and response projects. For one, these are populations that are disproportionately impacted during a storm because they are unable to help themselves. For another, there is additional Rising to the Top funding that may be available to Committee for vulnerable populations-related projects.
 - Planning Team asks: Who are the vulnerable populations in the Community?
 - School-aged children? There is a large population of residents under the age of 14 in the Planning Area (20%).
 - There is a small population of seniors (7% over age 75 total), yet still important to note since particularly vulnerable.

- A Committee member comments that the numbers of elderly people living in the Planning Area are surprising and should be higher. Perhaps this is due to some residents living part of the year elsewhere? Whatever the reason, seniors have nobody and are much more vulnerable than any children. Parents will take care of their children.
 - Planning Team adds that perhaps we should consider hospital patients as well.
- Project concept: Community preparedness program
 - Planning Team describes potential components: a plan, the development of educational material, and a coordinator. Asks if this is of interest to the Committee. Notes that they have heard so far that: Community-specific information needs to reach residents more effectively; that a response guide would be useful; and that a high tide notification system is important.
 - Committee comments that they do not want to support a staffperson, e.g., a coordinator, with project funds. Coordinators would fall by the wayside after a few years. Preference for programs and specific projects, even if it's a funding plan. Furthermore, programs and plans could easily get abused.
 - A community emergency preparedness plan may also be unnecessary. A Community-specific guide/educational materials, though, would be useful to the Community.
- Project concept: Resource/recovery center network
 - This is of interest to the Community and should be pursued.
 - Biggest thing it should do is identify and distribute critical information out to the Community.

Agenda Item: **Next steps**

Presenter: **Jee Mee Kim, Planning Team**

Summary of Discussion:

- DEP meeting tomorrow night
 - Planning Team thanks everyone who added questions, and notes that tomorrow's meeting is on project development, what projects make the most sense on a homeowner level and on a Community level.
 - There are two people attending from DEP – one from Capital Projects and one from Public Affairs. The Capital Projects representative will be able to discuss what upcoming projects DEP has planned for the area. They may not be able to go into depth around all questions, but will be able to touch on them.
 - GOSR adds that DEP has been a great working partner so far. While we may not get all the answers we need tomorrow, they are more than happy to provide the information they can.
- Next Committee meeting: 10/15, on Housing, Economic Development.
- Planning Team notes that they are collecting images for the Final Reconstruction Plan and would like the Plan to be filled with residents' photos as much as possible. They request that Committee members send any photos they are willing to share of Sandy-related impacts in the Community to Jaelyn (jsachs@hraadvisors.com).