DR-4273-WV

Recovery and Resilience Discussions

Analysis

1-24-2017

Recovery and Resilience Discussions Analysis

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Background

As part of West Virginia's long term recovery efforts in response to heavy rains and flooding at the end of June 2016, FEMA National Disaster Recovery Support (NDRS) staff were asked to support a series of informal discussions, led by the WV Department of Commerce. The purpose of these discussions was to meet with small groups of local, state, and federal partners in the most affected areas, to:

- Learn about: 1) community- and region-wide recovery planning and resilience issues; 2) what is important to protect/preserve; and 3) what changes are desired;
- Discuss long term recovery planning needs, as well as roles of state, local, and federal partners; and
- Gather information that will help form future recovery efforts and meetings.

Participants included representatives from state Regional Planning and Development Councils (RPDC), Long Term Recovery Committees (LTRC)[1], local municipalities and organizations, and state and federal agencies. Three discussions were hosted in various parts of the state: 1) Summersville, WV on November 9, 2016; 2) Clendenin, WV on November 18, 2016; and Lewisburg, WV on November 30, 2016. Individual meeting notes are included at the end of this analysis.

Cross-cutting Issues

As a result of the discussions, it became clear WV communities are facing many of the same recovery challenges. The cross-cutting issues identified throughout this process are:

1. Communication and Coordination
2. Capacity
3. Community Engagement
4. Affordable Housing
5. Broadband
6. GIS Data
7. Economic Development

For each of the identified cross-cutting issues a summary of the discussion is provided and a list of potential solutions and resources for beginning to address the issue are identified. Implementation for almost all of the proposed solutions will require coordination amongst the whole community along with an identified lead (e.g. federal, state, regional, non-profit or local entity) to spearhead the initiative. This report does not identify a lead for each solution. Leads should be identified as part of future recovery coordination efforts.

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[1] NOTE: In WV, Long Term Recovery Committees (LTRCs) are also referred to as Long Term Recovery Groups (LTRGs)

Analysis and Potential Solutions

1. Communication and Coordination

There is a need for a centralized coordinating body, which would serve to assist the RPDCs, LTRCs, and other municipal and local organizations. Municipal, regional and local organizations want to sustain their unique communities, and although they have access to some information (funding opportunities, programs, and resources), there are many gaps. They would benefit from a coordinating body which can a) obtain and disseminate comprehensive information and opportunities related to long term recovery, and b) ensure regional and state-wide meetings are regularly scheduled and supported administratively. Communications are a big issue. There should be a platform for disseminating information to local communities to ensure the whole community is equipped with the tools needed to make efficient and effective decisions.

Potential Solutions

- The implementation of a State Resilience Office (SRO) and staff, as suggested in the FEMA-4273-DR-WV Recovery Support Strategy, may serve as the main coordinating body for information-sharing and meeting coordination for local and regional partners. Embedding SRO staff with RPDCs may be considered in order to provide direct technical and coordination assistance.
- A Resource Guide, including funding and technical assistance resources, may help in identifying the agencies and programs available to assist in current and future recovery and resilience efforts.
- Coordination between regional and local organizations, through continued meetings, will serve to grow relationships. For example, the New River Gorge Regional Development Authority is currently developing a "Capital Access Guide", which is intended to serve as a resource for businesses and entrepreneurs. This guide may act as a supplement to any resource guides developed in the future.
- FEMA's Community Recovery Management Toolkit is a valuable resource for guidance through the recovery process: https://www.fema.gov/resources-plan-post-disaster-recovery

2. Capacity

Municipal, regional and local organizations all reported a lack of capacity, both personnel, and financially. As a result of limited staffing, the ability to implement current program activities, and search for new funding and projects, is greatly hindered. It is also challenging to find sufficient funding to support implementation. Needs include: a) reliable, continued funding to support current staff; and b) funding to secure and maintain additional staff.

RPDCs reported struggling with putting together funding packages, coordinating multi-year projects, and managing disparate funding requirements. Every grant and project comes with different requirements, and it is often a struggle to meet the funding match requirement.

Towns also report being overwhelmed due to limited staffing. In the aftermath of the flood, city/town departments have been inundated with requests from community members and they do

not have the capacity to help with all the inquiries. They are often aware of the resources available to address concerns, however, they are unable to access them due to limited time, staffing, or required matches.

Potential Solutions

- The creation and implementation of an SRO to manage long-term recovery and resilience activities, is a major component of the Recovery Support Strategy (RSS). This office will work not only with critical state, federal and local partners to implement recovery initiatives but it will also work to enhance statewide resiliency and recovery preparedness.
- Resources for staffing, program implementation, and grants management include:
    - CNCS: Vista, Senior Corps, AmeriCorps: https://www.nationalservice.gov/
    - Silver Jackets: https://silverjackets.nfrmp.us/
    - Society of Civil Engineers: http://www.asce.org/routing-page/technical-areas/
    - Points of Light Foundation: http://www.pointsoflight.org/
    - American Institute of Architecture, West Virginia Chapter: http://aiawv.org/Home/
    - US Green Building Chapter, West Virginia: http://www.usgbc.org/usgbc-west-virginia
    - GRANTSCASE: http://www.grantscase.com/
- Utilizing volunteer time and material donations as a match in order to sustain various grant-funded programs is key for many communities in maintaining recovery and other project implementation.
- Providing training opportunities through federal and/or state partners, to include: long-term recovery planning and implementation, community resiliency and sustainability.

3. Community Engagement

West Virginia communities want to be engaged in the recovery process and work on efforts from the bottom-up. Some believe there is too much reliance on the state and federal programs, and want communities to "own" their recovery. Municipal and local organizations would like assistance in organizing and fostering community engagement.

Potential Solutions

- Coordinate and hold regular community meetings to organize local community-wide recovery priorities, then communicate these priorities and local community recovery needs to state and other partners.
- Engage local citizens and state partners through the use of social media. Use of websites, Facebook and Twitter are often easily accessible and widely used.
- FEMA's Community Planning and Capacity Building (CPCB) toolkit: https://www.fema.gov/national-disaster-recovery-framework/community-recovery-management-toolkit

- Investigate community engagement organizations and groups to further create a sense of community. There are a number of volunteer organizations that may be developed at the local level. Examples include:
    - Community Emergency Response Teams (CERT): http://www.ready.wv.gov/WESTVIRGINIACITIZENCORPS/Pages/CERT.aspx
    - Medical Reserve Corps: https://mrc.hhs.gov

4. Housing

The need for more affordable housing was expressed by all communities. This need existed before the flood; however, the number of individuals and families displaced by the flood has made the need for available housing a priority.

Blight is also a challenge in many communities. Municipality efforts in demolishing vacant and dilapidated structures are often delayed due to legal waiting periods when owners cannot be located.

Potential Solutions

- Resilient Housing
    - Educate homeowners on preparedness options
    - Develop incentives to encourage mitigation strategies while rebuilding
- Blight
    - Identify and abate all destroyed, vacant, and derelict structures within the impacted communities and rural areas
    - Encourage private redevelopment of blighted properties
    - The HUB West Virginia includes an Abandoned Properties Coalition that "focuses on identifying and advocating for policy opportunities and solutions relating to abandoned and dilapidated properties." http://wvhub.org/abandoned-properties-coalition/
    - Potential use of condemned structures for fire department training exercises

5. Broadband

Lack of broadband is a major issue throughout the state. Unreliable and slow internet access affects businesses, retention of talent and potential businesses coming to WV, individual access to information and internet-dependent employment (home and otherwise), and students' ability to study and work from home.

Potential Solutions

The formation of the Governor's West Virginia Broadband Enhancement Council (WVBEC) in 2016 illustrates the state's commitment to increase broadband access and set goals for expanding broadband networks in the impacted rural areas. Working through the state and other partners, local municipalities and committees can explore programs which may help get their communities connected. Some of these programs include:

- EPA's Smart Growth, "Cool and Connected" program helps small towns use broadband service to revitalize main streets. https://www.epa.gov/smartgrowth/cool-connected
- USDA Community Connect Grants. This program helps fund broadband deployment into rural communities where it is not yet economically viable for private sector providers to deliver service. https://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/community-connect-grants
- National Resource Network – "Access and Inclusion in the Digital Age" Resource Guide is designed to support U.S. communities of all sizes and geographies in advancing their goals for high-speed Internet access and digital inclusion. http://www.nationalresourcenetwork.org/en/Document/306284/Access_and_Inclusion_in_the_Digital_Age_A_Resource_Guide_for_Local_Governments

6. Geographic Information System (GIS)

GIS data and capabilities and data are limited at the regional and local level. There are various small sections of reliable utility data, and the WV Infrastructure and Jobs Development Council has water and sewer systems mapped. The data available, however, is often not comprehensive. There is a need for a centralized, comprehensive GIS system, which can be accessed by all state, regional and local agencies and organizations. Access to such a system would be instrumental in planning efforts, grant applications, and programmatic reporting.

Potential Solutions
- Coordinate GIS requests with the West Virginia Office of GIS Coordination (http://www.wvgs.wvnet.edu/www/giscoord/index.php) and the West Virginia Geological and Economic Survey (http://www.wvgs.wvnet.edu/www/giscoord/index.php) to see if needed information and mapping already exists.
- "Summer of Maps" is a fellowship program that matches nonprofit organizations that have spatial analysis needs with talented students pursuing careers in geospatial data analysis to complete projects over a three-month period during the summer. The program funds a summer fellowship for an advanced student to work with your organization at no cost. http://www.summerofmaps.com/

7. Economic Development

There is a strong desire to develop available economic development assets throughout the state. Regional and local organizations want to use and enhance what is available to them: rivers, adventure tourism, theaters and "Main Street" initiatives. Communities want to see their storefronts filled and streets lined with residents and tourists alike; in order to attract businesses and tourists, they need help rebuilding and developing those attractions.

Potential Solutions
- Support and encourage municipality efforts to explore and implement economic diversification
- Support revitalization of downtown commercial districts to promote business development and economic diversification

- Coordinate town hall meetings and encourage community engagement in economic planning and development meetings
- Identify opportunities to develop new and improve existing tourism attractions, destinations and businesses
- Expand and publicize the state trails plan (walking/biking/hiking/ATV)
- Expand and publicize historic and cultural sites
- Develop mechanisms that allow the state to better encourage development of new entrepreneurs and to develop new skilled workers for the tourism sector
- Funding and programmatic resources include:
  - EPA's Smart Growth, "Local Foods, Local Places" program helps people create walkable, healthy, economically vibrant neighborhoods through the development of local food systems. https://www.epa.gov/smartgrowth/local-foods-local-places (Note: The Town of Rainelle is a participant of this program.)
  - EPA's Smart Growth, "Healthy Places for Healthy People" program helps communities create walkable, healthy, economically vibrant places by engaging with their health care facility partners such as community health centers, nonprofit hospitals, and other health care facilities. https://www.epa.gov/smartgrowth/healthy-places-healthy-people
  - "What's Next, West Virginia?" is a series of conversations that will take place in communities all over the state in the coming year. These conversations are designed to encourage talking, thinking, and actions based on West Virginians' own ideas for building a more vibrant and diverse economy. The effort is being organized by the WV Center for Civic Life, the WV Community Development Hub, and a broad--and growing--coalition of partners from nonprofit, philanthropic, governmental, educational, and faith-based organizations. http://whatsnextwv.org/
  - Refresh Appalachia - Agricultural Entrepreneurship Development Program is a regional economic and workforce development initiative to establish a sustainable training and development program to increase the success of beginning farmers and ranchers in West Virginia, the Mid-Ohio Valley Region, and eastern Kentucky. http://www.refreshappalachia.com/about.html

Recovery and Resilience Discussion Notes

Region IV
885 Broad St. #100 Summersville, WV
November 9, 2016

Meeting Purpose
- To learn about: 1) community- and region-wide recovery planning and resilience issues; 2) what is important to protect/preserve; and 3) what changes are desired.
- To discuss long term recovery planning needs, as well as roles of state, local, and federal partners.
- To meet with a small group of players to discuss where we are and get an idea of what needs to happen. The information gathered in these meetings will help form the RISE meetings.

Expectations
- Address vulnerabilities with resilient solutions
- Foster conversations within communities

Discussion Participants

Mary Jo Thompson, WVDO	Kevin Snyder, FEMA
Al Lisko, WVDHSEM	Regina Marotto, FEMA
James Bush, WVDO	Thom Rounds, FEMA – CPCB
Joe Brouse, NRGRDA	Michelle Diamond, FEMA-CPCB
Jeff Wood, WVNG	Mickie Valente, EDA
John Tuggle, Region 4 RPDC	Julie Alston, HUD
Brian Aluise, Gov. Tomblin's Office	Brandon Porinchak, HUD
Russell Tarry, WVDO	Tracey Rowan, EDA
Pete Hobbs, Mayor of Ansted	Jamie Meadows, Region 4 RPDC

General Comments
- The state has plans to develop a State Resiliency Office (SRO), which will serve as the State's hub for recovery and resilience activities and information.
- The CDBG Program (known in WV as "Small Cities Block Grants") is administered through the WV Department of Commerce and distributed through the Regional Planning and Development Councils (RPDCs)
- RPDCs will be instrumental in moving forward.

Region 4 Overview
- Region 4 is comprised of 5 counties (Fayette, Greenbrier, Nicholas, Pocahontas and Webster), and 32 municipalities
- Lewisburg and Summersville are the largest communities in the Region
- Region 4 is very rural and culturally/economically diverse
  - Diversity in adventure tourism/outdoor activity assets and opportunity (snowshoe, the gorge, golfing, the Greenbrier, etc.)
  - Limited manufacturing, but large artisan industry
- Changes in the transportation network (new highways) led to the decline of many communities
  - Limited mass transit. Mountain Transit Authority

- o Residents of many communities are willing to take lower-paying jobs rather than commute long distances to Beckley or Charleston
- Limited healthcare facilities – no large hospitals in area
  - o Osteopath school in Lewisburg. Doctors leave the area after training
- Retention of trained workforce is a challenge. Not many job opportunities for youth; many skilled workers leave the area after training.
- Retirees return; low cost of living
- Investments
  - o Boy Scouts of America
  - o Faith-based groups (Young Life $25 million)
  - o Tourist-based economies
  - o Apple orchard project
- Richwood and Rainelle are in bad shape in terms of flooding susceptibility, housing, jobs, access to services, schools, etc.
  - o Richwood even offered up their lumber site (their one major business that employs 55 people) as new site for school because current school is in the floodplain and will not be allowed to re-open on current location
- Marlinton was not affected by recent flooding, but is vulnerable as it sits next to the Greenbrier River in the flood zone.

RPDC Overview
- RPDC staffing is project-dependent. Revenue from grant projects are how staff and capacity are sustained.
- Project revenue is 2/3 of their income.
- Project examples: sewage treatment, highway projects, flood control
- RPDC struggles with putting together funding packages – how they all can fit together and assembling funds for multi-year projects
- The proposed State Resilience Office staff may support RPDCs
- Project management takes away from planning when capacity is static

Local Government Challenges
- Municipalities and unincorporated communities depend on Counties
  - o County Commissions have the least amount of capacity to address recovery/development issues
  - o Counties can't apply business and occupation taxes, which provides incentive to businesses to locate outside incorporated areas
- The town of Ansted serves as the service center for much more than just Ansted. For example, the town includes 1,404 residents, yet serves a population of over 4,000.
- Residents and businesses outside of the adjacent municipalities receive benefits from those towns without paying taxes to support the services.
- Most municipalities are struggling

Recovery/Development Issues and Challenges
- Infrastructure
  - o Broadband
    - ▪ Must be part of the infrastructure discussion
    - ▪ Lack of broadband is a major factor in retention of talent.

- Residents have no access to broadband, meaning they cannot take higher-paying jobs that require monitoring from computers.
- Prospective businesses have infrastructure (ex. Broadband) and workforce expectations
    - Public Service Districts (PSD)
        - Local districts set their own rate structure and decision making process
        - Public Service Commission is a challenging partner, because the districts are reluctant to approve consolidations
        - Major concerns with PSDs in terms of limited regulations
        - Poor maintenance of public services
        - Low rate structure
        - Poor wages to workers and other staff issues
        - Water quality issues (e.g. raw sewage in streams)
        - There are entire towns with no sewer systems
    - Public safety costs are shared by jurisdictions
- Schools
    - Student populations are declining, leading to the possibility of consolidating school districts. This is a concern for many, as schools provide a sense of identity for many communities. Ex: Richwood does not want to consolidate, nor for the school to have to be relocated.
    - Schools often can't be reconstructed in same locations due to position in the floodplain
    - Uncertain what is to happen with closed schools in WV. Ex: there are two school buildings sitting vacant in Ansted.
- Housing
    - Flood issues exist in many communities, not just those that received disaster declaration. For example, there are 44 Richwood homes currently located in the floodplain
- Blight is an issue that is prevalent throughout the state and needs to be addressed
- GIS capabilities and data are limited. In Region 4, coordinated comprehensive GIS data of any type is virtually non-existent. The City of Oak Hill has the most robust GIS system, but is the only locality with such abilities. There are various small sections of reliable utility data and the emergency services community has made great strides in the GIS world. The WV Infrastructure and Jobs Development Council has water and sewer systems mapped, however, this is loose knit and only good for very preliminary planning purposes.

Opportunities
- Region 4 RPDC offered to house SRO staff, but would need to ensure budgetary needs will be met.
- Suggested to house a "resiliency" staff member or dedicated POC within each RPDC.
- Transitional opportunities discussed:
    - Agriculture
    - Tourism –was "growing", now "maturing"
    - Manufacturing
    - Consolidation of Public Service Districts (water/sewer)
        - Being explored post-floods
        - Needs legislative backing
        - There are "turf" or identity issues to be considered

- Timber opportunities with the use of automation so that there is value added by businesses within the region before the timber is shipped out
  - Processing to create wood byproducts (chips, chipboard, pellets, etc.)
  - 35,000 acres of privately owned timber land
  - Rail corridors are assets but availability is limited (Norfolk & Southern, CSX, reduced haulage)
  - Area along I-64 has developable land; infrastructure is place

Next Steps
- Feedback from this meeting, along with potential next steps will be compiled and made available
- FEMA staff will research and share examples of communities (specifically extraction-based communities, if any are found) that have recovered resiliently. Success stories (not Branson, MO) are needed as an example and potential guide forward for WV.
- The state is developing and coordinating their RISE Sessions. Information gathered during these discussions will be used to put together meaningful and effective agendas.

Recovery and Resilience Discussion

Region III (Kanawha County) and Region V (Roane County)
4 2nd Street, Clendenin, WV 25045
November 18, 2016

Meeting Purpose

- To learn about: 1) community- and region-wide recovery planning and resilience issues; 2) what is important to protect/preserve; and 3) what changes are desired.
- To discuss long term recovery planning needs, as well as roles of state, local, and federal partners.
- To meet with a small group of players to discuss where we are and get an idea of what needs to happen. The information gathered in these meetings will help form the RISE meetings.

Expectations

- Address vulnerabilities with resilient solutions
- Foster conversations within communities

Discussion Participants

Kevin Snyder, FEMA	Mary Jo Thompson, WVDO
Regina Marotto, FEMA	James Bush, WVDO
Michelle Diamond, FEMA-CPCB	Jeff Wood, WVNG
Julie Alston, HUD	Brian Aluise, Gov. Tomblin's Office
Tracey Rowan, EDA	Russell Tarry, WVDO
Lorna Rosenberg, EPA	John Ballengee, United Way
James Young, Kanawha County	Terry Martin, RIII RPDC
Kay Summers, A New Clendenin	Scott Ferguson, Clendenin United Methodist
Carol Jackson, MOURC	Joe Ross, Roane County LTRG
Cody Schuler, Charleston Area Alliance	Gary Bledsoe, Mayor Town of Clendenin
Mike Kelley, Kanawha County Schools	

General Comments
- The state has plans to develop an "Economic Resiliency Office" which will house comprehensive plans, as well as create a state-wide resiliency plan. The office will include personnel and resources for the Regional Planning and Development Councils (RPDCs)
- The CDBG Program (known in WV as "Small Cities Block Grants") is administered through the WV Department of Commerce and distributed through the RPDCs
- The state has received $17 million in flood recovery assistance through the federal Community Development Block Grant (CDBG).
- It takes time for accurate information to get through the rumors. Oftentimes, once correct information is received and understood, the deadlines for enrolment in FEMA programs has passed. FEMA deadlines should be more flexible because of this.

Region III (Clendenin) Overview
- RIII RPDC
    - The 4 County/29 municipality RPDC is project-focused and maintains a staff of 7 people.
    - The RIII RPDC is a planning agency, including transportation projects, which operates under a comprehensive development strategy that every single one of their programs must fit in with.
    - It is challenging to fit all of the funding pieces together, given the different requirements for each project, and to find sufficient match.
    - Challenge in finding sufficient funding to support implementation. Currently, capacity does not exist for the entire process.
    - Many of the challenges faced are stringent requirements and limiting guidelines that come with funding, such as money having to be allocated for specific activities. This makes it challenging to optimize funding and complete needed projects.
    - RPDC needs to hear from municipalities and a main POC (the mayor, for example) what the community wants and needs, as far as projects are concerned.
    - The resilience piece is new for the RPDC, and they are starting now.
    - Unlike RV RPDC, RIII does not provide loan administration. There are other agencies/ organizations to meet this need in the region.
- Clendenin
    - Clendenin was the recipient of CDBG-DR funds approximately 10-12 years ago for water/sewer replacement.
    - Mayor feels the town is "well on its way to recovery", and that the major concerns now is infrastructure; slips, streets, drainage projects, etc. There are streets in need of repaving.
    - Estimates that about 30% of businesses are back.
    - The town is working on a 60% budget and will be able to get by for the next 4 to 5 months, but they'll need more businesses to open for the associated tax revenue. It will most likely be 12 to 18 months before they get to their "new normal".
    - Ministers and communities have come together for effective recovery efforts. There has been great community support.
    - It is an elder community and people want to stay there. There has been little involvement/input from youth in the area.
    - What caused Clendenin's decline?
        - The interstate being located so close has ruined a lot of the town's prosperity, as people no longer need to drive through town to get where they need to go. When people had to drive through town, they supported local businesses and helped create a sense of community.
        - Decline of coal industry did not have a major impact on Clendenin
        - Older, more active-in-the-community generation is dying and youth is moving away.
        - A history of "merger and acquisition" activity has led to the closing of smaller businesses and employers moving away.
    - What do you want the future to look like for your community?
        - Use and develop available assets (the river, tourism, current projects/initiatives, etc.)
        - Clendenin has a lot of promising activities identified: Rails to Trails, the re-opening of the Roxy Theater, and a nursing home project.
        - Local booster initiative: 25045 – A New Clendenin
            - Created to bring together all of the zip code. Regionalism is key to the area – the entire 25045 zip code needs to be addressed, not just the town itself.

- There is an opportunity for Clendenin to be a cool little suburb of Charleston (a destination for shopping, strolling and outdoor enjoyment) with the right plan. The desire is for every storefront to be occupied, providing a tax base, sense of community, and visitors to the area.
- Mindset of "if we build it they will come"
    - Schools
        - Rebuilding community schools is critical to the recovery effort
        - Clendenin Elementary - need to identify a site that will keep the school in the town
        - Herbert Hoover High School
            - Hoover is condemned, they now have approval for modular classrooms, most likely to be installed in January.
            - Need site approval process expedited so they can notify the community and start rebuilding. At the time of this meeting, the decision was with the School Board and the State School Building Administration.
            - Currently 770 students, may increase to 1000 with rebuild. They have not lost any enrollment.
        - Other educational efforts:
            - Working with Mined Minds program to train coal miners to write code for software development. They were not getting the response they expected from out-of-work miners so they've modified the approach to bring the program into the high school. They are considering adult education programs.
- Elkview Shopping Center Bridge is a contentious issue. There is a lot finger-pointing as to who is responsible for cost to replace the bridge. The issue is currently in federal courts.
    - In the meantime, the shopping center remains closed, meaning: tax dollars are lost, over 500 people are without jobs, and local, convenient shopping for surrounding communities is unavailable.
    - The mall is a $13million asset, yet no one wants to be the one to make the investment in the bridge, which is technically private property and not available for FEMA funds.
- Roane County is also dependent on Clendenin
- James Young mentioned that Kanawha County is getting ready for demolition program

Region V (Roane) Overview
- RV RPDC
    - Manages federal, state and local funding, along with the different requirements for each funding stream, through a staff of 30 people.
    - Delivers grants and post-disaster funding/programs and oversee a small business loan program
        - Thanks to EDA, they have new policies to focus on disaster funding/recovery to those who need it. These policies allow them to prioritize disaster-related efforts over non-disaster activities, as needed.
    - Working with Brian Penix (SHMO) on HMGP grants; they've worked with him previously but primarily doing buyouts
- Roane County
    - Large elderly population
    - Roane County is dependent on Clendenin

- o Roane County has no broadband infrastructure
    - Broadband is important for economic development and educational opportunities. Businesses will not relocate to Roane County without access to broadband
    - Many communities have broadband access in the schools, but nowhere else in the communities. This is problematic because the students can work in the school, but aren't able to complete their homework.
- o Broadband is needed, but before that, reliable phone lines are needed. Some do not have general telephone service.
- o Individual/household unmet needs
    - There are still lots of unmet needs in the area; it is difficult getting a sense of what the universe of unmet needs are
    - They do not know how many houses have really been affected
    - People are still trying to get back into their homes. Many people didn't apply to FEMA (once they saw the SBA loan applications, they didn't even bother to apply for IA).
        - In some cases the issue is pride, in other cases its mistrust of the government, and some people are just overwhelmed and don't know what to do.
    - There may be Federal and County money coming into the communities, but there is no money coming in from the State.
    - Health concerns with well contamination as they still are in need of immediate response actions
    - Water access and infrastructure needs remain critical.
- o Long-term needs:
    - There are not enough skilled labor (electricians, plumbers, etc.) to address the number of residential repairs needed in a timely manner
    - Need for more available, safer senior housing
    - Need to analyze opportunities for interconnecting Public Service Districts (sewer and water systems)

Recovery/Development Issues and Challenges

- Until the Elkview Shopping Center Bridge is rebuilt, tax dollars will continue to be lost, over 500 people are without jobs, and local, convenient shopping for surrounding communities will remain unavailable.
- Delays in the construction of the first school "the first school needs to be built to give hope"
- Lack of contractors/skilled workers to do the recovery work (specifically HVAC)
    - o More local skilled labor - HVAC needed to install new homes – can training be made available for local community?
    - o Rebuilding: homeowners want to rebuild but there are not enough skilled workers in the area to meet the demand. Therefore, many homeowners are forced to wait to complete their repairs.
    - o New building codes have been implemented since structures were built. This means, in some cases, that entire systems will have to be replaced to build to code. Many don't receive or have the funding to do this the right way.
- Location challenges: many residents don't have cars and mass transit isn't available in the area

Opportunities

- Kanawha County has offered assistance with long-term planning. They have limited capacity, but can help if given direction and assistance.
- Clendenin area could be the "next great frontier" for residential development
- If the federal government were looking to pilot a "next best technology" effort, WV would be very interested in hosting an initiative like this
- Long term resiliency efforts need to be centered around existing community and state assets.
- Broadband infrastructure is needed throughout these two regions, and the state as a whole.
  - Currently exists in some areas, but is highly unreliable. When too many people log on, the network crashes.
  - The focus in schools is shifting to all-online work/research, etc. Many students do not have internet access at home, preventing them to effective complete homework or other school projects. No connectivity = no work. This lack of access perpetuates the gap between the haves and have-nots.
- I-79 corridor offers development opportunities because of available transportation and sewer and water infrastructure; WVNG offered to be of assistance if possible.

Next Steps

- Feedback from this meeting, along with potential next steps will be compiled and made available
- The state is developing and coordinating their RISE Sessions. Information gathered during these discussions will be used to put together meaningful and effective agendas.

Recovery and Resilience Discussion- Notes

Region I (Summers County) and Region IV (Greenbrier County)
130 Piercy Dr., Lewisburg, WV 24901

November 30, 2016

Meeting Purpose

- To learn about: 1) community- and region-wide recovery planning and resilience issues; 2) what is important to protect/preserve; and 3) what changes are desired.
- To discuss long term recovery planning needs, as well as roles of state, local, and federal partners.
- To meet with a small group of players to discuss where we are and get an idea of what needs to happen. The information gathered in these meetings will help form the RISE meetings.

Expectations

- Address vulnerabilities with resilient solutions
- Foster conversations within communities

Discussion Participants

Kevin Snyder, FEMA	Russell Tarry, WVDO
Regina Marotto, FEMA	Brian Aluise, Gov. Tomblin's Office
Michelle Diamond, FEMA-CPCB	Jason Roberts, Region I RPDC
Joy Branham, FEMA	John Tuggle, Region IV RPDC
Tracey Rowan, EDA	Jack Woodrum, Summers County Commission
D. Anne Cavalier, USEDA	Al Lisco, WV DHSEM
Dave Lumsden, GGLTRC	Joe Garcia, GSLTRC
Kayla McCoy, GGLTRC	Steve Lipscomb, Summers County OEM
Heather Hanna, GVEDC	Lori Alderson, Town of Rainelle
Bo Belshee, City of White Sulfur Springs	Linda Coleman, City of White Sulfur Springs
Tom Cross, Greenbrier Valley EOC	Peggy Crowder, Greenbrier Valley Econ. Dev. Corp.
Joe Brouse, NRGRDA	Lorna Rosenberg, RIII EPA

General Comments
- The state has plans to develop an "Economic Resiliency Office" which will house comprehensive plans, as well as create a state-wide resiliency plan. The office will include personnel and resources for the Regional Planning and Development Councils (RPDCs)
  - Regional staff can sometimes do these things but the capacity doesn't exist at the "courthouse and city hall level"
  - Participants want to know: will the WV Office of Economic Resiliency take on the management of the state's recovery?
    - There are concerns that local volunteers will reach a limit of time and energy and not be able to continue with volunteer efforts.
    - When does the community know when their job is complete and others can take over?
- The Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program (known in WV as "Small Cities Block Grants") is administered through the WV Department of Commerce and distributed through the RPDC

- The state has received $17 million in flood recovery assistance through the federal CDBG.
- Regional and local staff transition and limited capacity were a central theme throughout the meeting.
  - The learning curve to administer grants and to not miss deadlines is a critical deficiency.
  - Communities often can't meet the match requirements of grant funding
- Pre-existing issues:
  - Infrastructure, water, and sewer need work
  - Lack of internet/broadband. The less-fortunate don't have access to information that those with more money do. Internet is a luxury.
- There is a need to target funds where needed. Small Cities grant funding has typically gone to water and sewer; need more of a focus on housing and areas beyond water/sewer.
- Communications are a big issue: getting good information out; stopping bad information so that the whole community can make informed decisions
  - A majority of those impacted live in economically disadvantaged areas, and with low to moderate incomes. This often prohibits access to digital resources. Word of mouth is generally the best and most important way to communicate news and information.
- A Resource Guide would help in identifying the players, their respective "wheelhouse", and how they relate to one another; perhaps organizing it by functional area.
  - New River Gorge is using a BB&T grant to develop their "Capital Access Guide". But they don't have enough marketing budget to get it out there
- Community Empowerment/Community Engagement is a missing piece of recovery efforts. Communities want to see recovery as a bottom-up effort.
  - How do we do this? How do we encourage community involvement? How do we engage individuals in the community recovery?
    - Michelle mentioned FEMA's Community Planning and Capacity Building (CPCB) toolkit
- Homes that were flooded but not destroyed cause concern for lingering health issues
  - The Long Term Recovery Committees (LTRCs)[1] will assign case managers to help track these issues, but people need to contact the LTRC in order to communicate the need/issue.
- The state was asked about the interest received in Hazard Mitigation (HM) grants.
  - White Sulphur Springs has had two applicants so far.
    - The zoning officer needs more training on the HM program
  - Rainelle has had more applicants
    - Mitigation is an abstract concept for most – they need to see it for it to be real
    - Some of the rebuilds in Rainelle are using the old floodplain maps (which had a larger floodplain)
    - Rainelle residents are mostly interested in buyouts

Region I RPDC (Summers County) Overview
- Region I was not affected too badly by this flood, but they have been through this before. It forever changes the landscape; buildings are gone and only green space is left. It kills a community.
- Current efforts:
  - Working on hazard mitigation plans, grant applications, and grant management
  - Revision of the regional Comprehensive Economic Development (CED) Strategy
    - Some individual counties and municipalities have their own plans

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[1] NOTE: In WV, Long Term Recovery Committees (LTRCs) are also referred to as Long Term Recovery Groups (LTRGs)

- Broadband is a priority.

Region IV RPDC (Greenbrier County) RPDC Overview
- Greenbrier County is in a better situation than the surrounding counties; it is the only county in the region that is not "distressed" (ARC designation).
- This flood has produced a need to review long-term plans already in existence.
- RPDCs focus:
  - Has been on recovery since the early days of the disaster.
  - Infrastructure, particularly broadband.
  - Need a long-term plan for recovery, but it is a slow process
- Capacity, and financing of capacity, is a major issue.
- Economic development priorities are tailored to properties owned by the town/city.
- There is a need for GIS data and resources: major priority for RPDCs

Long Term Recovery Committees (LTRCs)[2]
- LTRCs are fairly new and offer a different perspective from the established organizations
- LTRCs in West Virginia have been challenged to continue working in their communities after individual and household recovery to assist with economic and community development
- LTRCs asked about the process that the Fed and State uses in order to gain a holistic idea of the problem/issues at hand due to the disaster.
  - FEMA explained the National Disaster Recovery Support (NDRS) process of the Advance Evaluation Team (AET), Mission Scoping Assessment (MSA) and Recovery Support Strategy (RSS).
- LTRCs would like to see an organizational chart that clearly shows which agencies and organizations are involved in the response/recovery effort, and how they coordinate/who answers to who. They would like to understand how the Federal response and recovery is organized and its relationship to the state.
- Would like to know if there is a precedent for local, embedded staff to help bolster recovery capacity.
- The LTRCs do not have the staff/capacity to both continue dialogue and continue moving forward with the recovery.
  - They need funding for operating costs, training, case management, business case management, and equipment (computers, copy machines, fax, etc.).
  - Board development and training is needed, as well as guidance on how to retain board members and volunteers
- Would like to see a comprehensive resource guide to include: funding, project, and technical assistance opportunities, to include the players, an explanation of their "wheelhouse", and what resources they offer.
  - The New River Gorge Regional Development Authority is currently developing a "Capital Access Guide" which compiles grants, lenders, venture capitalists for businesses and small development centers in one resource. This may provide a piece of the desired resource guide.
- How do we maintain momentum? How do we sustain these activities as time goes on and we lose stakeholders? How do we keep these groups together after the flooding issues die down?
  - An example from Pennsylvania, where the State was involved in a convening a monthly/ quarterly call between the different long-term recovery group, providing a peer-to-peer opportunity for them to communicate, was shared.

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[2] NOTE: In WV, Long Term Recovery Committees (LTRCs) are also referred to as Long Term Recovery Groups (LTRGs)

- Community Empowerment – want to include all individuals in recovery process, making it a bottom-up effort. They want communities to own their recovery.
  - FEMA has a toolkit available on their website, which may be helpful in getting people involved
- Would like to see LTRCs as being an organizer of volunteers in future disasters.
- Is there an option to bring in a Local Disaster Recovery Manager?
- Recommendation to identify a point-of-contact to run monthly/quarterly LTRC calls down the road to ensure momentum isn't lost (ideally someone from the State Economic Resilience Office)
- Meetings like this allow us to realize we're all in the same boat.
- **Greater Greenbrier LTRC**
  - Includes: Greenbrier County, Monroe County, and Pocahontas County
  - How do we sustain this unique community? Is there a formula that we can use to connect all the pieces?
  - This session (meeting) is great; but it cannot be the last session.
    - Russell Tarry said the state's "Resiliency Office" can serve the role of coordinator for these continued meetings.
  - Described participants of this meeting as a "unique community of interest" and wondered how it would be sustained.
  - Very engaged with mitigation and economic recovery issues through the LTRC.
- **Summers County LTRC**
  - How do we coordinate volunteer opportunities? Early coordination of volunteers is critical.
  - Don't want to reinvent the wheel
  - Need to consider mitigation

Greenbrier Valley Economic Development Corporation (EDC)
- Pre-flood, the focus was on maintaining the properties they own or maintain.
- Since the flood, the biggest challenge/issue has been retention of jobs and businesses. Most businesses missed their entire tourist season and feel that they shouldn't bother to stick around any longer. They have been desperately trying to advocate for business communities.
- Want to be involved in long-term efforts/discussions, but have had to step away to focus on retention.
- Would like to see a plan that focuses on development and provides direct resources for individuals and small business owners.
- Development is a great indicator that there is commitment from the businesses to stay. There is a lot of concern from local businesses about their future.
- Currently working on small business forum; business coaching. Need to keep Main Street healthy so people will want to move there
- They are able to play the "neutral party" and advocate for businesses.
- Even though Greenbrier County is thriving economically, businesses are still at risk because of the disaster
- Next week, they are hosting a forum for small businesses; if they are able to instill some confidence, it will be a success.
- Small business owners need some hope.
- Their EDC has property that needs tenants

White Sulphur Springs
- Lack of capacity for overwhelming needs:

- o The city is being bombarded with requests from community members and they just do not have the capacity to help with all the inquiries. They are wearing too many hats and are too understaffed.
    - o The White Sulphur zoning officer is overwhelmed
    - o White Sulphur has code enforcement capacity needs
    - o White Sulphur doesn't have inspection resources for all the new rental properties that are coming online
        - ▪ Problems will arise because of inadequate, uninspected repairs
        - ▪ Same is true in Rainelle
- There is a lack of affordable housing in White Sulphur Springs and Lewisburg

Rainelle
- Rainelle is a hub for the Appalachia Service Project and Vista volunteers. They are constantly being overwhelmed with inquiries.
    - o The Appalachia Service Project has brought 16 homes back online in Rainelle
    - o They could use more VISTA volunteers
- They have a USACE grant, DEP stream bed clean-up project, and more.
- Lack of capacity also a problem:
    - o A lot of the resources that they need to address concerns *are* there, they just can't be accessed due to limited time, staffing, or required matches.
    - o They can easily get overwhelmed by it all, "don't have enough bodies".
    - o No code enforcement
- Protecting property value is a priority
- Public Health Issues – do we understand the depth of the mental health issues because of the disaster?
    - o Rainelle PM feels the public health facilities are doing a good job
    - o Are the school systems tracking issues?
    - o Rainelle police and elementary school are very busy.
    - o Who tracks/consolidates the issues? 911 call centers?
- Hundreds of wells have been contaminated. Concerned about public health issues.
- Finding owners of vacant property in Rainelle for the demolition program has been difficult, which means there are significant delays demolishing the property, and therefore run up against deadlines for programs that can help.

Recovery/Development Issues and Challenges
- Communication and Coordination
    - o Need for centralized, accessible, comprehensive information.
    - o Need to continue these meetings and see results
- Capacity
    - o Need reliable, continued funding to support RPDC staff. Do not have capacity to see all needed projects through.
- Housing: lack of affordable housing and rental availability
- GIS data: want a centralized, comprehensive system, accessible by all necessary agencies/programs
- Well water contamination
- Mental Health concerns
- Data collection:

- o Is anyone collecting info re: refuge facilities? School enrolment? Is there an increase of children in foster care due to loss of houses?

Opportunities
- Consider using the WV experience to look at revising federal and/or state regulatory mandates (ex. Deadlines)
- Explore more effective ways to get the Hazard Mitigation Program information to individuals.

Next Steps

- Feedback from this meeting, along with potential next steps will be compiled and made available
- The state is developing and coordinating their RISE Sessions. Information gathered during these discussions will be used to put together meaningful and effective agendas.