



RASCL ANNUAL SUMMIT
EXPECT THE UNEXPECTED:
PLANNING WITH
UNCERTAINTY
VIRTUAL: DECEMBER 9-10, 2020



4th Annual (Virtual) Delaware Resilient and Sustainable Communities League Summit

Each session included small group breakout discussions. Below are notes and takeaway points from some of those discussions.

Session 1: Recover Delaware Initiative: Improving Economic Resilience During and After COVID-19

Breakout #?:

- Question of scale and scale of approaches. Confusion surrounding how someone working in local government could apply principles from today's presentation. It is encouraged to take a regional approach but without a vehicle to utilize a regional approach that can be challenging. Also, many of the funding available is really for regional approaches but again, it can be difficult to find leadership for a regional approach (where Recover Delaware comes in!). Changing leadership at the local level when it comes to long term planning is also a barrier.
- Layered economic stressors and downturns, plus any pre-existing community conditions (social justice issues, etc.) create extra resilience challenges that must be addressed to keep impacts from compounding
- There are emerging opportunities for communities considering how to re-build/restructure to attract growth and talent now that COVID has opened up new worlds of remote working
- COVID-19 has been a crash course in adaptive management for everyone, for better or for worse. Need to look at what worked during this time (being flexible, allowing more room for creativity, etc.) and carry those lessons forward when thinking about addressing future hazards
- Must recognize local demographics when doing resilience and response planning, there is no one size fits all approach. For example, a community with an elderly population is likely to respond very differently to a given crisis than a working-age community. Can't have the same plan for both.

Breakout 2:

- Sea level rise is a major issue that can inhibit recovery, especially for those local economies that rely on tourism or their waterfront

- Aging populations are another factor to think about
- Find other assets in town that can be maximized and turned into a recovery engine - ex: heritage resources, the presence of a university or educational facility
- Think of a recovery plan as a retirement portfolio - diversify resources

Breakout 4:

- Important to take small steps during response phase to gain a foothold for further recovery.
- Diversity is key, particularly for municipal revenue sources
- Need to take a long-term outlook that goes beyond NIMBYism (for example opposing 5G installations because of aesthetic complaints).

Breakout 7:

- Discussion around the need for better broadband access as highlighted by the speakers. How could existing infrastructure, such as hospitals or power lines, fit into a statewide strategy as small communities lack resources or investment for broadband. What is the applicability of 5G or other options?
 - DE may be ahead of other states and Gov office previously looked at issue statewide
- Concern about programs expiring in Jan and impact on evictions, etc.

Breakout #?

- Appreciated honest and transparent collaborative planning approach
- Important to engage all stakeholders
- Interesting that the panelists mentioned that the towns should have started planning for COVID 6 months ago. Towns and communities that this participant works with don't have the capacity. How do we address? Perhaps, begin with an honest dialog
- Should look into partnering and expanding efforts of CCC4COVID; could possibly be done on a layered scale (reminded participants that a representative from CCC4COVID would be speaking during session 2)

Breakout (Mike)

- Really interested in the hurricane vs econ development conversation
- Main industry in Lewes is tourism- parking meter revenue is down now, as well
 - Increase downtown free parking hours to bring people downtown
- Housing stock is in need
- Renovations projects are up, compared to other years
 - Town of Ocean View- I have a stack of building permits waiting for me
- Lewes Holiday lights bring people in. App and map for visual tours- Residents and businesses are both participating in the effort (Chamber of Commerce)
- More financial resources are needed for restaurants to survive

- The Bethany Fenwick Chamber is sponsoring a contest where if you shop local the next 3 Saturdays and spend a certain amount, you are entered for prizes.

Session 2: Understanding Social Stressors and How to Factor Them into Community Resilience Planning

Breakout (Mike)

- Define resilience- GCC food security is a new aspect to me
- Trust of the Communities, CIB working with communities and has tools to bring to the table.
 - Many people have strong feelings against gov agencies, in general. Beyond just mistrust.
- Mapping data used to identify hotspots.
 - Great to know you can outsource to find the capabilities to do the mapping.
- Data mapping examples were interesting and informative.
- HOA communities (larger) may be reflective of leadership that might have other agendas.
 - Suggest adding/considering a data point of property management, and look for trends
 - CIB is currently looking for a list of HOAs for outreach.
- Maps transcend language barriers
 - bring them to the communities. Locals may not notice the trends/issues until you can show them
- We are connecting urban planning/forestry to make a planning guidance document that also addresses human health.
- Communication can be a challenge with different cultures. Use tools to reach people that are not 'like you.'
- The documents referenced today can be impactful for people at different levels of their career, from students on up.
- Seeing problems from different perspectives is becoming more useful as data is made accessible. Maps developed using different resources can create more useful tools.

Breakout 6

- Impressed with what CCC4COVID has accomplished with very little time
- Data collection is bringing homelessness and poverty to light
- COVID is making government/communities recognize that homelessness exists
- Impressed that what started as a group of volunteers could accomplish so much. The CCC4COVID started with a group of affluent people caring for those less fortunate.
- This same data should be used for evacuation plans for vulnerable populations.
- New Buildings should be built to have the ability to perform as shelters if need be.
- Until this presentation it was not commonly known that this data set existed. From a transportation aspect, this data would be good for planning strategies.

- Presentations showed that if you know what is needed, you know what to ask for. Identified strengths and weaknesses and used strengths to build up weaknesses. Should continue to resource data so that we understand our needs.
- Instilling resilience in people is important in the long term. Should become more self-sufficient locally. Not need to go outside of the peninsula for resources during a disaster.

Breakout 10:

- One advantage of coordinating a response to an issue is that it lays the groundwork for future coordination and builds a network that can respond faster and more effectively to the next issue
- Inspiring to see the direct connection between/application of a decision support tool at the community level
- Need to make sure we're thinking about co-benefits to address both our areas of expertise/missions as resilience practitioners while also addressing the greatest needs/concerns of the community we're working with (e.g., lack of access to broadband internet may be a more pressing concern for the community than nuisance or even major flooding, depending on frequency)
- Would be helpful to have a clear data hub for when practitioners and responders need information in the aftermath of an event - lots of people have data and information, but the folks on the ground who need it aren't always sure where to go to get it

Breakout #?

- Participants expressed their appreciation for the tools that were shared and the need for state/regional specific information/maps
- Discussed the issues with connectivity (internet)
- Interest in exploring the tools mentioned and looking to see if they could help inform zoning ordinance updates/changes
- Interest in the vulnerability of small business as it relates to SVI and impacts to services
- Appreciation for the work of CCC4COVID and interest in if other school districts are implementing something similar

Session 3 Lessons from the Trenches: Tips for Preparing for the Next Extreme Event

Breakout (Mike)

- How to apply this in other areas? We need data to show needs, and how we fit in the larger picture.
- Pivot for events to be able to change dynamic of how we do things
- Learning from this event(s) will be applicable for future emergency events. Maybe another super storm
- Having the Data is important

- Database to see the community needs, like the Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP).

Breakout 1:

- Could there be some sort of FAQ or info repository for some of these lessons learned? Especially during a crisis, there tends to be a revolving door of partners coming in and out to help, which leads to folks asking the same questions over and over. Having somewhere easy to direct them to basic information could save time and energy.
- Just want to recognize the sheer amount of responsibility associated with coordination, implementation, and recording of best practices on behalf of both speakers. Not to mention having to do it all while under the microscope.
- No matter how much we learn from crises like these to add to our toolbox for the next big disaster, we still don't know what we don't know when the next thing arrives. Making space for and acknowledging that there will always be a need to learn on the fly and try new things is important so we don't get bogged down in trying to inappropriately use old solutions to address new challenges.
- Definitely an interesting perspective looking at the denial, pushback, doubt, and lack of understanding between climate change and COVID 19. Obviously both have been politicized, but it's also that the magnitude of both crises is so large, it's hard to wrap your brain around and it's easier to push it to the back burner and focus on more immediate things.
- Using stories to reach people really resonates, and pictures can be invaluable too!

Breakout 2:

- COVID has been a big learning experience on the fly
- Grass roots organizations have been really helpful in filling gaps
- Having to know where weaknesses are for future events
- Adapting plans that are not 100% proven
- There is some uniformity in planning for events, which is helpful for the future
- Globalization of supply chain is an example of not being prepared and having to adapt - this was hard to plan for
- New legislation will likely be a result of the pandemic, but this will take a few years to develop.
- Delegating was one lesson learned by the pandemic
- Look at resiliency as solving many insufficiencies that exist within our community and reach out to partners to fill gaps...use a holistic approach.