

*Cedar Rapids, Iowa*

*Recovery and Reinvestment Coordinating Team (RRCT)*

# **Progress Report**

**Nine Months**

## **Flood Recovery**

**June 13, 2008 – March 13, 2009**

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>IMMEDIATE COORDINATED RESPONSE</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>QUICK FACTS .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>RECOVERY</b>	
<b>HOUSING.....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>RENTAL HOUSING .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>BUSINESS.....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>DOWNTOWN DISTRICT .....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>SMALL BUS. RECOVERY TASK FORCE</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>ARTS &amp; CULTURE.....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>SCHOOLS.....</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>COUNTY.....</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>HUMAN SERVICES.....</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>CITY OF CEDAR RAPIDS.....</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>LOOKING AHEAD</b>	
<b>FLOOD PROTECTION .....</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>NEIGHBORHOOD PLANNING PROCESS</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>CHALLENGES .....</b>	<b>19</b>

# IMMEDIATE COORDINATED RESPONSE

---

## **The Flood**

In June 2008, record floods besieged communities throughout the Midwestern United States. And among the many communities that suffered flood-related damage, Cedar Rapids, Iowa was by far the most severely devastated. The cost and damage statistics from flood waters that reached 31.12 feet above flood level and covered 10 square miles of the city are staggering. The recovery costs are estimated to be as much as \$5 billion dollars and it will take as long as 15 years to complete the demolition, reconstruction, and installation of adequate flood protection for the neighborhoods and downtown business district.

## **Immediate Response** (*Protection and Safety*)

First and foremost - no lives were lost! In the first few days after the flood, the City, County and community agencies were almost entirely focused on emergency response efforts. The City Police and Fire Departments, County Sheriff Department and hundreds of community volunteers mobilized to evacuate residents from flood-affected neighborhoods, close roads, secure properties, protect wells, relocate critical city functions (City Hall, Fire, Police, Jail, Courthouse, School Administration, and County Administration). An emergency 2-1-1 response line was enhanced; a centralized website, [cooridorrecovery.org](http://cooridorrecovery.org), was put into place; continuing media updates were provided; a daily flood-related newsletter was developed; and neighborhood meetings provided information and resources to flood-affected residents and businesses. Once these mechanisms were all put in place, efforts quickly migrated from response to recovery.

## **Coordination** (*Formation of the RRCT*)

Early on, it was recognized that no single group or organization could manage the magnitude and complexity of flood recovery efforts. Instead this effort would require a coordinated community response. This was the impetus to form the Recovery and Reinvestment Coordinating Team (RRCT). The original team consisted of community leaders who represent a full range of community interests which include: The Chamber of Commerce; non-profit human service groups; arts and cultural interests; the Downtown Business District; schools; workforce housing; neighborhood associations; organized labor; city government; county government and legislative interests. Since its inception, this group of leaders has expanded to include Landlords of Linn County and the Small Business Recovery Task Force.

## **Community Cooperation**

The RRCT met daily for the first two months to share, discuss and cooperatively resolve urgent and strategic issues and problems. This coordinating team embraced a spirit of trust and cooperation for the good of the greater Cedar Rapids community, not the individual. While the participating groups are diverse, self-serving interests are left at the door. Discussions have sometimes been lively, but the results have been collegial and solutions supported for the good of the whole. Underlying the efforts of the RRCT leadership is the implicit belief that the community recovers, rebuilds and thrives anew; the respective RRCT member organizations will also recover better and stronger than before the flood.

## **QUICK FACTS**

---

- 31.12 Feet – Crest (11.12 feet over the previous record of 20 feet)
- 10 square miles (14%) of the city
- More than 80,000 tons of debris has been removed to local landfills
- 18,623 estimated persons in flood impacted area
- 120 families in flood-impacted area
- 1,360 estimated job-loss as a result of the flood
- 7,198 flood-affected parcels of land (5,390 residential)
- 3 of 4 collector wells disabled by the flood
- Cedar Rapids residential valuation tax loss is estimated to be \$81.7 million
- The Cedar Rapids Wastewater Pollution Control Facility (WPCF) was completely flooded and disabled. The functionality was back up in less than a month and in less than three months this facility was completely back online.
- Throughout the flood and through recovery, Cedar Rapids was able to provide uninterrupted city services to the unaffected portions of the community.

# RECOVERY

---

The following report summarizes the progress made by the cooperative efforts of the RRCT during the first six months of flood recovery: June 13, 2008 – December 12, 2008.

## HOUSING

The Affordable Housing Network has worked with the City to provide information and help coordinate housing for displaced individuals and families impacted by the flood. They have provided people and process support to facilitate the intake and distribution of Jumpstart (State) and Community Development Building Grants (CDBG - Federal) funds to qualified flood-affected homeowners. The complexity of funding programs required a very coordinated effort among several interests to ensure an accurate, measurable, streamlined and on-going solution for what will be a long recovery process for the city and its neighborhoods.

The Replacement Housing Task Force was formed to review and make recommendations to the RRCT for discussion, agreement and resolution to be put forth to the City Council about housing recovery and reinvestment options. Considerations for rehabilitating and replacement housing include: compliance with safety and building code requirements; affordability; sustainability; over-all quality; and neighborhood needs and fit for new and redevelopment housing.

- Initial damage assessments were made and properties were placarded according to the severity of damage and structural integrity.
- A post-flood study identified a short term rental housing need for 2,195 units and long-term needs for 420 owner-occupied homes.
- The Affordable Housing Network and Linn Area Long-Term Recovery Coalition have identified 2,100 substantially damaged, owner-occupied homes that will require rehabilitation work or may need to be acquired.
- The City, Affordable Housing Network and human service agencies coordinated efforts with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), to register flood victims and offer assistance for temporary housing. There are approximately 470 families living in FEMA supplied mobile homes.
- An intake system has been developed to register interested homeowners for State Jumpstart and Federal Community Development Building Grant (CDBG) funding.
- Third party administrative staff have been trained and put into place to help with individual consultations for flood recovery funding options.
- As of March 13, 2009, more than 600 homes have been rehabbed or are close to complete.
- As of March 13, 2009, 1,708 applications for housing assistance have been gathered and 1,464 inspections are complete.

- A combined total of \$24,800,000 in State funds (Jump Start) and Federal funds (CDBG) have been designated for distribution for housing rehabilitation, mortgage assistance and mortgage down payment assistance. \$15,000,000 has been designated for housing assistance.
- The Replacement Housing Taskforce has approved the construction of 360 units; and of these approved units, 18 are single family and 342 are multi-family or townhouse units.

Challenges and obstacles include: securing adequate Federal, State and local funding to support property rehabilitation, property acquisition, the construction of appropriate affordable workforce housing and neighborhood planning.

## **RENTAL HOUSING**

Progress has been made to begin to support and restore rental housing in the flood-affected neighborhoods. The State of Iowa amended the Action Plan utilizing Supplemental Community Development Block Grant Disaster Recovery Funding from the Supplemental Appropriations Act to explicitly include landlords within the housing repair/rehabilitation, homebuyer assistance, and interim mortgage assistance activity.

The application process has been underway for two months and as of March 17, 2009 more than 500 landlords have applied for almost 900 rental units. The information gathered through this process will be used to identify specific structural as well as financial needs for this group. Additionally, this information will help identify potential funding gaps, so efforts can be made to fund those gaps.

Here is the timeline for next steps:

- Program Administrator Identified and approved (March 18, 2009).
- Application Review – to begin immediately upon the approval by Council
- Individual landlord assessment meetings scheduled – beginning by April 1, 2009
- Individual follow-up meetings on-going as needed
- Inspections, documentation and approval process on-going as needed
- Duplication of Benefits Check – on-going on case-by-case basis
- Funds to arrive in CR – April/May 2009
- Checks dispersed to landlords – April/May 2009

## **BUSINESS**

The Cedar Rapids Chamber of Commerce and Downtown District partnered with the City of Cedar Rapids to provide information and support for employers impacted by the flood. The Small Business Administration (SBA) and FEMA provided support for these needs. The Chamber created a Jobs and Small Business Recovery Fund, and with \$3 million in matched funds from the City, distributed \$5.4 million to small businesses in need of recovery assistance. The Chamber also provided the structural support to facilitate the intake and distribution of Jumpstart (State) and CDBG (Federal) funds to qualified flood-affected businesses. The complexity of funding programs required a coordinated effort between several interests to ensure an accurate, measurable, streamlined and on-going solution for what will be a long recovery process for the business community.

Additional coordination of business recovery includes the formation of a Small Businesses, Taskforce which works with a variety of business leaders and resources to advocate for the expedited and viable recovery of local small businesses. This includes working with the Entrepreneurial Development Center (EDC) and the Small Business Development Corporation (SBDC).

The following list demonstrates the progress made to help with the recovery of business, jobs and employers in the Cedar Rapids community:

- Initiated and coordinated skywalk reconnaissance to retrieve business equipment and information on the weekend of the flood
- Developed and implemented a successful “Adopt-A-Business” program
- Established Job and Small Business Recovery Fund. As of December 10, 280 checks have been distributed totaling \$5,105,350
- Coordinated Federal Lobbying trip to DC
- Marion Chamber of Commerce organized fundraising over the July fourth weekend. The Floodstock 2008 flood relief benefit concert raised \$100,000 to benefit local flood relief and recovery efforts in Linn County.
- Provided an Internet kiosk for businesses to use in the absence of Internet connection because of flood damage
- Distributed free “Open For Business” signs to indicate business status post-flood
- Implemented a regular e-mail communication with flood affected members and non-member businesses to keep them informed about business flood recovery efforts
- Coordinated several visits from state and federal officials (Governor, Senators, members of Congress, Speaker of the House, Presidential candidates, et al)
- Compiled list of flood-affected businesses through registration forms
- Developed and helped implement Jump Start flood recovery assistance programs
- Collaborated with the City and Corridorrecovery.org to provide unified communications, a source for Business funding applications, and status reports
- Created video for the Chamber of Commerce annual meeting to tell the flood recovery story (past, present and future) of the business community
- Developed and hosted free Back-to-Business and Heartland Tax Relief Disaster Package seminars for businesses

- Provided free space for many community organizations to use in lieu of meeting space lost in the flood
- Have provided flexible work space for multiple flood assistance positions at the Chamber
- Conduct ongoing research for resources and funding assistance to help the business community recover from the flood
- Worked with the City and State to administer State Jump Start business funding as well as Federal CDBG funds for business recovery

## **THE DOWNTOWN DISTRICT**

The Cedar Rapids Downtown District (CRDD) has focused on improving the services and infrastructure of downtown during recovery and reinvestment, along with its traditional role of downtown promotion, advocacy, streetscape maintenance and events. The specific focus of CRDD has been to restore downtown to a thriving business park and premiere entertainment/cultural district. CRDD regularly works collaboratively with other organizations on individual business advocacy, arts & culture, downtown housing and economic development projects. To date, approximately 75% of businesses have returned within the downtown core or SSMID (Self-Supported Municipal Improvement District). In addition to assisting with daily troubleshooting for downtown businesses and property owners that are returning to/getting settled in downtown, CRDD is:

- Coordinating a three day flood anniversary event, RIVERenaissance, June 11-13, 2009. This will include a rebuild luncheon, Flood Remembrance documentary, Floodstock concert series and many other affiliated events
- Developing key technological infrastructure through donated “Main Street” software – this program can track business statistics, vacant real estate and business involvement through sponsorship/volunteer hours
- Actively working on short and long-term improvements/updates for parking, way-finding and skywalk systems
- Preparing for full Summer 2009 event line-up, including seven Farmers’ Market dates, three Drive-in Movie dates, flood anniversary event and restaurant week; and
- Undergoing organizational re-branding process that will include a new logo and website focused on the future of downtown Cedar Rapids

Streetscape repair plans are underway with specific focus on sidewalk repairs; bench, planter, trash can and decorative light replacement; and overall streetscape clean-up. The Downtown District also recently hired a Maintenance Coordinator for downtown who will start on March 23.

## **SMALL BUSINESS RECOVERY TASK FORCE**

Small Business Recovery Task Force, sponsored by the Chamber of Commerce, was formed to bring together business recovery agencies, including Chamber of Commerce, Small Business Recovery Group, Entrepreneurial Development Center, Small Business Development Center, Corridor Recovery and both local and state governments. We know the normal post-disaster business closure rate, for the 12-month mark, is about 40%. The Task Force goal is to cut that in half.

Small Business Recovery Portal launched on CorridorRecovery.org to consolidate the information, funding and flooded business support into a single place.

Small Business Development Center @ Kirkwood has been leading the effort to work directly with businesses to identify what help is needed (i.e. "flooded business case management"). At the 9-month mark, the following business status was reported by SBDC.

### **Statistics**

	<b><u>February 11</u></b>	<b><u>March 13</u></b>
Open for business (76%):	444	449
Not open yet (11%):	66	66
Out of business (8%):	45	48
Unreachable (3%):	29	15
<u>Moved from CR (2%):</u>	<u>13</u>	<u>13</u>
Total Flooded:	597	593

*(Total number drops as data is "cleaned up", removing duplicates, those that were not actually flooded such as 2<sup>nd</sup> floor businesses, etc. Especially amongst "Unreachable" category.)*

## ARTS AND CULTURE

Since the devastation nine months ago, the organizations constituting this sector have shown remarkable resiliency in continuing their operations. Because some of the buildings and/or land essential to these groups are city-owned, directors of the organizations are unable to project the impact of decisions to be made by the City Council on their future operation or location.

The Indian Creek Nature Center has utilized volunteers to clean and stabilize their barn, which is owned by the city; however, no FEMA payment has been determined or received. Restoration of the Paramount Theatre was approved by vote of the Council but timelines are yet to be determined which impacts the Cedar Rapids Symphony ~ Orchestra Iowa.

In an effort to find a silver lining behind the cloud caused by the flood, all groups are engaged in rigorous planning efforts to clarify their future endeavors. Occasional meetings of the larger organizations are held to share information and strategies as well as to determine areas of future cooperative and collaboration.

Although the arts and cultural community is aware of the priorities to deal with the housing and small business issues, their patience is not unlimited. The difference between the financial loss and funds received to date from multiple sources is at least \$20 million.

The following is a status up-date for key Arts and Culture organizations:

### **African American Museum and Cultural Center of Iowa:**

All major functions again are located in the museum building where their exhibitions on coalmining in Buxton and Haitian Art are on display. Administrative offices are back as well. The conceptual design stage of the permanent exhibit is underway. This exhibit will be constructed in modules to accommodate any need to move it quickly and with some ease. To enhance their fundraising efforts they are working to expand their state-wide base. The Celebration Hall again is accommodating meetings of numerous groups and organizations. Their staff has been reduced by two positions and they continue to meet with FEMA to determine the financial settlement.

### **CSPS/Legion Arts:**

While their main areas of operation on the second floor of their historic building were not directly hit, the first floor of the building was severely damaged. The organization has hosted special programs and workshops for this community featuring speakers from national organizations and from New Orleans. The principals of Legion Arts have raised more than \$12,000 which has been granted to individual artists whose studios were flooded. They continue to be involved with recovery efforts in the Oak Hill Jackson/New Bohemia neighborhoods.

**Cedar Rapids Museum of Art:**

The Museum is returning the collection, which has been stored in the second floor gallery, to the basement where storage facilities have been rebuilt. The second floor gallery will be opened soon and works from the Permanent Collection again will be on display. While rentals of spaces within the museum have nearly doubled, store sales have declined. The Museum's auditorium is very important now that there are so few performance venues. The exhibit of flood photographs attracted more than 25,000 visitors, many of whom were not previous museum patrons. Insurance has covered much of their direct cleaning and repair efforts as was a \$50,000 Jumpstart grant.

**Cedar Rapids Symphony Orchestra Iowa:**

The most important recent development for the Symphony is the vote by the Council to restore the city-owned Paramount. Public interest in the Paramount is centered around the Symphony because of the perception the Paramount is controlled by them. Included in the Council approved resolution is a statement that key stakeholders will be involved in the Theatre's restoration. Because of the dislocation of the concerts, ticket sales are off from previous levels. They are creative in their efforts to find locations which vary from Bruce more to the Kernels Stadium. Some elements of their strategic plan are being implemented ahead of schedule because of flood related circumstances including more concerts in Iowa City. Reconstruction of the Symphony School and Center, adjacent to the Paramount, are underway with expected occupancy this Spring.

**Indian Creek Nature Center:**

While the ICNC is using their building for some programming, there are many challenges including lack of hot water. The City owns the building and they continue their programming including a recent Maple Syrup Festival with 1,600 participants. To date 23 different FEMA representatives have visited the site; however, no progress is reported on payment.

**National Czech and Slovak Museum and Library:**

An opening of the Kosek Building on 16<sup>th</sup> Avenue is planned for the near future; the building will include administrative operations and an exhibit on the history of the Czech people in Cedar Rapids and one on the impact of the flood in Czech Village. They will maintain a presence at Lindale for the next many months. Their "red roof" building will be rebuilt for educational programs and rentals; however, the main museum will be located outside of the flood plain in a location yet to be determined. Additionally, the immigrant house will be moved and a new space for research and collections storage will be constructed. The Museum staff continues to work closely with the neighborhood realizing their connection to and importance of the Museum to the area.

**Science Station:**

The staff and board are engaged in a planning process which included recent meetings with community leaders and educators. Of the three buildings comprising the Science Station, two are owned by the organization and one, the former fire station, is City-owned. They are continuing activity in a basement location at Lindale and shortly will expand their presence on the main floor of Lindale to include early childhood programs

and exhibits. Their “interim” space has no time limit while their planning continues. A summer science camp in both Cedar Rapids and Iowa City has attracted strong early registration.

**Theatre Cedar Rapids:**

TCR recently unveiled plans for their renovated home in the Iowa Theatre Building with a planned opening date of Spring 2010. Their temporary location near Lindale will be used until that time. The renovated space will include three rehearsal/programming areas, an expanded lobby with ancillary services, the addition of 30 seats in the auditorium, as well as the stage and wing areas. While the final settlement with FEMA is to be determined, it may be between \$2 and \$3 million. Current fundraising efforts are centered on matching a \$750,000 grant from the Hall Perrine Foundation. Their plans and work prior to the flood for the renovation of their home have served them well as they work toward those goals as well as use of space not available earlier.

**SCHOOL DISTRICT**

The Cedar Rapids Community School District consists of 33 attendance centers (schools) and provides education for nearly 17,000 students living within 121 square miles of the metropolitan Cedar Rapids area. The school district sustained flood damages estimated at nearly \$33 million to six facilities. Four administrative/support operations buildings and Taylor Elementary School were badly damaged. All previously housed administrative and support services have been temporarily moved to other locations. Taylor staff and students were relocated to other District schools for the 2008-09 school year. Taylor is currently under repair and will be re-activated for the 2009-10 school year. Damage to the Transportation Center lot and to Harrison Elementary School has already been repaired; both sites are in use. No decisions have been made regarding the future use of the other flood-affected District facilities: Educational Service Center, Carpenter/Paint Shop, Annex, and Warehouse.

The school district immediately established the following flood recovery priorities:

- Design / construct temporary work facilities for all District administrative and support service operations affected by the flood.
- Reactivate Taylor Elementary School for 2009-10 school year.
- Support revitalization of flood-impacted neighborhoods.

Using these guiding principles, the Board of Education, administration, and staff have worked diligently on flood recovery with minimal impact on students while maintaining the high standards of excellence that made the District a vital and successful community entity and a contributor to our quality of life.

Here is a nine-month summary of progress made by the school district:

- Cleaned and removed debris from all flood-impacted District facilities.

- Began repair construction of Taylor Elementary School in December 2008; expected to be completed before the start of the new 2009-10 school year.
- Initiated comprehensive document recovery and restoration process to be completed in the fall of 2009.
- FEMA project worksheet (**PW**) production continues with the assistance of consultants from Adjusters International. It is estimated that the District's total recovery will be accommodated within 59 "initial" PW's and 6 "versioned" PW's totaling \$30.4 million. It is estimated that all PW's will be completed and submitted to FEMA for review and approval by the end of April 2009.
- The stages of completion of these PW's are as follows:
  - 35 PW's in *development* totaling \$22.8 million
  - 29 PW's *completed* totaling \$7.6 million
  - 20 PW's *obligated* totaling \$5 million
- Identified 1,800 District students impacted by the flood. Of these, all but 286 students enrolled for the 2008-09 school year.
- Discussions continue with City officials regarding a community feedback process to identify facilities options for District administrative and operational support locations that incurred flood damages.

## COUNTY

Ten county buildings were damaged by the flood including: Administrative Office Building, AOB Annex, Correctional Center, County Courthouse, Elections Depot, Mott Building, Options of Linn County, Sheriff's Office, Witwer Building and the youth shelter. Estimated losses to Linn County government are over \$60 million. The entire city of Palo was underwater. More than 600 properties and 86 farms were damaged in Linn County outside the Cedar Rapids city limits.

Linn County partnered in forming the Economic Planning and Reinvestment Corporation (EPRC) and the Recovery and Reinvestment Coordinating Team (RRCT) to promote coordination of recovery efforts and help with the economic rebound from the flood. In addition, Linn County is working on cooperative legislative initiatives to obtain funds for disaster impacted businesses and individuals, housing, and economic recovery.

Linn County has reestablished government services in temporary facilities and is moving forward on efforts to establish permanent locations and to re-occupy existing physical structures including the County Courthouse and Correctional Center. Cooperation with FEMA and State assistance has been good. FEMA representatives have been willing to resolve issues and have shown flexibility in problem solving. Recovery efforts on buildings are moving forward in compliance with FEMA timelines. And initial partnerships such as EPRC are gaining momentum. Linn County progress includes:

- County operations reestablished in temporary facilities
- The Board of Supervisors made a decision to return to the Administrative Office Building and preliminary design work has begun
- Services restored for physically- and mentally-challenged clients
- Courthouse partially re-occupied

- Correctional Center will re-open by the end of April with some repairs to be made while the building is occupied
- County building inspectors assisting Palo residents
- Participation in RRCT, EPRC, and cooperative legislative initiatives
- Pursuing Hazard Mitigation Grant Program Voluntary Acquisition funding for residents of unincorporated Linn County who suffered substantial damage from the flood
- Repaired several major roads and bridges that were damaged by the flood
- Assisted in the repair of river walls on May's Island
- Layout in some temporary facilities has improved customer service
- Staff expanded voting hours for the November 2008 and March 2009 elections

## HUMAN SERVICES

United Way of East Central Iowa represents 42 nonprofit human service organizations, is a member of the Recovery and Revitalization Coordinating Team and works in partnership with the Linn County Nonprofit Resource Center, The Greater Cedar Rapids Community Foundation, Hall Perrine Foundation, and the Linn Area Long Term Recovery Coalition to achieve the following goals:

- Assist and support nonprofit organizations impacted by the flood in their recovery efforts.
- Advocate for the following target population(s): flood-affected, vulnerable individuals and families who are low-income, ineligible for other resources, elderly; disabled or ill.
- Address and develop community resources to meet ongoing human services needs: safe, affordable, secure housing, emotional, financial, and spiritual needs, basic needs including food, clothing and household goods.

These goals are achieved in the following ways:

1. Facilitated discussions regarding nonprofit facility needs and coordinating legislative requests for funding for the nonprofit sector.
2. The formation and chairing of the Linn Area Long Term Recovery Coalition (LALTRC): A collaborative group of over 45 agencies, government and faith-based organizations working to assure all vulnerable individuals and families recover safe, affordable secure housing and have access to community resources. The goals of the organization include: 1) strengthen area-wide ongoing disaster coordination; 2) share information; 3) advocate for the most vulnerable; 4) simplify access to service; and 5) jointly resolve disaster-caused human recovery needs. The LALTRC consists of many planning committees which include Community Assessment, Volunteer and Construction Coordination, Recovery Advocates, Counseling Services (mental health and financial), Spiritual Care and Donations
3. Development of a team of human service providers (local, county, state) to develop and track human services data and trends

4. Coordinate private and public Flood Relief Funds with other community partners and distribute money to nonprofit agencies

Summary of progress (9 months):

- Community Recovery Center opened in November and houses over 40 employees from multiple organizations
- Donations are also stored at the Recovery Center, ie: refrigerators, and new furniture
- Hired 10 Full time Case Advocates and 3 part time
- Construction Coordinator has been hired
- Received a \$366,000 grant to hire case advocates
- Will hire a Program Director to manage the Recovery Center
- Currently managing the Unmet Needs grant - up to \$10,000,000 maximum grants per individual- \$2,500
- Instituted the Roundtable format to process cases and grant gap/rebuild funds to home owners
- Currently closed 100 cases
- Actively working 200 cases with capacity to reach more than 500 individual cases
- Over \$367,000 in resources to families has been distributed: volunteer labor on homes, appliances and cash
- Community Flood Funds have distributed \$4,887,000 to nonprofit agencies
- Mental health counseling continues throughout the community-requested more than \$6,000,000 in federal funding assistance
- Financial counselors are providing services to all Jumpstart recipients - nearly 100 sessions per week
- 2-1-1 continues to process calls for services, and schedule tax preparation for flood victims
- Volunteer Center has mucked and gutted over 600 homes
- More than 4,500 volunteers have provided over 78,000 hours of labor since the center opened
- Project over 1,000 volunteers for the months of March, April, May and June
- Promoted co- location of nonprofits through a Human Services Campus facility project
- Vice President of United Way New Orleans and UMCOR presented training to case management staff in March
- Opened Rebuild Iowa Office at the Recovery Center with the Governor present for a ribbon cutting

## CITY OF CEDAR RAPIDS

On June 17, 2009 (four days after the flood waters crested), the Cedar Rapids City Council adopted the following six goals to rebuild and reinvest in the community:

1. Improve flood protection to better protect homes and businesses
2. Rebuild high-quality and affordable workforce neighborhoods
3. Restore full business vitality
4. Maintain arts and culture
5. Preserve our historic heritage
6. Assure that we can retain and attract the next generation workforce

To accomplish these goals the City Council, City Staff, and strategic partners gathered public input and feedback to begin to build a recovery and reinvestment plan around four primary tenets:

1. Economic Recovery: housing and business reinvestment
2. Flood Management and Protection Strategies
3. Public Facilities Replacement
4. Health and Human Service Needs

The complete plan and detailed worksheet is posted at [www.corridorrecovery.org](http://www.corridorrecovery.org)

The Cedar Rapids City Council has made some milestone decisions towards recovery and reinvestment for our community. Here is a brief list of the highlights:

- \$3 million grant for business recovery – **September 10, 2008**
- Approval to support the formation of the Economic Planning and Recovery Corporation (EPRC) – **September 10, 2008**
- Additional funding to support financial and mental health counseling and case management - **September 17, 2008**
- Framework for Redevelopment and Reinvestment Plan – **November 12, 2008**
- Approved \$50,000 for Economic Planning and Recovery Corp. (EPRC) - **December 10, 2008**
- Neighborhood Planning Process begins – **January 10, 2009**
- Local Option Sales Tax Ballot Initiative – **February 3, 2009**
- Public Facility Replacement Plan – **February 4, 2009**
- Interim Flood Plan approved – **February 18, 2009**
- Voluntary Acquisition Plan – **February 25, 2009**
- The approval to proceed with a potential Flood Recovery Mgr. – **March 11, 2009**

### **Estimated Funding Needs:**

The flood impact to Cedar Rapids was over \$5,400,000,000 (not counting losses to Linn County). Below is an estimate of the funding needs facing the City in each of the four plan element areas.

Economic Recovery	Flood Protection	Public Facilities	Human Services
<b>\$1,310,654,724</b>	<b>\$1,113,389,000</b>	<b>\$481,578,585</b>	<b>\$24,795,043</b>

# LOOKING AHEAD

---

## FLOOD PROTECTION

During September and October hundreds of residents and business people attended a series of three progressive River Corridor open houses to provide feedback on the Framework for Reinvestment and Revitalization. These open houses and ensuing public discussions helped shape the final flood protection plan adopted by the Cedar Rapids City Council in November. Approval of this plan concluded a five-month study of flood-control options and reinvestment and revitalization needs in flood-impacted area.

The approved river corridor flood protection plan has been submitted to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers for detailed study, cost-benefit analysis and approval. The study, which may take 18 to 24 months to complete and approve, will qualify Cedar Rapids for Federal funding for flood protection measures, including the creation of riverfront green spaces, the construction of levees and floodwalls and re-alignment of infrastructure such as roads and utilities.

An interim flood protection plan was approved by the City Council on February 18, 2009. This plan provides flexible but limited flood protection for up to 24 feet of water. This interim protection is ready to be deployed should high waters be predicted. For more details about this protection, go to [www.corridorrecovery.org](http://www.corridorrecovery.org).

## THE NEIGHBORHOOD PLANNING PROCESS

Part of the flood recovery and planning process involved an extensive series of River Corridor Redevelopment Planning open house meetings. During these public meetings, residents and businesses were presented with a series of redevelopment plans and options for input and feedback. As a result of these meetings the Cedar Rapids City Council was able to identify a flood management framework.

**The River Corridor Redevelopment Plan** accomplishes some preliminary goals:

- Provides flood protection plans for neighborhoods, homes and businesses.
- Outlines neighborhood boundaries and landmarks
- Establishes historic and cultural priorities
- Provides sustainable redevelopment guidelines
- Demonstrates “connectivity” for the city, businesses and communities.

With the River Corridor Recovery Plan in place, the Neighborhood Planning Process can begin. This planning process will be a series of neighborhood meetings and discussions to address necessities and amenities for quality of life, including a variety of housing options, transportation and connectivity, business vitality, arts and cultural opportunities, open space and accessible public facilities.

**The Neighborhood Planning Process will:**

- Encourage greater civic engagement
- Allow for a stronger public voice for neighborhoods
- Encourage neighborhoods to work together
- Gives neighborhood organizations ownership over plan content
- Enable neighborhood leadership development

The Neighborhood Planning Process will encompass three flood-affected areas of Cedar Rapids, which includes seven neighborhoods:

- North River Area – Time Check & Ellis Harbor (Northwest)
- Downtown Area – Taylor Area, Downtown, Medical District (Near Downtown)
- South River Area – Czech Village, Oak Hill Jackson (New Bohemia), Cedar Valley (Rompot)

The Neighborhood Planning Process will be lead by the Cedar Rapids City Council, the City Community Development Department, an appointed Steering Committee and hundreds of neighborhood residents. The process will consist of a series of community meetings, workshops and individual area meetings during a five month period.

**The tentative timeline is as follows:**

- January 10, 2009 – Community-wide Kick-Off Meeting - **COMPLETE**
- January 31, 2009 – Workshop 1 - **COMPLETE**
  - Topics: Flood management, connectivity, neighborhoods and housing
- February 2009 – several Area Meetings - **COMPLETE**
- Saturday, March 6, 2009 – Workshop 2 - **COMPLETE**
  - Topics: Evaluation of area alternatives within larger context and process goals
- March 21, 2009 – several Area Meetings – Workshop #2 **COMPLETE**
- April 25, 2009 – Workshop #3
  - Topics: Presentation of final plans and creation of prioritized action items
- May 5, 2009 – Area Meeting #4 (Final Area Plans)
- May 13, 2009 – Presentation to City Council
  - Each area will present its action plan to the Cedar Rapids City Council

## **CHALLENGES AHEAD FOR FLOOD RECOVERY EFFORTS**

There will be many challenges, obstacles, delays and setbacks during the community recovery and rebuilding efforts. Some of these include the following:

**Timing:** It took Grand Forks, North Dakota roughly 10 years to reach a point when the community felt it had “recovered” to a point of an accepted “new normal.” Citizens of Cedar Rapids need to be prepared for a long recovery time which may not be complete until the year 2020.

**\* Funding:** The financial and economic impact to Cedar Rapids and area businesses is estimated to be almost \$6 billion dollars. For the city of Cedar Rapids, the projected costs for economic recovery (business and housing), flood protection, facility replacement and human services needs total approximately \$2.9 billion. The bulk of this funding will be in the form of federal Community Development Block Grants (CDBG). Cedar Rapids has received (as of March 3, 2009) a total amount of \$50,198,167 in FEMA, CDBG, State Jump Start, business funds and insurance proceeds. Redevelopment efforts will be dependent upon the availability of on going funding for these primary areas of focus for the city.

**Construction:** The rebuilding of neighborhoods and construction of flood protection measures will cause ongoing disruptions to our community. Roads will be temporarily closed, transportation routes will be disrupted, some infrastructure will need to be re-routed (sewer, electrical, etc.). This challenge is tied closely to timing, funding and land acquisition.

**\* Property Acquisition:** A voluntary property acquisition plan was approved by the City Council on February 25, 2009. Some property demolition has begun and it is the intent of the City Council to begin acquisitions in the Greenway as soon as funding is available (possibly July 2009). Once the United States Army Corps of Engineers has completed its feasibility study by 2010, very specific property acquisition decisions will be incorporated into long-range redevelopment and reinvestment planning.

**Mental Health:** All of the challenges mentioned above and the relationships these have to individuals, and businesses, put a strain on community mental health. Studies have shown an increased amount of community stress as result of natural disasters and corresponding recovery. Cedar Rapids needs to be prepared for an increase in mental health-related issues such as substance abuse, domestic abuse, feelings of helplessness and depression to name a few. Ensuring adequate resources for help Cedar Rapids residents and businesses will be necessary, long-term.

\* Updated for nine month report