

AFTER THE STORM: STRATEGIES FOR BUILDING A RESILIENT COMMUNITY

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Texas coastal communities live with the certainty that a major hurricane is somewhere in their future. A major consideration for the leadership of those communities is what happens after the storm. Can a city adopt strategies today that mitigate the impacts of the inevitable storm?

A resilient community is one that evaluates all of its critical services and facilities in light of what happens after the storm. In fact, they recognize the importance of being responsive after any disaster, whether natural or man-made. The definition of resilience relates to how quickly a community gets its critical services operational after a disaster. The services go far beyond the need to protect critical infrastructure. Resilient communities address first responders, health care, and other community services.

Many communities operate under a strategy that waits for the disaster and then tries to fix whatever is damaged. This strategy does not recognize that some services are more important after the storm than others. The community is at the mercy of the storm. In contrast, resilient communities suffer the same impacts during the storm. The difference is how they respond once the storm has passed.

A discussion of what should be considered as critical and how to adopt resilient practices will benefit public officials and related professionals in protecting our coastal communities.