

Recovery Retrospective: Lessons from the Trenches

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Loma Prieta: A “limited” disaster?

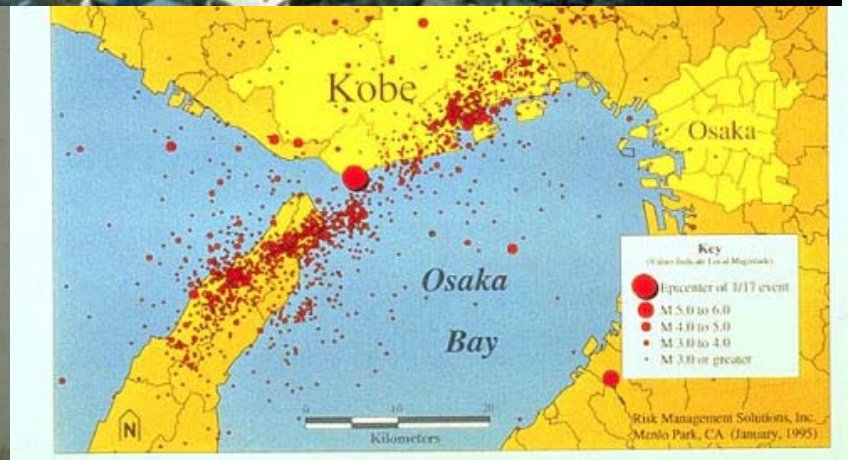
- 63 deaths and \$8 billion in damage
- Region largely remained functional
- Disaster in focused areas: Santa Cruz, Watsonville, Oakland, parts of SF, etc.
- Mostly avoided major population centers



Comparison to Kobe Earthquake Disaster



- 8,000 killed
- 45,000 injured
- 300,000 displaced
- Loss of infrastructure function and services lasting months/years
- Disaster at a regional scale



Challenge Moving Forward

- Can we have an earthquake but limit the “disaster” of it?
- Will incremental gains in mitigation be sufficient?
- Are we prepared?
- How can we encourage and fund investments in preparedness and mitigation?
- What do we know about recovery?



1. Hard-hit areas experience recovery as extremely difficult and stressful

- Immediate aftermath:
 - Tough decisions
 - Limited time and information
 - Risk taking: defining acceptable risks
 - Balancing life safety and other priorities such as business resumption
 - Community-wide stress (families, businesses, organizations)



2. Post-disaster time compression pushes people out of their comfort zones



- Politicians: many decisions, no time for “ripening”; loss of control (issues laid bare)
- Bureaucrats: irrelevancy of normal tools and rules; urgency and overload; MIA
- Community: ongoing multiple stresses (post-traumatic stress overlay)

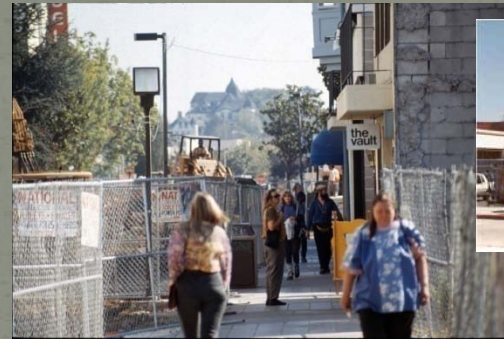
3. Pain and sorrow will be deep and lingering: Kobe

- “Every day is like a fighting a battle. We have had a weak life since the earthquake.”
 - Kazutoshi Sazayama, Mayor of Kobe, Sept. 1995
 - “I still have great pain in my heart.”
- Vice Mayor Ogawa



4. The first years are the hardest years

- Short-term recovery demands action and interim solutions:
 - Housing
 - Infrastructure
 - Business resumption
 - Gearing up/charting a course
 - Assessing realistic options



5. Long term recovery starts immediately

- Emergency response sets the tone
- Assessing the new realities
- Designing a viable planning process
- Adjusting the political course
- Assimilating change
- Attracting investment
- Balancing speed and deliberation



6. The fundamental recovery variable: underlying economic strength

- Santa Cruz success built on:
 - Tourism base
 - Growth of University of California Santa Cruz (enrollment doubling)
 - Regional employment base: Silicon Valley connection
 - Educated, largely affluent population



7. Variations can be substantial between adjacent communities

- Watsonville faced completely different context:
 - Structural shift: loss of agricultural processing industry
 - Low wage agricultural economy
 - High unemployment (17-25%)
 - Need for affordable housing and commercial development



8. Recovery strategies: no “one size fits all” solution

- Santa Cruz
 - Downtown focus
 - Use of multiple financial tools
 - Minimize entitlement risk, gain community support via Downtown Recovery Plan
 - Specific Plan
- Watsonville:
 - Job generation, economic development
 - Use of multiple tools
 - Affordable housing to support agriculture
 - Focus on community growth and major new development
 - General Plan

9. Recovery starts as a sprint, then is a marathon of incremental investment

- Turning point at year 5 for both SC and Watsonville
- Watsonville recovery measured in terms of 20 year growth objectives
- New Orleans struggling 4 years after: lacking economic/population base
- Kobe: reinvention and massive government investment
- Recessions/economic cycle



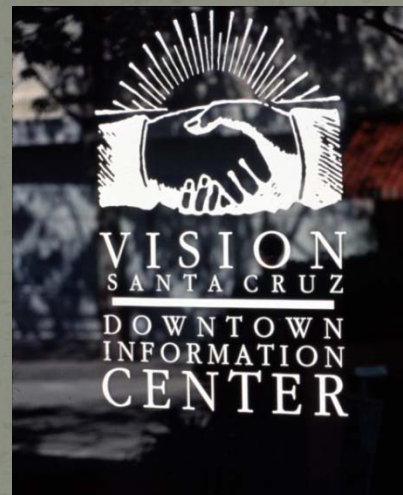
So What? How to anticipate recovery



- Identify vulnerable areas and population: where the hit will be hardest
- Mitigate (priorities!)
- Encourage investment and economic health
- Focus on smart, safe growth and development practices

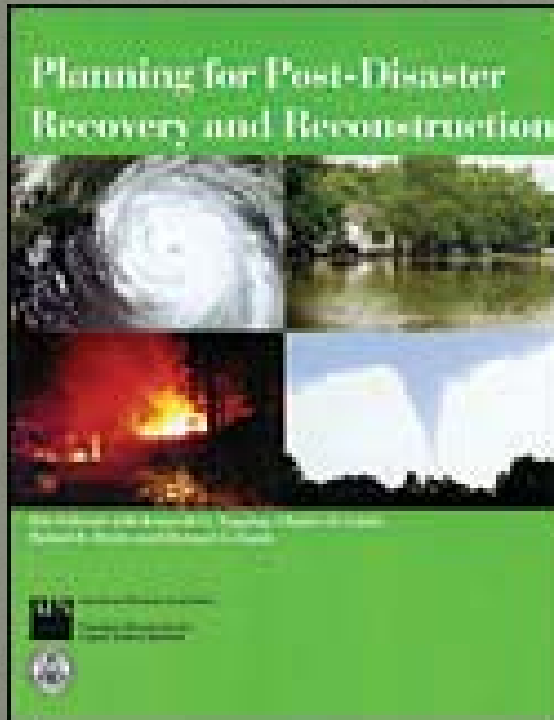
So What? How to plan for recovery

- Community-based disaster response planning
- Connect with businesses and populations
- Identify useable planning resources
- Consider how to be ready to re-invent the organization (public, private, NGO)
- Post-Earthquake Goal: Good decision-making in real time; collaborate (or fail)
- No guarantees for success



More Information

- charlie@hamiltonswift.com



- Planning for Post – Disaster Recovery and Reconstruction
 - Robert Doyle, Charles Eadie, Jim Schwab, Richard Smith, Kenneth Topping

Published by APA
Planning Advisory
Service (PAS
483/484), 1998