OPERATIONS CHALLENGES RELATED TO PUBLIC TORNADO SHELTERS
CITY OF BIRMINGHAM
DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING, ENGINEERING & PERMITS

JEFFERSON COUNTY TORNADO PROFILE

- Typically occurs within a 20-mile radius of the center of Jefferson County, during the Spring months of March, April and May, and significantly more frequently in the afternoon and evening, rather than the morning.

- Jefferson County tornadoes, on average, tend to be severe and the average intensity of tornadoes overall is rated as an F-2 category (113-157 mph)

APRIL 27, 2011

- EF-4 tornado leveled much of the Pratt Community
- 1,500 structures damaged or destroyed citywide
- Almost 500 homes destroyed or rendered uninhabitable resulting in more than 1,000 residents being displaced in Pratt Community
- Important public facilities destroyed within Pratt Community

FEMA-1971-DR-AL

- Alabama Severe Storms, Tornadoes, Straight-line Winds, and Flooding
- Major Disaster Declaration declared on April 28, 2011
- Birmingham became eligible for HMGP Funding
- Coordinated with Community Stakeholders and Submitted Grant Applications for Construction of 20 Safe Rooms throughout the Pratt/Ensley Communities
- Four of the Six Approved Safe Room Grant Applications were directly related to HMGP DR 1971 (Pratt City Park, Smithfield Estates Park, South Hampton School, and North Sherman Heights Park)
- Two Additional Safe Rooms, Jimmie Hudson Park (HMGP 4052 – Declared February 1, 2012); and Howse Sanford Park (PDM 2013) were also approved

COMMUNITY SAFE ROOMS
COMMUNITY SAFE ROOM LOCATIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Neighborhood</th>
<th>Capacity</th>
<th>Square Footage</th>
<th>Initial Estimated Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pratt City Park</td>
<td>North Pratt</td>
<td>888</td>
<td>5,027</td>
<td>$873,589.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jimmie Hudson Park</td>
<td>Sandusky</td>
<td>383</td>
<td>2,158</td>
<td>$383,235.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Smithfield Estates Park</td>
<td>Smithfield Estates</td>
<td>1,844</td>
<td>9,161</td>
<td>$1,531,063.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Hampton School</td>
<td>North Pratt</td>
<td>1,485</td>
<td>8,171</td>
<td>$1,360,647.23</td>
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<tr>
<td>Howze Sanford Park*</td>
<td>Central Pratt</td>
<td>607</td>
<td>3,468</td>
<td>$695,063.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>North Sherman Heights Park*</td>
<td>Sherman Heights</td>
<td>220</td>
<td>1,184</td>
<td>$188,480.62</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Under Construction

SAFE ROOM OPERATIONAL CHALLENGES

- When to open safe rooms
- How to open safe rooms
- Staffing

HOW/WHEN WILL I KNOW IF THE SAFE ROOM IS OPEN?

- Residents are strongly encouraged to monitor severe weather threats. Once the threat is identified, Safe Room Managers will be on standby and/or notified to open the Safe Rooms.
- Residents will also be provided notifications via the Everbridge Citizen Alert Notification System. To sign up, visit: Jeffcoema.org (click on red button titled Everbridge Citizen Alert)

OPENING THE SAFE ROOM

- The Safe Room may be opened using the keys stored in the “Knox Box” which is only accessible by fire personnel.

REMOTE OPENING OF THE SAFE ROOM

- The Safe Room may also be opened using the remote access software via desktop or through mobile application.

PARTNERSHIPS

- City of Birmingham Mayor’s Office
- Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)
- Alabama Emergency Management Agency (AEMA)
- Jefferson County Emergency Management Agency
- Department of Planning, Engineering & Permits
- Department of Public Works
- Birmingham Fire and Rescue Service Department
- Birmingham Police Department
- Community Development Department
- Mayor’s Office
- Birmingham Planning Commission
- Law Department
- Traffic Engineering Department
- Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) Program
- Local Community Leaders
- Consultant Team
- M & M Engineering
- Herrington Architects
- Various Sub Consultants
- Construction Teams
  - AG Gaston Construction
  -Alabama Building Commission
  -Birmingham City Council
  -Birmingham Park and Recreation Board
OPERATIONS AND MAINTENANCE PLAN

- Coordination Meetings
  - To review the City of Birmingham's Community Safe Room Operation and Maintenance Plan with key safe room management personnel consisting of the Birmingham Fire and Rescue Service Department, Birmingham Police Department, Department of Public Works, the Department of Planning, Engineering and Permits, and Jefferson County Emergency Management Agency.
  - To understand the purpose, operational procedures, maintenance requirements, roles, and responsibilities of the community safe rooms in order to ensure compliance with all local, county, and federal regulations and grant requirements.

O & M PLAN INITIAL RESPONSES

- Birmingham Fire and Rescue Service Department
  - Acknowledged staffing challenge associated with being the designated Safe Room Managers—especially if the safe rooms will open after normal business hours in which there would be a need to utilize overtime personnel.
  - Limited BFRS Staff identified the need to quickly reconstitute CERT program in order to receive additional assistance with managing safe rooms.

- Birmingham Police Department
  - Police Chief initially not prepared to obligate a full-time officer to staff the community safe rooms.
  - Security Implications related to overall crowd control, State Gun Policy, etc.

- Department of Public Works
  - Prepared to respond to staffing needs at the community safe rooms and will utilize on call staff to act as building managers and provide maintenance and custodial services as indicated in the Plan.

O & M PLAN CHALLENGES

- Lack of Resources
- EOC Liaison Role
- Notification Process and Procedures
- Activation and Deactivation Procedures
- Safe Room Supplies (e.g., Food, Snacks, Water)
- Reconstituting CERT Program
- Access and Keys
- Traffic Control (Pedestrian and Vehicular)
- Special Needs Groups
- Notification and Enforcement of Rules
- Weather Cancellation or Expiration
- Long Term Recovery
- Training and Exercises
- Long Term Recovery
- Partnership
- Operations and Maintenance Plan Development
  - Planning
  - Implementation

O&M PLAN COMPONENTS

- PURPOSE / SCOPE
- AUTHORITIES
- ASSUMPTIONS
- IMPLEMENTATION
- CONCEPT OF THE OPERATIONS
- EXERCISE AND TRAINING
- ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES
- PLAN MANAGEMENT AND MAINTENANCE
- APPENDIX (Supplies, Specific Job Duties, Forms, etc.)
COMMUNITY EMERGENCY RESPONSE TEAM (CERT)

What is the Community Emergency Response Team (CERT)?

- FEMA's Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) program educates volunteers about disaster preparedness for the hazards that may impact their area and trains them in basic disaster response skills.
- CERT Members:
  - Learn how to safely respond to manmade and natural hazards.
  - Help organize basic disaster response.
  - Promote preparedness by hosting and participating in community events.
  - Please contact your local emergency manager for additional information for your area.

Building Manager

- Ensure that the proper systems are in place to track expenditures, bills and invoices, materials, and local volunteer records.
- Establish a Community Safe Room communications log.
- Conduct pre-occupancy inspection; assess the general condition of the facility, cite pre-existing damage.
- Assist Safe Room Manager with posting signage where needed.
- Conduct post-occupancy inspection; assess the general condition of the facility, cite post-occupancy damage.
- Responsible for overall facility maintenance and housekeeping/custodial services.

Communications Unit

- Meet with the Community Safe Room Manager and identify which people will have the authority to transmit messages.
- Establish contact with Building Manager and determine the appropriate location for radios. The location should be isolated, suitable for optimal reception, and have access to generator-powered outlets.
- Establish a Community Safe Room communications log.
- Brief staff that will have the authority to transmit messages.
- Establish standard shift schedules for staff.
- Ensure that all safe room residents have been evacuated.

Registration Unit

- Assist the Safe Room Manager in processing visitors’ information prior to entry into the facility.
- Assist the Safe Room Manager in recording visitor’s information on entry form.
- Establish and update the list of visitors who are present in the facility.
- Maintain the communications log.
- Ensure that Community Safe Room residents have been evacuated.
**Health Services Unit**

Birmingham Fire and Rescue Service Department and CERT Volunteers

- Receive and process all incoming calls, provide general information, and direct to the appropriate personnel.
- Act as a liaison between the public and the Health Services Unit.
- Coordinate with the Department of Health to schedule the Health Services Unit whenever necessary.
- Provide assistance to the Health Services Unit on a voluntary basis.

- Look for compromised health problems of Community Safe Room occupants and take necessary action to correct these problems.
- Provide assistance to the Health Services Unit on a voluntary basis.

- Be available at the registration desk to assist with all Community Safe Room occupants who require medical attention. Be aware of any persons who have a communicable disease. Make these reports to the Manager of the Community Safe Room.
- Work with the Community Safe Room Manager to ensure the suitability of all equipment.
- Work with the Community Safe Room Manager to ensure the suitability of all medical supplies and equipment.
- Assist the Community Safe Room Manager in ensuring the suitability of all medical supplies and equipment.
- Be available at the registration desk to help screen arrivals at the Community Safe Room who require medical attention. Be aware of any persons who have a communicable disease. Make these reports to the Manager of the Community Safe Room.
- Work with the Community Safe Room Manager to ensure the suitability of all medical supplies and equipment.

- Work with the registration staff to collect demographic and health information on the Health Services Unit.
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- Serve as a liaison between the public and the Health Services Unit.
- Provide assistance to the Health Services Unit on a voluntary basis.

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**Local Law Enforcement**

Birmingham Police Department

- Enforce all public safety related safe room rules (i.e. smoking, weapons, alcohol-related disorderly conduct).
- Control all traffic and pedestrian traffic control.
- Ensure proper building and security measures are in place in regards to the security of registered safe rooms.
- Stroll around buildings as necessary.

- Assist with tracking time and expenditures when necessary.

**Plan Maintenance and Training Coordination**

Planning, Engineering and Permits, BFRS, and Jefferson County EMA

- Coordinate testing and training and operate team meetings to ensure implementation of plan.
- Conduct public meetings in residential areas with each safe room’s location.
- Advise residents utilizing the Community Safe Room Unit System to ensure proper implementation of safe room utilization and evacuation.
- Provide guidance to residents on safe room evacuation.
- Coordinate with legal department to ensure appropriate contact numbers are up to date.
- Work with building and development office agencies.
- Communicate regularly with QM and EOC status regarding overall safe room operations.
- Integrate Safe room planning and Operation Team.

**SUMMARY / LESSONS LEARNED**

- The CERT program is vital to the operations and staffing of Safe Rooms.
- Coordination from multiple departments, agencies, and volunteers needed to ensure successful planning and operation.
- Operation and Maintenance Plans must be well developed and implemented to meet FEMA 361 Guidelines.
- The O&M Plan is a Living Document. Training must be provided regularly to provide guidance to Safe Room managers and other stakeholders; especially after use of Safe Rooms.

**QUESTIONS?**

DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING, ENGINEERING, AND PERMITS
FLOODPLAIN MANAGEMENT AND DISASTER MITIGATION SERVICES
(205) 254-2479

AUTHOR: KATRINA THOMAS
CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE ANALYST

CO-AUTHORS: GENAÉ RAINES-WILKERSON
SENIOR PLANNER
DENISE BELL
DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF ADMINISTRATION
Operational Challenges

QUESTIONS?

Daphne LaDue  dlare@ou.edu
— University of Oklahoma

James Bell  Jim.Bell@assaabloy.com
— ASSA ABLOY

Genaé Raines-Wilkerson  Genae.Raines-Wilkerson@birminghamal.gov
— City of Birmingham, AL