# carolina planning

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## After the Storm: planning for disaster

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## editor's note

Crisis planning is, by its very nature, a paradoxical expression of the planning process. As planning professionals, we are accused of short-sightedness in the wake of community emergencies. This challenge to our purpose is, of course, familiar. We are accused of short-sightedness in our most routine zoning reviews. The planner's dilemma? Indeed, we are prisoners of necessity and captives of precaution.

For the most part, the conflict associated with crisis planning and emergency planning is related to the frailties of the "long-range comprehensive process" which characterizes our mission. It is a conflict empowered and crippled by politics; a conflict of financial and social priorities. The "long-range" is discounted as a frivilous and unknowable perspective. "There is so much to be done now. . .", the public bureaucracy cries, "how can we afford the *luxury* of a disaster plan?" Luxury becomes necessity only in the aftermath. The disaster provides for itself. Community response to life-threatening emergencies provides a context for future planning. In many cases, however, the unwanted education of one community is rarely exchanged with cities and towns still waiting their turn.

In this issue of *carolina planning*, some of the lessons of disaster and emergency planning are discussed. In two articles, researchers at the Center for Urban and Regional Studies at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill describe hurricane planning and development management efforts of disaster-prone coastal communities. The process of reconstruction and the planning strategies which some of these regions have adopted to mitigate the costs of severe storms are recounted by Hegenbarth/Brower and Beatley/Godschalk with unexpected conclusions. In a related piece by Kartez et al., western cities subject to periodic disasters (earthquakes, flooding, hazardous technology failures, etc.) are surveyed to determine the extent of their preparedness. In all three articles, substantive recommendations are made to inspire improved emergency planning efforts in local communities.

Contributions by Dusenbury and Gelblum balance the issue with more traditional planning concerns. Dusenbury reviews the history of the Regional Coastal Commission and critiques its weak commitment to regional planning. Gelblum considers the role of planners in community dispute resolution; concerns of political planning.

As a whole, this issue explores the contradictions of long-range planning relative to the divergent public investment goals, political priorities, and technical capacities of local communities. It is an attempt to assemble the work of planners concerned with the extremes of community planning and development. As we share the experience of planning extremes, our local and more immediate actions are expanded and enhanced. The long-range plan is made real from historical events and human response.

Ted Olin Harrison
Editor