NJDEP Superstorm Sandy Blue Acres Buyout Program

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Flooding is NJ’s #1 Natural Hazard*

Risks:
- Rising Sea Level
- Storm Intensity Increasing
- Coastal Erosion
- Over-Development
  - Stormwater Run-off

*FEMA, August 4, 2004
A Densely Populated, Flood–Prone State

Superstorm Sandy:

- 40 deaths
- > 300,000 houses damaged
- 2.8 million lost power
- 600 roads/tunnels closed
- Bus & train systems disrupted
- Water, sewage & electrical plants inoperable
- $382 M in commercial property damages
- $64 million in business interruption
Flood Insurance is NOT the Answer

Columbia, 2006

Hackensack, 2007

Wayne, 2011

Hoboken, 2012

Toms River, 2012

Wildwood, 2016
New Jersey’s Approach to Resilience

- Improving Infrastructure
- Comprehensive Shore Protection System
- Rebuild by Design
- RREM (Elevation)
- Blue Acres Buyouts

New Jersey
Five Years Post-Sandy

STRONGER Than The Storm
Sandy Blue Acres Buyout Program

- Created in 1995 with $15M ballot referendum
- Arm of Green Acres for flooding buyouts
- 2013: BA appointed to lead Sandy buyout efforts
  - Mission: To purchase 1,300 homes damaged by Sandy from willing sellers, at pre-storm values.
Criteria for a Blue Acres Buyout

1. Flood damage from Superstorm Sandy or repeated flooding
2. Clusters of homes
3. Willing sellers/support of local officials
4. Opportunity for significant impact on environment, or public health, safety, and welfare
5. Repeated NFIP claims
6. Benefit–cost analysis
Funding Sources

- Secured $375 million in funding
  - FEMA HMGP:
    - $185 million
  - HUD CDBG–Disaster Recovery:
    - $175 million
  - State bond funds:
    - $15 million
Recognition

- **HUD:**
  - Exemplary Practice (2015)

- **FEMA:**
  - National Best Mitigation Practice (2015)

- **FEMA:**
  - Designated Blue Acres a "Community" for ICC purposes (2017)
Achievements*

- 969 homes approved for purchase
- 895 offers made
- 692 offers accepted
- 621 sales closed
- 507 properties demolished
- >$5.1M in debt forgiveness for 66 families

*As of December 22, 2017
500th Demo
Case Study: Woodbridge

- Dec. 2013 = 70 properties
- June 2014 = 70 properties
- Oct. 2017 = 38 properties
- Local ordinance: OSC/R:
  - Annual Registration
  - Prohibits resale without elevation
  - Stricter code for new construction
- Rutgers restoration plan
The Need and the Work Continues

- 1,406 SRL properties
- 14,655 RL properties
- FEMA funding application:
  - 62,000 properties
  - $18.5 billion dollars
- Expended $162M from the total $375M
- FEMA: additional $16M
- HUD: additional $75M
Lessons Learned

- Local govt. buy-in
- Strong relationship with funding agencies
- A consistent (but flexible) process
- Established procedures
- Compassionate case managers
- A sense of humor
Thank you!

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