

THE RESILIENCE DART

Parsons Brinckerhoff Resilience Disaster Awareness Report

April 16, 2015

The Parsons Brinckerhoff Resilience DART (Disaster Awareness Report) summarizes key developments related to resilience planning and design across the US, including the region affected by Superstorm Sandy.

Parsons Brinckerhoff's Resilience Information Center: A website established by Parsons Brinckerhoff allows users to track congressional, regulatory, and federal agency funding developments pertaining to Superstorm Sandy and resilience programs. The site provides links to the final Sandy bill, notices of funding availability and funding allocations, Federal Register notices, fact sheets on agency Emergency Relief programs, testimony from Sandy implementation hearings, etc. The website can be accessed via the following link:

http://www.pbtransportationupdate.com/legislation/resiliency_issues_and_hurricane.aspx

State of Affairs:

Washington, DC/National/International

- The U.S. government's plan to cut greenhouse-gas emissions over the next decade will require accelerating the shift from fossil fuels to clean energy, and a commitment to addressing climate change and creating jobs in clean-energy industries is part of the overall strategy (link below).

<http://fox13now.com/2015/04/03/white-house-releases-clean-energy-fact-sheet-ahead-of-president-obamas-speech-in-utah/>

- The National Weather Service will begin a phased implementation of a new prototype for storm surge watches and warnings beginning June 1 with the aim of having a fully operational system for the 2017 hurricane season—the second change to the center's warning process since Sandy (link below).

http://www.pressofatlanticcity.com/weather/new-storm-surge-watches-and-warnings-to-help-both-hurricane/article_e0ba22e6-d950-11e4-b84a-c32e693241de.html

- FEMA is initiating sweeping reforms to the National Flood Insurance Program after allegations that insurance companies underestimated damage estimates on Sandy-related claims (links below).

<http://www.npr.org/blogs/thetwo-way/2015/03/11/392430032/feds-prepared-to-reopen-all-superstorm-sandy-insurance-claims>

<http://wshu.org/post/fema-outlines-flood-insurance-reforms>

<http://www.insurancejournal.com/news/east/2015/03/19/361220.htm>

- During the UN World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction in Sendai, 187 countries set seven targets and four priorities over the next fifteen years aimed at substantially reducing loss of life and economic losses from natural disasters (links below).

<http://www.rtcc.org/2015/03/18/countries-agree-un-plan-in-sendai-to-save-lives-from-disasters/>

<http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/presscenter/events/2015/march/world-conference-disaster-risk-reduction.html>

- Applications for the Rockefeller Foundation's 100 Resilient Cities Challenge reveal how different cities perceive resilience and the challenges associated with it (link below).

<http://www.100resilientcities.org/blog/entry/lessons-from-700-resilient-cities-applications>

- A report from the Nature Conservancy expected in June will focus on natural defenses used in tandem with infrastructure improvements to help protect against the next Superstorm Sandy (link below).

<http://www.crainsnewyork.com/article/20150323/BLOGS04/150329984/protection-against-the-next-sandy-look-to-the-mussel>

- Virginia's Climate and Resiliency Commission will meet at the University of Richmond on April 21 to examine the subject of sea-level rise and storm surge (link below).

<http://www.publicnewsservice.org/2015-04-02/climate-change-air-quality/planning-for-climate-change-on-the-virginia-coast/a45479-1>

Regional (New York/New Jersey/Connecticut/Boston)

- The MTA will receive an additional \$343 million from the federal government for rehabilitation and flood protection measures for Lower Manhattan's South Ferry Station (link below).

http://www.silive.com/news/index.ssf/2015/03/officials_secure_more_than_343.html

- The Connecticut Institute for Resilience and Climate Adaptation, in response to a survey of residents living within two miles of the state's shoreline, concludes that there is a significant and dangerous lack of public awareness with respect to storm conditions (link below).

<http://www.emergencymgmt.com/disaster/Survey-Shows-Gaps-Public-Awareness-Coastal-Storm-Risk.html>

- The Army Corps of Engineers is reviving its South River storm risk management plan to strengthen resilience measures in New Jersey (link below).

http://sub.gmnews.com/news/2015-03-19/Front_Page/Army_Corps_revives_flood_mitigation_projects.html

- PSEG Long Island, following an agreement that was reached between Governor Cuomo and FEMA, has begun a three-year resilience project to protect and strengthen the electric grid across Long Island and in the Rockaways (link below).

<http://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/pseg-long-island-further-strengthens-electric-grid-300051649.html>

- National Grid's plan to update its infrastructure in the Mohawk Valley in upstate New York includes a new \$9.5 million substation outside the city of Amsterdam (link below).

<http://www.timesunion.com/business/article/Girding-for-the-next-superstorm-5863325.php>

- An audit by New York City's Comptroller reveals that under the Build It Back program, a total of \$6.8 million was paid to contractors for flawed work (link below).

http://www.bostonherald.com/business/business_markets/2015/03/audit_ny_sandy_relief_program_paid_millions_for_flawed_work

- New York State will provide \$4.9 million in grants for repair and assistance to historic and archeological resources damaged by Sandy (link below).

<http://newyork.realestaterama.com/2015/03/23/governor-cuomo-announces-4-9-million-to-repair-historic-properties-damaged-by-superstorm-sandy-ID03063.html>

- FEMA has awarded \$12 million for storm-related repairs and flood protection measures at Governors Island (link below).

<http://www.ny1.com/nyc/all-boroughs/news/2015/04/2/feds-kick-in-12-million-for-sandy-recovery-on-governors-island.html>

- A general-interest article looks at the history and identity of Ellis Island in the context of severe climate and rising tides (link below).

<http://www.theawl.com/2015/03/ellis-island-after-the-flood>

- FEMA has allocated \$3 billion—the largest award in the agency’s history—to NYCHA for repairs and upgrades to New York City public housing projects damaged by Sandy (links below).

<http://www.nydailynews.com/new-york/fema-give-3-billion-nycha-hurricane-sandy-damage-article-1.2167853>

http://www.nytimes.com/2015/04/01/nyregion/fema-awards-new-york-city-a-3-billion-grant-for-hurricane-sandy-repairs.html?_r=0

- The Center for NYC Neighborhoods examines the impact of climate change on coastal urban communities, including the need to protect housing affordability in the context of rising flood insurance rates (link below).

<http://www.100resilientcities.org/blog/entry/rising-flood-insurance-rates-building-resilience-protecting-housing?>

Contact:

Parsons Brinckerhoff provided immediate support to help clients and communities in the New York metropolitan area recover and rebuild after Superstorm Sandy, and is currently participating in a range of projects to mitigate the effects of extreme weather and build resilience in the region. For information on the firm’s activities and capabilities, please contact:

Michael Flood, AICP
National Resilience Lead
Parsons Brinckerhoff
Flood@pbworld.com
410.246.0528 (office)
202.748.6131 (cell)