

THE RESILIENCE DART

Parsons Brinckerhoff Resilience Disaster Awareness Report

May 18, 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. Department of Homeland Security has selected the University of Rhode Island and Jackson State University as primary partners in the Coastal Resilience Center of Excellence at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, to research and develop strategies for strengthening U.S. coastal resiliency (link below).

<http://www.sandandgravel.com/news/article.asp?v1=19599>

- According to a new study led by a University of Tasmania scientist, errors in tide-gauge and satellite measurements over the last two decades suggested that sea-level rise was slowing down when in fact it was speeding up, as models had predicted (links below):

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/news/energy-environment/wp/2015/05/11/sea-levels-are-rising-at-faster-clip-as-polar-melt-accelerates-new-data-shows/>

<http://www.theguardian.com/environment/2015/may/11/sea-level-rise-accelerated-over-the-past-two-decades-research-finds>

- The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Baltimore District is applying Geographic Information System (GIS) technology to present key data in a user-friendly way to stakeholders and public, including mapping stormwater infrastructure, delineating flood plains and wetlands and displaying active projects (link below).

<https://www.dvidshub.net/news/163121/gis-much-more-than-maps>

- The Center for American Progress argues that efforts to promote resilience are critical for coastal cities, which face diverse challenges that range from lessening the effect of the next superstorm to management of tides that crest a little higher each year (link below).

<https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/green/news/2015/04/30/112132/from-risk-to-resilience-preparing-u-s-coasts-for-climate-change/>

- The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Philadelphia District has launched several new projects to construct beaches and dunes in three New Jersey municipalities (link below).

<http://www.capemaycountyherald.com/article/government/ocean+city/106633-beach+rebuilding+begins+federal+project+aids+postsandy+resiliency+three+areas>

- FEMA is providing New York State with \$2.1 million to extend the recovery program for post-Sandy victims (link below).

<http://www.newsday.com/long-island/sandy-recovery-program-granted-2-1m-extension-1.10257738>

- One of Pope Francis' closest advisors is confronting climate-change skeptics in the U.S. who are already coming out against the not-yet-released encyclical on climate change (link below).

<http://thehill.com/policy/energy-environment/241769-popes-top-adviser-blasts-us-climate-skeptics>

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

- A bill moving through the New Jersey state legislature will provide more information and greater transparency concerning the distribution of Sandy aid (link below).

<http://www.timesunion.com/news/article/Senate-panel-passes-bill-aimed-at-transparency-in-6258990.php>

- With sea-level rise and catastrophic flooding being the new normal, the choice between rebuilding or retreating from the waterfront is being debated in Staten Island and Brooklyn communities in New York City (link below).

<https://www.takepart.com/feature/2015/04/24/new-york-sea-level-rise-sandy-ocean-flooding-rebuild-or-retreat>

- New York State is funding a \$2.8 million program to rebuild the Sea Gate bulkhead and sea wall in Brooklyn, as part of a larger program to improve flood protection and storm resiliency in New York City (link below).

<http://jpuupdates.com/2015/04/22/gov-cuomo-announces-2-8-million-for-reconstruction-of-sea-gate-bulkhead/>

- Eleven winning projects to improve the resiliency of small businesses across New York City under the RISE: NYC program were announced on April 29 (link below):

<http://rise-nyc.com/>

- Mayor de Blasio has released a detailed plan entitled "One New York: The Plan for a Strong and Just City" aimed at developing an economically and environmentally sustainable and resilient New York City (links below):

<http://www1.nyc.gov/office-of-the-mayor/news/257-15/mayor-de-blasio-releases-one-new-york-plan-strong-just-city#/0>

<http://www.nyc.gov/html/onenyc/downloads/pdf/publications/OneNYC.pdf>

- New York City is adopting a formal policy—which goes into effect in 2050—to reduce the impact of storms in the city and shorten the recovery time (link below).

<http://www.ny1.com/nyc/all-boroughs/politics/2015/04/21/ny1-exclusive-new-policy-aims-to-prevent-sandy-s-rebuilding-issues-during-future-storms.html>

- The controversy continues over the way insurance companies handled flood-insurance claims after Sandy, as FEMA gets ready to reopen and review claims from people—including residents of New Jersey coastal communities—who believe they were undercompensated (link below):

<http://www.njspotlight.com/stories/15/05/11/federal-probes-continue-into-why-sandy-victims-were-shortchanged-on-flood-insurance/>

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)