

# Principles for Temporary Communities



Urban Land  
Institute

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**Fannie Mae  
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## About ULI—the Urban Land Institute

ULI—the Urban Land Institute is a non-profit education and research institute that is supported by its members. Its mission is to provide responsible leadership in the use of land to enhance the total environment. ULI sponsors education programs and forums to encourage an open, international exchange of ideas and sharing of experiences; initiates research that anticipates emerging land use trends and issues and documents best practices; proposes creative solutions based on that research; provides advisory services; and publishes a wide variety of materials to disseminate information on land use and development. Established in 1936, ULI has more than 29,000 members in 80 countries representing the entire spectrum of the land use and development disciplines.

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# Introduction

The first and most important thing to notice about this latest in ULI's Principles series is its title. Following a disaster, natural or otherwise, the first thing victims need, after food and health care, is shelter—and this need may continue for weeks, months, or even years.

In the case of the 2005 hurricane season, the immediate occasion for this publication, the need is for tens of thousands of temporary homes. However, when two or more temporary houses are put together, a community is created: this is why ULI decided to study how best to create temporary communities, not just temporary housing.

A home, temporary or permanent, is more than four walls and a roof. The quality of a home is determined both by the living space within it and by the neighborhood surrounding it. The importance of surroundings is clear from the fact that people are often willing to live in a house of lower quality if the neighborhood is one that they find desirable. Unfortunately, this fact has been ignored in past efforts to provide shelter for people displaced by disaster; as a result, what began as a

compassionate response to need ended by compounding the suffering of those forced to live in such environments. In short, providing temporary housing without paying attention to the design and functioning of the whole community creates a dysfunctional environment that undermines the residents' ability to recover—emotionally, physically, and economically.

The purpose of the principles enumerated here is to bring community-building expertise and experience to bear on the planning and management of temporary communities for disaster victims. Incorporating these principles is especially critical in the case of the 2005 hurricane season, which has created needs for temporary shelter that will likely last for years. The families who live in temporary communities are recovering from major shocks: they have lost homes, jobs, and in some cases loved ones, and need a wide range of support services to get back on their feet, both emotionally and financially. Ignoring these needs when they can be provided for in the design and development of temporary communities is insensitive and unproductive.



## Types of Mass-Produced Housing

All of the following housing types have a number of features in common:

- They are mass produced, allowing for economies of scale that decrease overall construction costs.
- They are typically less expensive than stick-built homes of similar quality.
- Proper installation and assembly usually require some assistance from building experts such as architects, general contractors, plumbers, or carpenters.
- The home's legal status (whether it is personal or real property) depends on whether it is affixed to the land.

**Prefabricated (“prefab”) homes** are assembled on site from manufactured components. The components are shipped to the site as a kit and are assembled by a general contractor, sometimes with the help of an architect. The components may be generally available or may be manufactured specifically for the project.

**Modular homes** arrive at the site in a number of box forms that require limited assembly. The modules are constructed off site, usually in an indoor manufacturing facility. An on-site general contractor oversees the construction of the foundation and the assembly of the modules. Modular homes usually require the addition of plumbing, heating, ventilating, and air conditioning; windows, roofing, or siding may also be needed.

**Container homes** are box-shaped modular homes manufactured from International Standards Organization (ISO) standardized containers and are typically outfitted with prefabricated components. These homes are often used as temporary housing for disaster victims. Recently, several large builders have experimented with using container modules for temporary offices and as workforce housing.

**Manufactured housing** is completed entirely in a manufacturing facility. These homes arrive at the site in turnkey condition and require only utility hookup.

**Mobile homes** are a type of manufactured housing often known as trailers. Some are wheeled, but most are designed to be semipermanent. Because mobile homes are typically not affixed to the land, they are usually defined as personal property.



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The principal idea behind this publication is not that temporary communities should become permanent, but that even a temporary community should meet the full range of its residents' needs—not only for shelter, but for safety, social services, employment, education, recreation, and a sense of place, ownership, and community. It is also important to recognize that temporary communities do not, and should not, exist in a vacuum. They are located in existing communities, and should be integrated into those communities. And their effects—positive or otherwise—on existing communities must be taken into account.

It may be argued that adherence to the principles articulated here will add to the time and cost of providing shelter in moments of crisis. This is all the more reason to ensure that tested, successful models of temporary communities exist *before* a disaster occurs. With proper planning, it should take no more time to create a well-designed community than a sterile, barrackslike environment. The initial cost may, in fact, be somewhat higher, especially where needed amenities are not already available in the immediately surrounding neighborhood. Any additional upfront costs, however, will be repaid several times over as healthy and vital temporary communities enable residents to recover and move back into the larger community more quickly.

# Principles for Temporary Communities

- 1 Don't Be Ruled by Expediency**
- 2 Be Sensitive to the Surrounding Area**
- 3 Foster Livability**
- 4 Provide Transportation Linkages**
- 5 Integrate a Variety of Housing Types**
- 6 Keep People Safe**
- 7 Create a Sense of Responsibility**
- 8 Devise an Exit Strategy**

# 1

## Don't Be Ruled by Expediency

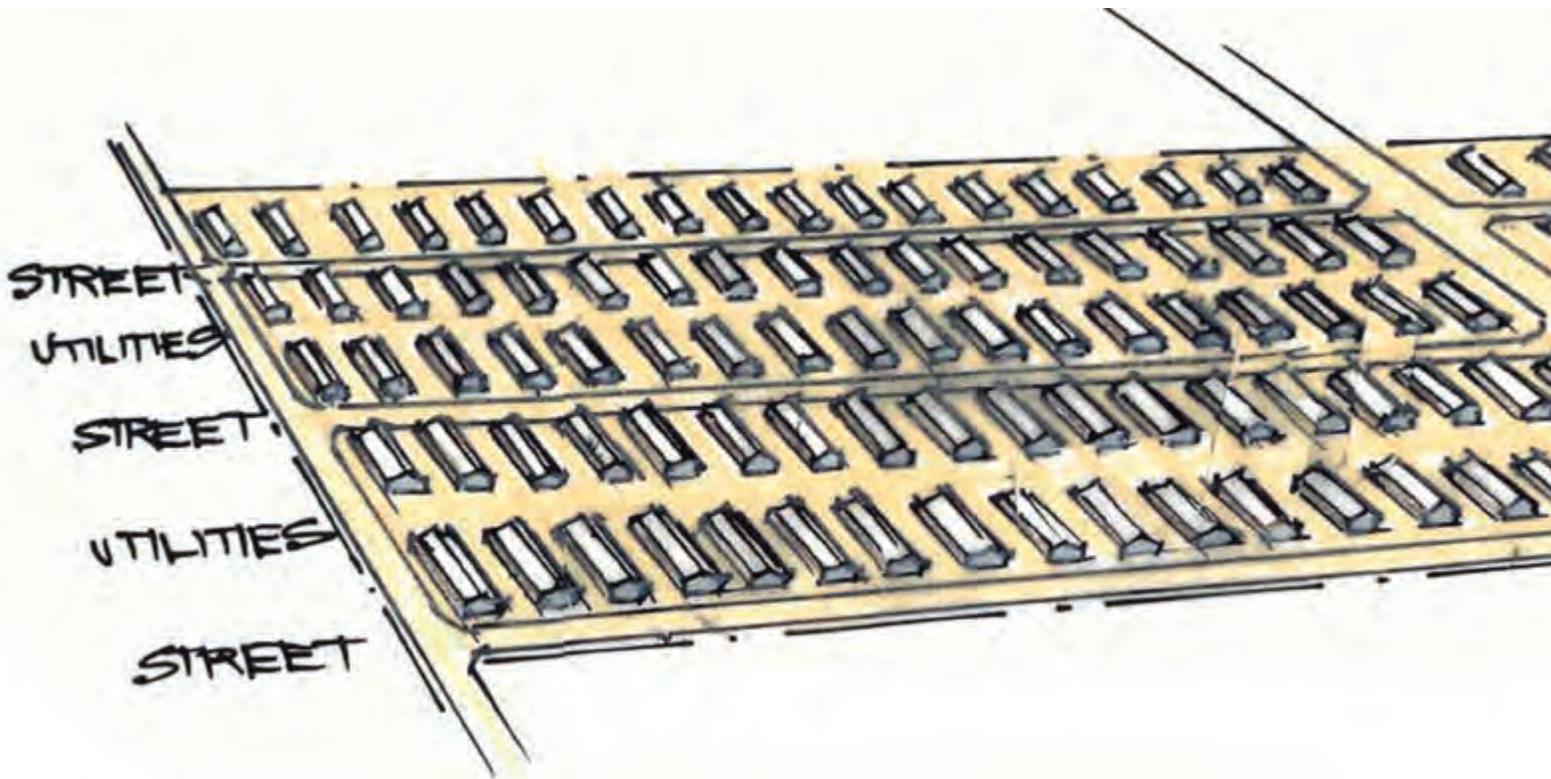
The economic and social consequences that played out in New Orleans and the Gulf states after hurricanes Katrina and Rita hit in 2005 make it clear that planning for temporary communities can lead to much quicker recovery and a better outlook for the long term. Both natural and manmade disasters will continue to occur. To ignore or deny the possibility of future disasters means going back to square one and attempting to handle disasters without the planning that could ensure survival. Failure to prepare means that when the crisis comes, decisions will be made on the fly: in other words, the big picture—social, economic, and environmental viability—will be overshadowed by the problems of the moment.

### Plan Before the Need Arises

Do not be caught unprepared. Potential sites for temporary communities can be identified before disaster strikes. Community designs can be prepared in advance, so that they can be pulled off the shelf and implemented immediately. The plans should incorporate all the principles enumerated in this document.

### Establish Connections to Existing Public Services

When the time comes, the temporary community will need the full range of public services: police, fire protection, social services, schools, and so on. To ensure



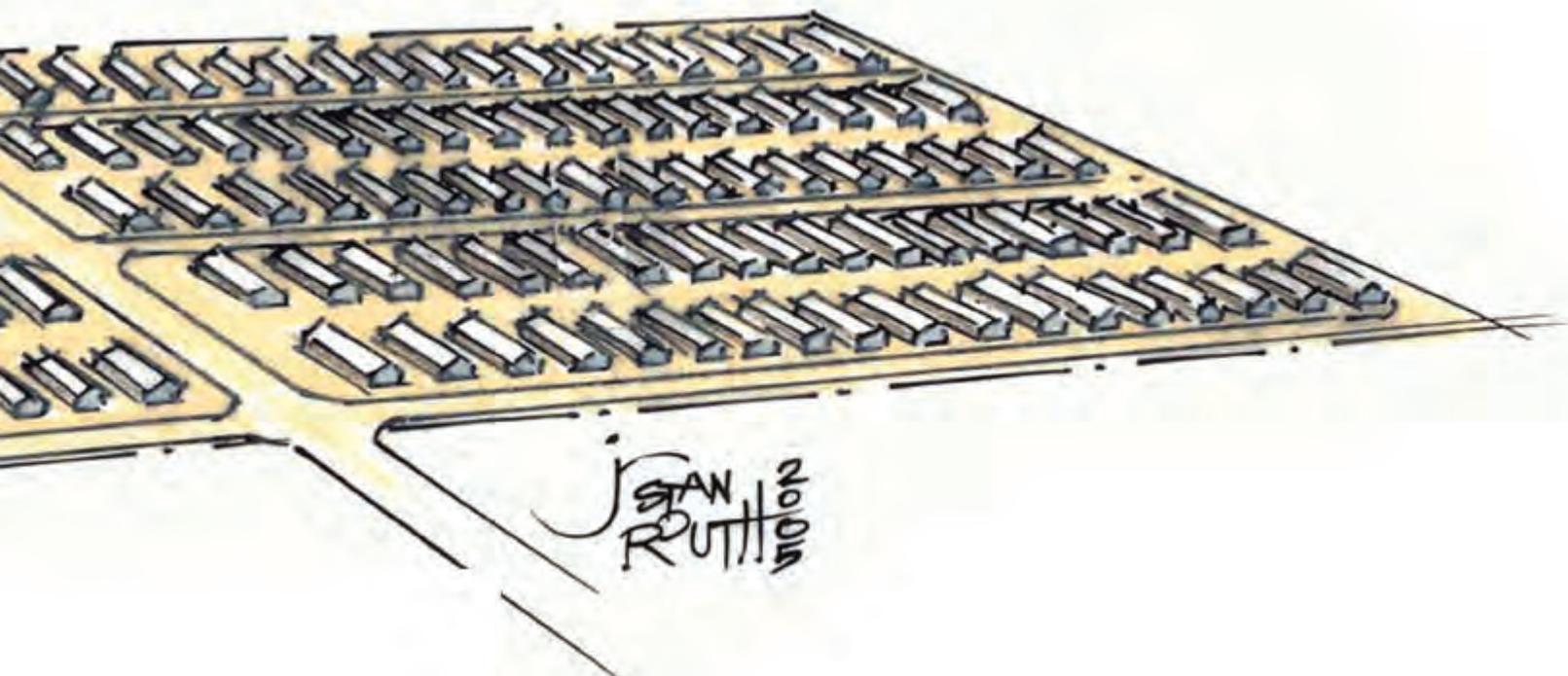
that the temporary community is linked to existing public services, and to ensure that plans reflect the expectations of the existing community, representatives from both the service agencies and the community at large must be part of the planning process. One option is to create community groups to help the various service agencies plan for disasters. This approach helps ensure that when a disaster occurs, both the citizens and the agencies will understand what is necessary to deliver public services.

### **When the Time Comes, Stick to Your Guns**

When a disaster strikes, don't let your plans be brushed aside by those who have different priorities or who are themselves being ruled by expediency. Insist that the plans be implemented just as you have prepared them—allowing, where appropriate, for practical adjustment.

### **Plan for Recurring Needs**

**Where disasters are likely to recur, regional plans for temporary emergency housing should be developed. If public lands such as municipal parks, playing fields, or fairgrounds are to be used, then it is desirable to plan the temporary housing locations so that the infrastructure can be reused in future disasters. In the case of fairgrounds, one option is to install infrastructure that can be used year-round for event-based parking of recreational vehicles. This arrangement would provide an income source for the community, and would ensure that infrastructure is in place should it be required.**



## 2 Be Sensitive to the Surrounding Area

**W**hen a new permanent development is created, it is essential to consider its impact on the existing community. The same is true of a temporary community. Although the transience of a temporary community reduces its long-term impact on the existing community, several aspects of temporary communities—including higher density, the effect on public infrastructure, and the fact that the housing may be manufactured or prefabricated—may have significant short-term implications for the surrounding community. Support for those in need of temporary housing should be the primary goal, but planners of temporary communities must also minimize disruption for the permanent residents of adjacent neighborhoods.



AP IMAGES

The construction of the temporary community should also reflect concern for the environment of the receiving community. For example, additional infrastructure created for the temporary community should be as environmentally sensitive as possible. Care should be taken to limit the amount of impervious surfaces and to protect (and, wherever possible, enhance) green space.

### **Integrate the Community into the Existing Neighborhoods**

To the extent possible, temporary communities must be physically and functionally integrated into the surrounding area. Residents of adjacent neighborhoods may fear increases in crime, noise, lighting, and traffic congestion. Effective communication is vital to alleviating such concerns. For example, planners should provide statistics from temporary communities that are similar to the planned community in order to separate misinformation from legitimate con-

cerns. Public meetings offer a good forum to discuss plans for temporary communities and to help displaced residents, planners, and nearby residents understand each others' needs and concerns. These meetings also offer an opportunity to correct misinformation and to address legitimate issues.

It is important to obtain input from permanent residents so that the plans for the temporary community reflect both their concerns and the needs of displaced citizens. Best practices that can successfully address community concerns include the screening of views, a sensitive lighting plan, meticulous property management, an effort to limit permanent environmental impacts, and a plan for restoring the property to its previous condition. For example, lighting that may strengthen security in the temporary community should be designed so as to not disturb neighboring properties; similarly, temporary bus stops or bus shelters should be positioned so as not to impede traffic flow or damage existing roadways. If appropriate, the bus service may be integrated into the existing community, providing service to both the permanent and temporary communities.

### **Create Smaller Communities and Avoid Concentrating Them in One Area**

In comparison to large temporary communities, smaller ones are easier to develop and manage and have less impact on the surrounding area. Residents of temporary communities have been through a traumatic experience and face stressful life decisions. Concentrating many such residents in large temporary communities risks magnifying the sense of desperation that many of the residents likely feel.

The lessons of the high-density, public-housing projects of the mid-20th century should not be lost on the planners of temporary communities: large concentrations of distressed people may create the conditions for desperate acts. Integrating smaller temporary communities into established neighborhoods, in contrast, provides a stronger sense of normalcy and community to residents who are seeking stability and a return to what was familiar in their previous lives.

A good rule of thumb is that the population of a temporary community should not exceed 5 percent of the population of the receiving community. Thus, an established community of 10,000 households should not receive more than 500 temporary homes—and, if possible, the homes should be dispersed in clusters throughout the community, rather than concentrated in one large area.

### **Determine the Best Use of the Land**

**Make an assessment of the land underlying the proposed temporary housing site. Determine the intended or best final use of the land, and design the temporary site accordingly. For example, if the final use of the land is residential, then the infrastructure should be designed and installed in such a way that it will be available for future permanent housing. (It is not necessary to provide all the infrastructure needed for permanent development, but what is installed should be viable for future development.)**

# 3 Encourage Community Livability

In a time of immediate crisis, when many people have been driven from their homes and have nowhere to go, it is important to focus on the absolute necessities: food, shelter, water, sanitation, and health care. But when large groups of people are brought together for longer periods, additional needs must be accommodated, both for the overall health of the community and for the well-being of the people within it. It is only when these other needs are addressed that a genuine community can be formed—one that will protect against the sense of hopelessness that arises when people feel alienated and alone. Remember that the temporary community is being planned for *people*:

it is not an exercise in designing and engineering infrastructure. The infrastructure is important, but its role is to serve the people of the community. People must not be made to adapt to poorly designed infrastructure.

Creating a neighborhood is critical to building community. Among the elements that can strengthen the sense of neighborhood and connection are high-quality design, recreational opportunities, and gathering places.

Good design principles will help build community. As noted earlier, design should not be sacrificed to expediency. This means that whenever possible,

The community of Ville Plácido Domingo, Acapulco, Mexico, provided a pleasant, secure home for families displaced by the 1997 devastation of Hurricane Pauline.



## Transitional Neighborhoods

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) will provide hundreds of millions of dollars to create temporary housing for people who were displaced by hurricanes Katrina and Rita. Because the current model used to develop temporary housing does not contribute—structurally or financially—to the creation of longer-term solutions, FEMA’s Joint Housing Solutions Center has devised a strategy for transforming temporary housing into permanent new neighborhoods that will be built and supported by public/private partnerships. These transitional neighborhoods will be designed to grow into permanent, sustainable, mixed-use, mixed-income neighborhoods that will be an integral part of the communities in which they are located.

Transitional neighborhoods will have three key components:

- 1. Reusable infrastructure.** Infrastructure will be designed and installed so that it can be reused in the development of future permanent housing on the same site.
- 2. Smart growth design principles.** Transitional neighborhoods will begin as mobile

home developments, with each mobile home placed on a lot large enough to accommodate a permanent residential structure. Between 18 and 24 months after its founding, each development will transition to permanent housing; part of that transition will involve the integration of mixed-use and mixed-income structures. Transitional neighborhoods will be pedestrian-friendly and will be located near shopping, recreation, transportation, employment, and schools. The design and placement of buildings will take into account local architectural styles and the protection of natural resources. The public realm will be designed to stimulate social interaction and civic participation, creating “a sense of place” and an environment where people from diverse backgrounds and income levels can come together in an atmosphere of acceptance. Transitional neighborhoods will provide the opportunity—and the support—to allow displaced people to move from temporary to

permanent housing within a single neighborhood.

**3. Support services.** The design of transitional neighborhoods will allocate space for the kinds of support services that displaced people need. The neighborhood’s mixed-use design will accommodate a broad range of services and amenities. As the development transitions from temporary to permanent housing, the allocated space will continue to support ongoing services, activities, and businesses.

Through the use of financial incentives and the provision of valuable infrastructure improvements for future housing needs, well-designed, well-planned transitional neighborhoods will be desirable assets for any community. These incentives and amenities are intended to stimulate community acceptance of the project, which will both expedite the provision of temporary housing and lay the foundation for longer-term housing solutions.



## Going Home, Inc.

Going Home, Inc., a new nonprofit organization, has developed an innovative approach to postdisaster housing. Two elements make the approach unique: first, Going Home dwellings are temporary residences that can be transformed into permanent homes. Second, the approach focuses on quickly reestablishing everyday community life. According to founder Reena Racki, "The idea is to use new materials and site plans, and to incorporate familiar elements associated with home and neighborhood."

The Going Home Cottage is made up of individual modules, each of which measures 12 feet by 12 feet. The first module, which can serve as a temporary dwelling for one or two people, has a small kitchen and a bathroom on one side and an eating and sitting area with a

bunk bed on the other. A ten-foot ceiling makes the small space feel roomier. A 12-foot by six-foot porch attaches to the front of the module. Each module is constructed of factory-made lightweight panels and roof trusses that are flat packed, shipped, and assembled on site, on contractor-made foundations. The modules incorporate design features that protect the homes from bad weather.

Each household can add modules as needed, and completed homes can include as many as ten modules—a total of 1,440 square feet. In their final form, the homes will vary according to size, color, roof style (shed, gable, or pyramid), and configuration of modules.

The Going Home Villages concept offers an opportunity to create entirely new communities in areas that have been largely destroyed. Plans call for the homes to be close to the street, with

zero lot lines and small backyards. Property boundaries would be marked by privacy fences, a feature that is important to reestablishing a sense of normal community but is missing from most emergency housing. Initial planning could also provide for community buildings, such as chapels, meeting facilities, child care facilities, and play areas. A pilot community might include 25 to 50 homes.

Going Home, Inc., has copyrighted the core house design and the village concept and will license them to other groups. Licensing fees will help finance further research, design, and prototype development. Going Home is seeking partners to implement pilot projects in the Mississippi Gulf.

Source: Adapted from Ronald O'Rourke, "An Innovative Approach to Post-Katrina Replacement Homes," *ArchitectureDC* 7, no. 4 (Winter 2005–2006).

REENA RACKI ASSOCIATES



Going Home village.

careful thought should go into the creation of both the overall plan and the individual structures. The temporary community is a place for people to live; respect for that purpose requires attention to detail.

Recreation also fosters a sense of community. Space should be provided for parks and playgrounds when none are otherwise available within a quarter-mile.

Remember that temporary housing has limited space. An indoor community center—with a kitchen, a lending library, Internet access, and meeting space—

will not only provide extra room but also make it possible for neighbors to meet and to make friends. To jump-start a sense of community among people who may feel dispirited from their tumultuous journey, the community center should include programming such as after-school activities, recreational opportunities, adult education, and cultural events. Space should also be provided for religious activities, and arrangements should be made for clerics of various faiths to visit and attend to the spiritual needs of the community.

Service retail—such as a laundry, a dry cleaner, and a small market or a convenience store—also enhances the sense of being in a neighborhood. If such services are not readily available in the surrounding community, provision should be made to bring these amenities to the temporary community.

Finally, remember that evacuees are not all alike: they have different origins and different needs, and they all deserve to be treated with dignity and respect. Determine if the people in a temporary community have specific needs; then try to meet them. Whenever possible, let people make choices so that they feel they have control over their lives. Allow people to settle as close to their homes as possible.

# 4 Provide Transportation Linkages

**T**he temporary community will not prosper if it is isolated from the surrounding community. Strong transportation linkages will make residents feel more comfortable about moving about within the temporary community and between their community and the surrounding area. If appropriate, the transportation linkages may be integrated into the existing community, providing service to both the permanent and temporary communities. Walkways, streets, roads, and public transportation should facilitate easy access to jobs, schools, shopping, and entertainment. Well-planned connections also improve access for emergency vehicles, allowing alternate routes when necessary. Residents of the temporary community who lack private transportation will need effective public transportation; they should not be left to fend for themselves.

A number of means can be used to achieve strong transportation linkages:

- Road layouts and circulation patterns that connect to the surrounding community;
- Shuttle bus service;
- Strategically located parking areas and sidewalks;
- Street names, signage, and way-finding that facilitate movement within the development and between the development and the surrounding areas;

**Attractive pedestrian walkways provide important transportation linkages.**





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- Carefully planned pedestrian linkages;
- Open space within the temporary community—and, where possible, connections to open space beyond the temporary community; and
- Attractive uses, such as farmers’ markets, recreational opportunities, or a business incubator.

Strong transportation linkages will allow the temporary community to gain stature and take shape as a real place. The essence of community is human connection, and a sense of belonging to an identifiable place with an active, effective public realm.

# 5 Integrate a Variety of Housing Types



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**D**isplaced households come in all shapes and sizes, each with different housing needs: singles, couples with or without children, extended families, and seniors, to name but a few. The most important goal is to keep family structures intact. People who have experienced a disaster are seeking a stable environment and a return to normalcy. By keeping families together, a temporary development can help to restore the psychological well-being of its residents. Planning for temporary communities that takes into account the full range and variety of needs can provide much-needed stability during a tumultuous period.

To address both the specific requirements and the fluctuating needs of residents, it is best to provide a range of housing configurations—from single-room occupancy to three- and even four-bedroom units, as well housing options (usually modular) that can be combined or broken down as necessary. By analyzing the neighborhoods in which displaced residents originated, planners may be able to anticipate the needed housing configurations. As a basis for this analysis, data from recent census or housing reports can be combined with reports on the affected areas.

## Provide High-Quality Design

Limited budgets and size constraints are no excuse for poor design. There are numerous examples throughout the country of small-scale housing units that use innovative design, materials, and construction techniques and achieve low cost. Good design takes into account privacy, safety, comfort, and economy. Other considerations, such as accessibility, may be important as well. In addition to elderly residents whose ability to navigate stairs is limited, or who need a ground-level home to facilitate wheelchair access, the temporary community may include people who are similarly restricted by temporary disabilities resulting from the disaster. The planning process should take into account not only how design decisions address housing accessibility, but also how good design can help meet the needs of all displaced residents.

Prefabricated and modular housing products can generally take on a variety of forms. In deciding which forms to select, planners should attend to the specific needs of the temporary community. Architectural services can be helpful in tailoring modular units to address the majority of the community's needs.

## Take Climate into Account

Disasters can happen anywhere and at any time. Even disturbances such as hurricanes and tornadoes, which have a set season, may have a “window” of five months in which they may occur. Thus, for example, the climate after a hurricane can range from the heat of June to the chill of November. Temporary communities should reflect the climate in which they will be located.

Effective and energy-efficient air conditioning and/or heating should be part of the planning process for any temporary community. To maximize the location’s natural benefits and minimize its deficiencies, design should take into account siting and topography. In warmer climates, for example, morning and evening shade should be maximized to reduce cooling costs; in cooler climates, morning and even shade should be avoided to reduce heating costs. Warmer climates may require manmade shade. Existing vegetation may be incorporated into the design to block wind, create shade, and enhance privacy.



Going Home cottage  
(see page 8).



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### **Provide Private Outdoor Space**

Where possible, planners should incorporate private outdoor space into temporary communities. A patio, a garden, or a lawn can provide important mental health benefits to residents who have been traumatized by disaster. Often, these areas are the only spaces where residents can relax and enjoy solitude. By creating private outdoor areas, planners provide residents with the opportunity to engage in healthy activities such as planting private gardens, which also beautify the community. In this way, private outdoor space can help to create a sense of calm in the community.

### **Strive for Demographic Diversity**

The residents of temporary communities often wonder why they were the victims of disaster. Many suffer from depression; some may have a pervasive sense that life is unfair. Ensuring that a temporary community is racially and socio-economically diverse can create a sense of shared sacrifice among residents—which in turn, can strengthen their feeling that, at least within the temporary community, fairness does exist.



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The perception of fairness is essential for the functioning of the new community. As noted earlier, residents of temporary communities should be housed as close to their former neighborhoods as possible. In addition, households from different demographic groups should be distributed evenly, to help to prevent the community from becoming polarized along racial or socioeconomic lines. A housing lottery is one way to avoid the perception of unfairness in the distribution of housing. A “first come, first served” waiting list for specific types of housing will also help to alleviate any concern about inequities in housing allocation. Lotteries and waiting lists are but two among many means of ensuring that one demographic group is not favored over another.

While attempting to create a community that is blind to race and class, planners should remember that other factors may have some impact on where households are located within a development. For example, older residents may need accessible units that are close to public transportation. Similarly, a family with children may view location near a playground as an asset, while a childless couple may view it as a liability. A household with a car may view a location near the parking lot as a convenience and a location near a bus stop as an annoyance, while the reverse may be true for a household without an automobile. Another consideration might be proximity to child care or to daycare facilities for seniors. Planners must strike a balance between avoiding any impression of inequity in the distribution of housing and matching residents to appropriate housing.



# 6 Keep People Safe



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**T**wo levels of safety need to be managed in a temporary community: the first is actual physical safety, which comes from good design, adequate lighting, eyes on the street, security patrols, neighborhood watch, and so on; the second is the perception of safety, which comes from good landscaping, regular trash collection, careful maintenance, and other practices that indicate a caring and respectful community.

The concept of “defensible space” is a useful one for temporary communities. Defensible space is a gradation of space from the purely private to the purely public. Inside the home, for example, is obviously purely private space. The front porch, however, is



less private and has some flavor of the public realm. Although the sidewalk in front of the home is clearly a public space, the residents of the home feel some ownership and responsibility for this space. The street itself is more public still, but the people on the block feel a special attachment, concern, and responsibility for that street above others. Defensible space makes communities safer, in that residents feel a shared sense of responsibility for various public spaces and for watching and maintaining those spaces.

The perception of safety must, of course, be supported by actual safety measures that deter illegal activity and ensure that offenders are prosecuted. The combination of safety measures and the perception of safety reinforces the sense of community and encourages residents to engage in personal efforts to protect and enhance safety.



# Create a Sense of Responsibility

**B**ecause temporary communities may exist for a year or even longer, creating a civic identity and a sense of community responsibility is important to reestablish a sense of normalcy and stability for displaced residents. Numerous studies have shown that strong communities—those that have a sense of pride and ownership—are cleaner and have lower crime rates. This implies that people are more likely to tend to things they feel invested in; as the saying goes, “You don’t wash a rental car.” Nevertheless, it is possible to encourage commitment even where homes are not owned. Many rental communities, for example, have a strong sense of unity and community pride.

Most residents of temporary communities have a shared mission: their immediate goal is to put back together the critical pieces of their lives. And most hope, eventually, to move back to their former community or to a new home. Residents of temporary communities have undergone similar tragic experiences and are seeking information and help. Such commonalities are a foundation on which a strong sense of ownership and pride can be built. That sense of ownership can be fostered through several key actions during the planning and implementation phases of developing temporary communities.

## Create a Civic Identity

It’s hard to feel a sense of community ownership and pride when your address is Trailer 126, Sector 4, Road B. Naming a community, its places, and its streets can create a civic identity. Names may have local significance, or they may be



related to the disaster-affected area, or they may remind residents of common cultural threads.

Even more important is the creation of a governing body, along the lines of a community association or a homeowners' association, both to create a sense of community and to provide needed services. Members of the governing body would make decisions about the daily management of the community and address complaints. The governing body could have subcommittees—a community watch group, a landscaping group, or a transportation group, for example—to provide or manage community services.

As noted earlier, temporary community facilities are also important; these may be managed by one of the subcommittees of the community association. Examples of such facilities could include a cafeteria, a space for religious practice, and a health care facility. It is important, however, to ensure that such facilities remain temporary, so as not to encourage permanent residence at the temporary site.

Finally, opportunities to work together, through public and private partnerships, should be made available to the entire community. Community organizations can help focus people on shared values and create safe and stable temporary homes.

### **Provide Job Training, Adult Education, and Access to Temporary Employment**

Natural disasters often disrupt the economy of a region. In some cases, employers may decide that they can no longer survive in the market, and jobs will be permanently lost. At the same time, new employment opportunities may be created during the rebuilding effort. In addition, the region's employment base may undergo restructuring in response to changed demographics, with new industries replacing older ones.

Some displaced residents may find that their skills have been rendered obsolete. Others may already have been retired, or may lack the skills needed for gainful employment. Many of these residents may need help finding employment to meet needs that have arisen unexpectedly because of the disaster.

Temporary communities can provide an opportunity for displaced residents to get the education or job training they need to get back on their feet. The community association can work to match job training and adult education courses to employment opportunities within the community. It can also act as a clearinghouse, assisting residents who already have marketable skills to find temporary employment and encouraging residents to find jobs that will aid in the recovery effort.



It is beneficial to offer educational sessions on planning, reclamation, and rebuilding practices and procedures that are being used on homes and neighborhoods hit by disaster. Keeping displaced residents informed about the various stages of physical recovery in their permanent neighborhood makes them more likely to feel invested in the outcome.

### **Provide Child Care and After-School Programs**

Child care and after-school programs enable parents to go back to work and begin rebuilding their lives. Such programs can also provide temporary employment for child care providers in the community. Not having child care creates a Catch-22 for many parents: they need income to support their families, but they can't work because they have children who need their daily care. Getting parents back to work and creating a safe place for children provides families with a sense of routine, and with the hope that they will soon be able to move to a more permanent housing situation.

### **Set Aside Space for a Business Incubator**

As noted earlier, disasters create regional economic disruption. Often, a disaster causes immediate, if temporary, changes in the needs of the area population—and, therefore, in the products and services that will be required. Basic needs in a postdisaster community might include building supplies, cleaning supplies and

services, replacement equipment, debris removal, and other products and services that were not priorities before the disaster.

Temporary communities provide an opportunity to incubate new businesses that may arise as a direct result of the changed economic environment. Space should be set aside to encourage entrepreneurial activity among the residents. Who knows the needs of disaster-stricken residents better than the residents themselves? Economic development is required before a community can resurface. New business opportunities will create jobs, prompting new housing and retail for the workers. Restoring the employment base is the first step toward recovery.

# 8

## Devise an Exit Strategy

**J**ust as planning is important for the creation of temporary communities, it is equally important for their eventual closure. A well-designed exit strategy provides housing placement services for displaced residents and establishes clear benchmarks to indicate progress toward the final closing. It is important, however, not to underestimate how long the temporary facilities may be used. In some cases, lengthy tenure may be necessary.

Part of the exit strategy is to develop a plan for restoring the site and returning it to an appropriate use, whether the original use or a new one. Once a site has been used for a temporary community, it may be better suited to another purpose than to its original one. If that is the case, plan the exit strategy to be directed toward the new use. If not, think through how the site will be restored to its original use.

In any case, it is essential to prevent or minimize long-term environmental impacts. Here are some examples of the types of impacts to expect:

- Soil compaction (from automobile use, foot traffic, and other uses);
- Soil contamination (from automotive fluids and other toxic materials);
- Erosion and sedimentation (from inadequate stormwater control and loss of vegetative ground cover); and
- Stream degradation (contamination from stormwater runoff; stream bank erosion from excessive stormwater flows; siltation of stream beds; loss of aquatic diversity from combined impacts).

Protect natural systems by paying close attention to the site's characteristics and resources: hydrology, terrain, geology, ecology, wildlife, and vegetation. Disturb the environment as little as possible; to preserve native vegetation, use natural drainage for stormwater. Careful planning for an exit strategy will make the final restoration of temporary community sites easier and more comprehensive.

# Principles for Temporary Communities

*John K. McIlwain, Alexa Bach, Mary Beth Corrigan, Richard Haughey, Prema Katari, George J. Kelly, Michael Pawlukiewicz*

The effects of hurricanes Katrina and Rita in 2005 have made it clear how critical it is to have a plan of action in place—before disaster strikes. Whether natural—such hurricanes, floods, tornados, or earthquakes—or manmade, all disasters can wreak havoc in your community and leave survivors homeless for days, months, even years.

Based on ULI's extensive experience in documenting how communities are built, this booklet will help you develop an advance plan for temporary shelter that will assist evacuees during a crisis, and get them back on their feet with due speed in the days that follow.

## You Will Learn to:

- Plan in advance for temporary shelter;
- Minimize disruption to surrounding neighborhoods;
- Make temporary communities safer and more attractive;
- Provide transportation options;
- Offer housing that meets the needs of a variety of family sizes and types;
- Create a sense of community responsibility; and
- Devise a strategy for closing the community.

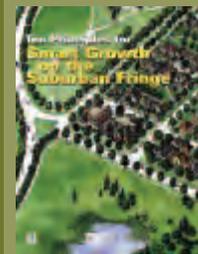


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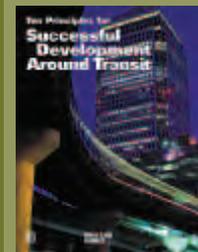
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