

After the Disaster: Housing

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Overview

Background

Overlapping phases of housing needs after a disaster

- Evacuation and repopulation
- Interim and temporary housing
- Rebuilding and recovery

Looking forward

Lessons learned and recommendations

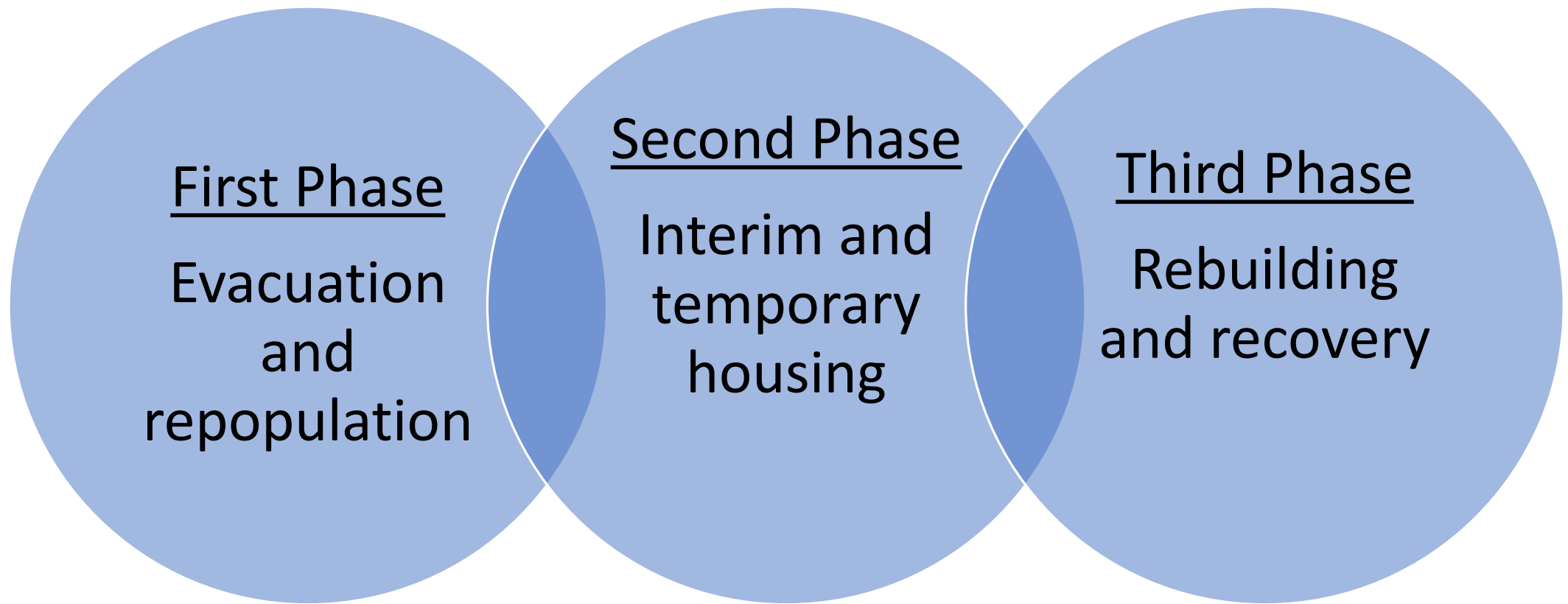


Sonoma Complex Fires, October 2017

- 5,300 homes destroyed countywide
- Santa Rosa lost 5% of its housing stock overnight
- More than 100,000 people evacuated, some for weeks
- 4,162 evacuees in 43 shelters
- Pre-existing housing crisis



Three overlapping phases of housing needs after a disaster





First phase
Evacuation and repopulation

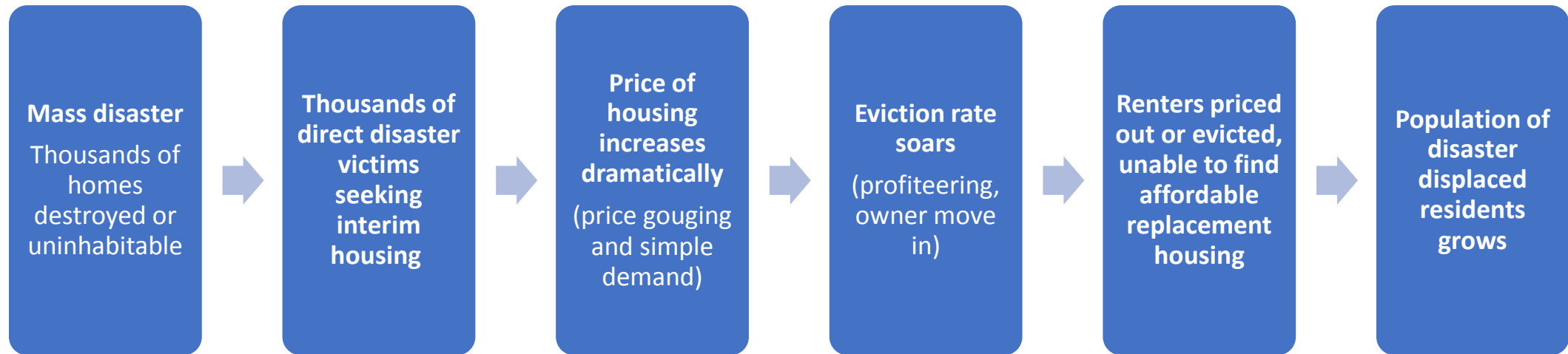
Evacuation: immediate shelter needs

- Number of evacuees reporting to shelters depends on demographics and scope of disaster. Many will find other options:
 - Hotels/motels, campgrounds, RV parks
 - Friends and family: guest bedrooms, backyard camping, RVs in driveways
 - Big box store parking lots
- Activate shelters in other jurisdictions if needed (mutual assistance)
- Disaster workers (mutual aid/mutual assistance) need a place to sleep, too

Repopulation

- Residents with habitable homes return
- Remaining displaced population with longer-term housing needs
 - Residents with destroyed or heavily damaged homes
 - Residents with homes that are uninhabitable for other reasons (threat of debris flows, lack of essential services)
- Displacement domino effect begins: disaster-displaced residents displace renters not directly affected by the disaster.

Displacement domino effect





Second Phase **Interim and temporary housing**

Meeting temporary/interim housing needs

Goal: Ensure that there is enough housing (permanent or temporary) that is available, affordable, and safe

- Displaced population
- Recovery workers
- Prevent further housing displacement

Temporary and interim housing: constraints

- Skyrocketing rental prices; insurance company bidding wars
- Price gouging: Penal Code § 396 (potential jail time, penalties)
- Option: local ordinance to address price gouging
 - Permitted by Penal Code § 396
 - Potentially lower bar to enforcement; greater reach
 - You may encounter resistance from your DA



Temporary and interim housing: options

- Adaptive re-use ordinance
- Vacation rentals: incentives to rent to displaced persons on longer-term basis
- “Safe parking” ordinance or program
- Accessory dwelling units and junior accessory dwelling units
- Temporary housing villages: RVs, tiny homes, trailers, modulars in existing RV parks, campgrounds, vacant parcels

Temporary and interim housing: things to consider

- What type of permit will be required for different temporary housing options
- Standards for permit issuance (sanitation, water, power)
- Discretion
- Term
- Enforcement

Temporary housing on disaster properties

Some disaster survivors want to return to their own property
(in RVs, trailers) right away

When there's no housing available of any kind, it's an
appealing option

Temporary housing on disaster properties



Require permits.

Do not issue permits until cleanup/debris removal is complete, testing is done, and the site has received all environmental clearances.



Third phase
Rebuilding and recovery

Transition to rebuilding and recovery

Policy questions

The long view

- Should all destroyed homes be allowed to rebuild in the same location?
- Advance longer-term housing and land use goals through rebuilding and recovery process?

Transition to rebuilding and recovery

Fees

- Waivers: Waived fees not eligible for FEMA reimbursement. Homeowners' insurance generally covers.
- Reductions: Potential to reduce rebuild permit fees because sites were previously developed (less staff time to process).
- Impact fees: "Substantially equivalent" reconstruction after disaster is exempt from development fees per Government Code § 66011 (Mitigation Fee Act).
- Incentives: Reduce or eliminate fees for development you want to incentivize. (Santa Rosa, Sonoma County: ADU permit fees.)



Transition to rebuilding and recovery

Common issues

- Legal non-conforming uses and structures. Will your existing ordinance be appropriate for rebuilding after a major disaster?
 - Allow legal NCUs to expand?
 - What nonconformities don't matter after a major disaster?
- Design review. Keep current system, streamline, eliminate?
- Natural hazards. Rebuild on parcels with significant hazards? Waive normally applicable local requirements?
 - Fault zones, debris flow risk, very high fire hazard zones, floodplains
- HOAs

Transition to rebuilding and recovery

Form and process

Urgency ordinances (supermajority vote; interim or permanent)

Options for post-disaster housing and land use ordinances:

- Adopt disaster recovery zoning overlay (Santa Rosa)
- Adopt separate disaster recovery chapter of municipal code (Sonoma County, Shasta County)

Tips for disaster ordinances:

- Include sunset provision (2-3 years after start of disaster)
- Build in administrative discretion

Balancing rebuild permitting activity with resumption of normal business

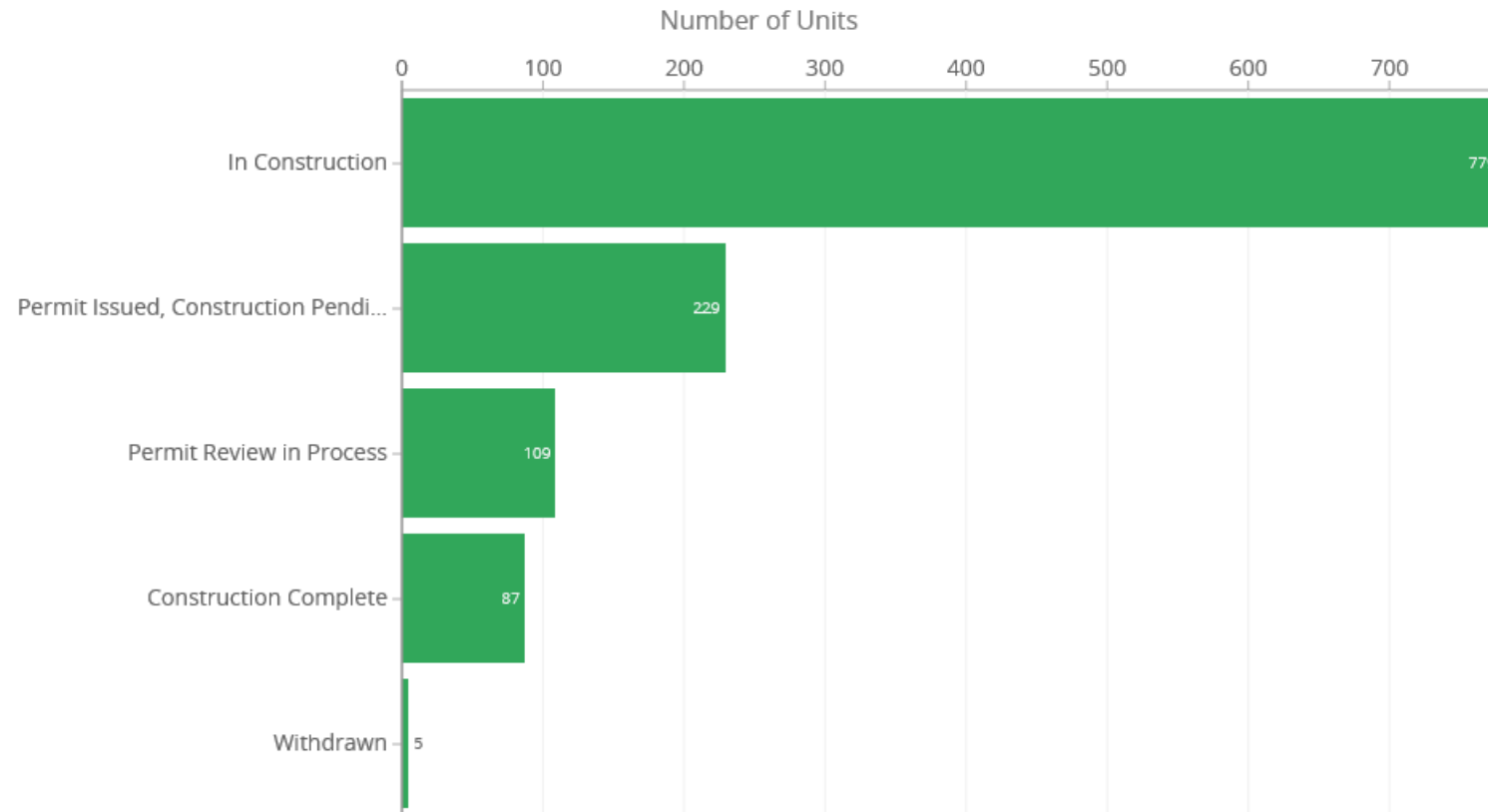
Options:

- Contract out rebuild permit processing
- Moratorium on building permits not related to rebuilding (Salinas), or simply prioritize work on rebuild permits
- Ordinance automatically extending expiration date of unused use permits, tentative maps, etc. (Sonoma County)



Rebuilding takes time

Number of units by status for parcels impacted by the Sonoma Complex Fires in unincorporated Sonoma County (as of May 16, 2019)



Key date to plan for

Three years from the date of disaster

- Most “Additional Living Expense” coverage expires (2019 and later disasters)
- Many survivors may still be rebuilding when their ALE expires
- Potential secondary housing crisis
- 2017 and 2018 disasters: most insureds have 2-year ALE coverage (for most Sonoma Complex Fire survivors, ALE expires on October 8 or 9, 2019.)

Looking forward: innovation and institutional change

Ongoing experiments

- Sonoma County Office of Recovery and Resiliency
- Renewal Enterprise District

Sonoma County Office of Recovery and Resiliency

- New department established to coordinate recovery efforts among departments and develop a long-term strategic approach to recovery.
- Created the Recovery and Resiliency Framework, structured around five strategic areas: Community Preparedness & Infrastructure, Housing, Economy, Safety Net Services, Natural Resources.
- Report card: successful ongoing experiment



Renewal Enterprise District

- JPA created by Sonoma County and City of Santa Rosa
- Collaborative regional approach to increasing multi-family housing development in key infill areas
- Leverage public and private funding, attract additional funding and developer interest
- Report card: ongoing experiment/in progress



Renewal Enterprise District (RED)

County of Sonoma | City of Santa Rosa

Lessons Learned & Recommendations

1. Adopt or develop a housing-focused disaster recovery ordinance before the disaster happens.
2. In your longer-term recovery work, DO experiment with creative approaches.
3. Help your clients create and maintain a rebuild permitting process that is predictable, transparent, reasonably fast, and humane.
4. Plan in advance for coordination among your departments. Who and how?
5. Use the city/county disaster network. There is a wealth of experience and ideas among us.
6. **Recovery is a marathon, not a sprint.**



Thank you

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