



MEMORANDUM

DATE:	December 4, 2008
TO:	Mayor and Town Board
VIA:	Kelly Arnold, Town Manager
FROM:	Melissa M. Chew, CPRP, Director of Parks and Recreation
RE:	Tornado Recovery – Six Months Post Event

Background / Discussion:

It has now been six months since an EF3 tornado barreled through Windsor on May 22, 2008. The Town is making strides in recovery, both from the government services side and the personal property recovery side. However, it should be noted that while many people have completed or are nearing completion of the recovery of personal property, a few others continue to struggle with insurance or other components of the recovery process. This report is presented with contributions by the departments in the Town organizational structure, as many of the functions have now settled into the various departments that oversee those areas.

Administration:

Town Hall is still under construction. The cost for the repair alone to the 1908 building roof and third floor is anticipated to reach approximately \$1.2 million. Much of this includes meeting code updates and creating structural integrity. The Town is also considering additional renovations to the building including the incorporation of a board chambers, ADA restrooms, offices, and a full service elevator. These improvements will be incorporated into the repair if the Town receives the Department of Local Affairs Energy/Mineral Impact Grant in the amount of \$1,000,000. The improvements will take place in cooperation with the repairs since the 2nd floor staff are already displaced.

Old Town Hall has been renamed the Art and Heritage Center. The roof was severely damaged by the tornado and had to be completely removed to enable repairs to the walls, and full replacement. The steel roof structure should be delivered no later than December 15, 2008 with dry in by the end of the year. Once the roof has been replaced, the interior finish of the building will be left to the Parks and Recreation Department to finish in accordance with previous grants. The current anticipated price on the roof system is approximately \$465,000.

In response to the Federal Emergency Management Administration's (FEMA) suggestion that revitalization of entry corridors would be significant in the recovery efforts, the Town has partnered with the Department of Local Affairs and the Colorado State University (CSU) Extension Office. Students from CSU are working to provide conceptual ideas regarding a downtown corridor master plan. An open house has been held and 26 people attended to contribute suggestions and ask questions on the process.

The Town of Windsor is part of the Emergency Support Function #14. This group is a collaboration between the Federal, State, and Local government departments and jurisdictions. It

focuses on the public recovery of the Towns and County. The FEMA recommendations given to the committee have generally been achieved.

The Town of Windsor is responsible for the Emergency Support Function #14 (ESF14)– Long Term “Community” Recovery committee. Below is the progress on the project action items:

1. Increase engagement at federal and state level
2. Build relationship to improve local cooperation - meetings with local managers and
3. Rebuild Green
4. Develop pre-disaster mitigation plan with FEMA
5. Reinitiate Windsor Housing Study
 - a. Revitalize Transportation Corridors
6. The Town has entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with DOLA and CSU to conceptualize the Historic Downtown Master Plan Economic impact study
7. Identify additional State resources – Ongoing
8. Identify non-profit funding for unmet needs – Ongoing

The Long Term Recovery Team (LTRT) is a non-profit organization which was formed under the advisement of FEMA. Under this program, several subcommittees exist to meet the needs of individuals impacted by the disaster including volunteer coordination, case management, crisis counseling, community assessment, finance and donations, unmet needs, case management and county town liaison. The Town of Windsor is represented by Dawn Jaeger on the Case Management Subcommittee and as the Town liaison.

After the tornado FEMA and volunteers identified approximately 418 homes that had significant structural damage. The Town has been monitoring these properties and working with property owners to ensure the properties are safe. . Many of the owners of the 418 properties have taken advantage of the funds from their insurance and have rebuilt homes incorporating greener building practices and updating the homes to meet current building codes.

Not all the properties have been repaired. Six months after the tornado, there are still approximately seven properties that show little progress. None of the owners have abandoned the homes, but some are continuing to work with insurance and contractors. The Town is working with individuals and requiring that properties be made safe.

Finance:

The Town is utilizing a contract employee to oversee all insurance processing and claims information as well as project management for Town Hall and the Art & Heritage Center. The tracking system seems to continue to work well, although direct tornado related expenses have pretty much ended. This employee also tracks claim settlements to projects bid for repair.

The Town’s current out of pocket expenditures that are not reimbursable by insurance are: \$977,485. This breaks down as shown below:

- \$503,419 – hard costs of services and replacement items
- \$300,000 – estimated cost of lost trees based on age and quantity (\$100 per 300 trees) does not compensate for the loss of a 50 to 200 year old tree.

- \$98,391 – cost associated with staff overtime in the disaster response
- \$75,675 – FEMA estimation for equipment usage

Fortunately, the Town had excellent insurance coverage through CIRSA who was quick to respond to emergency needs, and continues to work with the Town for ongoing claim settlements for lesser needs. The Town has already been reimbursed approximately \$2,543,443.13 in insurance funds. This does not include the repair to the Town Hall or the Art and Heritage Center, which combined will total close to \$2,000,000.

The utility billing division worked with the GIS division and tornado recovery team to locate water and sewer services and property owners of affected properties. The finance division continued working with various agencies and insurance representatives furnishing information for reports, grants and insurance claims. Sales tax administration continued without pause, working with affected business owners on payment plans and reporting obligations.

The Information Systems division restored network connectivity between the Town's physical sites and developed a tornado information section on the web site. Repairs to Town Hall required that second floor personnel be moved to temporary housing on in the first floor multi-purpose room. The move required a great deal of planning and cabling from the second floor server room to the temporary quarters, but the move was accomplished in one weekend with computers being operable on Monday morning.

The Town has solicited two Energy/Mineral Impact Assistance grants for the purpose of tornado recovery. The first is a Tier I grant in the amount of \$89,208. This grant provides fifty percent of the salary, benefits, and operating costs for the Assistant to the Town Manager over a two year period. The grant pays specifically for the time spent by the employee conducting tornado recovery efforts.

The other grant is for \$1,000,000 that will be used for structural repairs on the 1908 Town Hall building, third floor renovations and elevator. The Windsor Town Hall Tornado Repair application is important to the Town and the Community and is consistent with the goal of Tornado Recovery, and building back better and greener than before. Prior to May 22, the third floor, the previous school auditorium, was unusable space; the Town is choosing to see the disaster as an opportunity to embrace the history, and create an historically significant town building with modern accessibility, relevance and energy efficiency

In the recovery effort, time has continued to be of the essence. The Town Hall and the Art and Heritage Center both are still under construction. However, each building will be improved structurally.

Donations are still being accepted by the Greeley Weld Community Foundation, the Windsor Community Foundation and the re-Create Fund, all accessible at 711 8th Ave., Greeley, Co 80631. The re-Create Fund is specified for parks and recreation amenities and has collected over \$150,000 to date for trees, ball fields and museums. Some of these funds were used in the *plant small Grow Tall* event described under Parks and Recreation.

Engineering

The Engineering department has replaced concrete sidewalks due to uprooted trees in order to eliminate safety concerns. To date, just over \$3000 has been expended to repair sidewalks from uprooted trees; further repairs may be needed as buildings are repaired and construction traffic accesses property. Additionally, the Engineering Department has assisted in supporting other department's functions in the initial response and ongoing recovery.

Parks and Recreation

The Parks and Recreation Department has completed repairs to the roof at the Community Recreation Center and some repairs to roofs on the historic buildings that help comprise the Town of Windsor Museum. Shelter and outbuilding roofs and siding remain to be repaired, along with the Chimney Park Pool building, and the re-Create Chimney Park concept. The Community Recreation Center also suffered some interior damage due to leaks. The Art & Heritage Center (Old Town Hall) is awaiting a new steel roof to be installed shortly, and again interior damage will then be addressed. Collections from the Old Town Hall are being cleaned, catalogued and restored.

The re-Create Chimney Park project has developed into a group of some 15-20 professionals offering pro-bono services on all aspects of design and project management. In addition there is great collaboration on recruiting materials and labor services. Grants, insurance funds, and private contributions are expected to comprise the majority of the revenue for this exciting project, however, an allowance has proposed in the 2009 budget that helps cover any shortfall.

The construction and tornado debris that accumulated at Diamond Valley Park is being mulched and removed; the leaf and brush site will re-open at the end of this year, providing citizens with this desired amenity.

The Windsor Severance Fire District Museum has been approved for relocation to a different site within Boardwalk Park. The remaining slab is to come under Town jurisdiction for re-use or removal; a decision will be made early next year. In the meantime, staff has removed significant safety concerns provided safety fencing at the site.

On October 18, 2008 nearly 450 volunteers planted in excess of 200 trees as part of the plant small Grow Tall event to replace some of the tree canopy at Main Park and Lakeview Cemetery that was lost.

Planning

Out of approximately 24 commercial/industrial buildings damaged by the tornado, building permits have been issued for the almost all properties and they are currently in various stages of reconstruction, with eight having received final inspection approval already. Three of these commercial/industrial buildings were found to contain asbestos by the State Health Department; two of which have obtained state permits and the asbestos abatement is nearly complete. The third building containing asbestos (9231 Eastman Park Drive) is one of two that have been

declared unsafe structures by the WSFPD (the mill at 30 Main Street being the other) and the Town is in contact with both property owners in an effort to address these properties.

While initially fees were waived for tornado related building permits, SAFEBuilt reinstated fee collection on July 1, 2008 and the Town reinstated fee collection on July 23, 2008. All fees are collected in normal fashion at this time. To date, 4,071 tornado related building permits have been issued.

Public Works

The Public Works Department continues to track repairs and clean up associated with the tornado. Crews working on storm sewers spent over 140 hours clearing debris from streets and storm sewer drainage channels.

The Fleet Division repaired 24 windshields, repaired 104 tires, repaired 18 radiators, repaired 24 units with mirrors or glass and 4 units remain to be repaired.

The Street and Water Divisions have assisted with locates related to gas cut off/on, building scrapes, power pole installs, rebuilding fences and landscaping; turning water services off/on for building scrapes and rebuilds; repair/change out water meters that were damaged in during reconstruction; relocate SCADA to shop for Town hall reconstruction and repair antennae, repair hydrants; leak detections, setting up portable generators for Town Hall and lift stations, assisted with lift station repairs, assisted with portable safety lighting, traffic control for debris cleanup, reset street signage, assist with temporary safety fencing, and resetting headstones at Lakeview Cemetery.

Closing Remarks

The Town's activities in both the ESF14 and the LTRT have been instrumental in coordinating activities on behalf of the Town and its citizens. The ESF14 networking opportunities have provided essential advice regarding program and collaboration opportunities. The work with the LTRT have provided links necessary to ensure citizens are being offered help on an individual basis during their recovery efforts. Combined it provides a solid understanding of the recovery process on every level.

The tornado has created a new way of doing business in the Town. It has forced a re-alignment of some priorities; and more efficient practices. In the fall, Town Board adopted a Strategic Plan that outlines initiatives for the years to come. Addressing the challenges and opportunities of tornado recovery are among the many goals established for the future of the Town of Windsor.

In an article entitled "Healing the Scars" from August 2008 Governing, Brendan Schlauch quotes Richard Nathan of the Rockefeller Institute as stating that any successful recovery effort requires balancing decisive action while seeking adequate community input in the development of a rebuilding strategy, and that requires leadership.

We remain grateful to our residents, neighbors and the many partners we have made in the recovery effort.