

**KEY INDICATORS OF COMMUNITY RESILIENCE  
AND A FRAMEWORK FOR ASSESSING COMMUNITY RESILIENCE  
Working Paper  
Resilient Communities Research Consortium**

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*Success, reflective of a systems approach, in building and maintaining community resilience depends upon recognition of the interdependence of community planning and capacity building; economic development; health, social, and community services; infrastructure systems; natural and cultural resources; information and communications; and accessibility of community systems.*

**ORIGINS OF THE RCRC KEY INDICATORS OF RESILIENCE**

The Resilient Communities Research Consortium's (RCRC) Community Engagement Resilience Framework (CERF) is based on work done during a research development meeting of the Consortium that was held in Monterey, CA, February 18-19, 2010. The focus of the meeting was development of key indicators of community resilience along with measures of the indicators that produce information from which an assessment of resilience status can be made. Discussion in the Monterey meeting resulted in a list of factors that have been recognized as interpreting or affecting community resilience. This list was condensed through discussion and successive rankings to the six key indicators and example measures that are described in following sections.

CERF development is based on the review of resilience source documents, other sources, and experience of the RCRC members in community and economic development, urban studies, service delivery to rural and underserved areas, human performance dynamics and assessment, systems analysis, and regional economics. The indicators are being clarified through literature review, discussion with other research groups, demonstration and discussion with candidate community groups and potential sponsors, and a trial of the key indicators framework with a mock, or mythical, community of the CERF. Revisions are being incorporated into a demonstration assessment system for conduct of full pilot trials of the CERF system in selected communities.

The objective for a pilot trial is to assess the behavior and usefulness of the CERF as an easy-to-use, readily-understood, online system that community groups can use for self-assessment of resilience status. CERF trials help the RCRC team understand better how to help communities understand their resilience status and choose actions based on that understanding. In addition, we can learn how communities think about resilience, how they engage in resilience improvement activity, and what types of community outreach and technical assistance can be effective in helping communities improve their resilience status.

## KEY INDICATORS AND MEASURES

Resilience-building is a continuous process. Assessments conducted at pre-determined intervals (monthly or quarterly for example) provide a view over time of how the community is approaching its resilience stance. The six Key Indicators and their Measures, eighteen in total, for the RCRC Community Engagement Resilience Framework (CERF) are shown below. Each Measure has three Rating Aspect Guidelines that a rater from a community group can use to develop a rating for each measure.

**Key Indicator 1: Community Planning and Capacity Building Status** - Community planning is a government-facilitated effort, in both the short and long term, which is aimed at maintaining stability and growth within and among jurisdictional areas. Recognizing that a community is a network of public, private, non-profit, and informal organizations and social structures represented by respective stakeholders, we believe that the community's planning process is fundamental to its ability to attain its desired level of resilience. Planning and capacity building for resilience requires engagement and collaboration among these stakeholders whose activities may be facilitated, but not owned, by government.

Measures: (1) Government Engagement in a Formal Planning Process

*Rating Aspect Guidelines:* Community Planning Process  
Community Planners Availability  
Participation in Regional Planning

(2) Strength of Community Organizations

*Rating Aspect Guidelines:* Concern for Community  
Contributes Volunteer Time and/or Funds to  
Community Activities  
Active Membership

(3) Professional Planning Staff

*Rating Aspect Guidelines:* Education and Certification  
Years of Experience  
Training and Continuing Education

**Key Indicator 2: Economic Development Planning Status** - Economic development is the set of efforts and activities in which communities engage to build business, grow jobs, and develop new opportunities with the goal of creating and sustaining their viability as communities. Economic development is coordinated and collaborative in nature. Either government or private sector entities or a collaboration of them may be the catalyst that provides the motivation for economic development engagement, but sustainable economic development requires community vision and full engagement by the private sector.

A sound infrastructure is necessary for sustainable economic development and a high quality of life, but not all infrastructure investments stimulate economic growth. Innovation is a critical element for the creation and sustainability of economic development for viable communities. Public/private cooperation to promote innovation and economic development requires balance and mutual respect for each party's institutional and legal constraints.

Measures: (1) Economic Development Plan

*Rating Aspect Guidelines:* Economic Development Plan  
Stakeholder Participation in the Community  
Economic Development Plan  
Participation in Regional Economic  
Development Planning

(2) Diversification of Economic Base

*Rating Aspect Guidelines:* Inventory of Existing Business and Industry  
Basic versus Support Business and Industries  
Participation in Regional Economic  
Development Planning

(3) Business Recovery Planning

*Rating Aspect Guidelines:* Business Impact Analysis  
Recovery Strategy  
Continuity Plan

**Key Indicator 3: Health, Social, and Community Services Status** - Resilience is reliant upon the health and well-being of the community, and programs that sustain these properties are indicative of the community's degree of resilience. Aspects that reflect this relative resiliency indicator include programs that provide:

- health care
- social services
- community services
- continuing education
- outreach to and care for vulnerable populations

Measures: (1) Healthcare Resources and Facilities

*Rating Aspect Guidelines:* Healthcare Facilities  
Healthcare Providers  
Access to Out-of-Area Resources and Facilities

(2) Strength and Involvement of Social Service Agencies in the Community

*Rating Aspect Guidelines:* Agencies  
Activity  
Services Mix

(3) Strength and Involvement of Faith-Based Agencies in the Community

*Rating Aspect Guidelines:* Agencies  
Activity  
Services Mix

**Key Indicator 4: Cultural and Natural Resources (Community Identity) Status -**

Resilient communities are characterized by mutual respect and tolerance among different ethnic and cultural communities and other stakeholders. Natural and cultural assets are indigenous to a geographic area, tribal nation, U.S. territory or other unique community.

The United States is increasingly culturally diverse. Preserving natural and cultural resources and the environmental integrity of these resources is critical to economic viability, quality of life, and resilience. Government helps preserve cultural assets and establishes the legal and regulatory framework for the management of natural resources. Non-governmental organizations frequently complement public and/or private initiatives. Natural and cultural resources are key community assets as recognized in the National Disaster Recovery Framework: “A systematic, interdisciplinary approach is used to understand the interdependencies and complex relationships of the natural and cultural environments” (NDRF, 2-5-2010, draft: p. 40).

Measures: (1) Community Identity

*Rating Aspect Guidelines:* Social Networks (Cultural, Economic, Religious, Fraternal, etc.)  
Attachment to Neighborhoods  
Length of Residency

(2) Community Parks/Refuges and Recreation Opportunities

*Rating Aspect Guidelines:* Trails and Greenways  
Parks  
Refuges and Gardens

(3) Cultural and Historical Landmarks

*Rating Aspect Guidelines:* Aesthetic Value and Linkage to History  
Contribution to Cultural Memory and Appreciation by Community  
Economic and Cultural Value

**Key Indicator 5: Infrastructure Systems Status -** Physical infrastructure systems include public and private assets such as utilities, transportation facilities, hospitals, schools, buildings and other developed resources of the community. They are the foundation for supporting human and organizational activity in a community and are, therefore, reflective of its resilience. The infrastructure enables most of the other resilience-oriented activities. One of the ongoing functions of the community is the development, maintenance, and growth of its infrastructure.

Quantity and quality of existing infrastructure is essential to resilience. Losing infrastructure makes the community less resilient. All emergencies involve infrastructure, and loss of infrastructure can itself create an emergency (e.g. loss of a bridge, disruption of power supply, etc.). Other emergencies (e.g. loss of life, ecological disasters, etc.) rely on and impact infrastructure in both response and recovery operations.

Measures: (1) Risk and Vulnerability Assessment

*Rating Aspect Guidelines:* Risk Assessment  
Vulnerability Assessment  
Critical Facilities Analysis

(2) Hazards Mitigation Plan

*Rating Aspect Guidelines:* Hazards Mitigation Plan Based on Risk and  
Vulnerability Assessment  
Incorporation in other Planning  
Community Acceptance

(3) Adequacy of Community Resources to Restore Essential Services

*Rating Aspect Guidelines:* Transportation  
Energy  
Water and Sewerage

**Key Indicator 6: Information and Communication Status** – Community communications processes enable the exchange of information within the community. Effective communication systems enable improving knowledge, coordinating activities, and fostering the creation of ideas.

Effective communications provide relevant (actionable) information to the appropriate people in a timely manner. An effective emergency communication system is in fact a system-of-systems that contains instances of information exchange targeted to specific situations and phases of activity. These communications subsystems are interlinked in complex ways, and decomposing and examining them out of context can often be misleading. Effective and efficient emergency communications systems involve aspects of coverage, access, relevance, correctness, precision, form, format, trust, credibility, and timeliness.

Measures: (1) Risk and Vulnerability Communications Plan

*Rating Aspect Guidelines:* Risk and Vulnerability Communications Plan  
Community Awareness  
Training and Exercises

(2) Involvement of Stakeholders in the Communications and Information Plan

*Rating Aspect Guidelines:* Stakeholder Agencies and Institutions  
Community Participation  
Linkage to Regional and/or State Plans

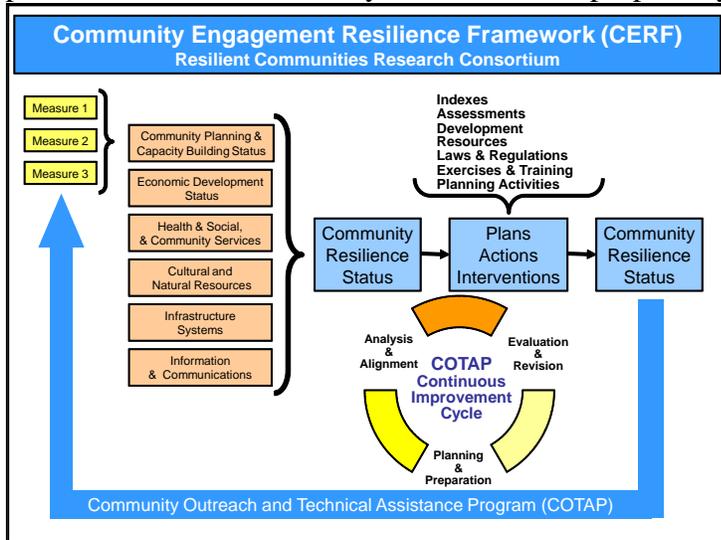
(3) Communications Channels Coverage in the Community

*Rating Aspect Guidelines:* Radio and Television  
Internet  
Telephone and Cell Phones

Collectively, the set of Key Indicators, Measures, and Rating Aspect Guidelines form the Community Engagement Resilience Framework (CERF), a tool for community resilience improvement that can be used by a community group to self-assess its resilience status and choose areas in which to work to improve resilience status.

**COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT RESILIENCE FRAMEWORK (CERF)**

To make the CERF tool operational and accessible by communities, we have overlaid CERF in the Resolution Information System for Organizational Excellence (ISOX) online performance measurement system. ISOX is a proprietary system of Resolution which is a partner in RCRC. CERF/ISOX provides the capability for a community group to assess its resilience status using the CERF framework, develop Plans for Improvement (PFI), and track change over time. To derive an overall assessment of community resilience status, the measures for the key indicators are rated by a designated group of raters from a community group approved or appointed by a jurisdictional authority. The community assessment group may be a Citizens Corps Council, a public/private partnership, an



economic development planning council, or similar group. The assessment is conducted online via the CERF/ISOX system. It may also be conducted in a face-to-face setting facilitated through the online CERF tool set.

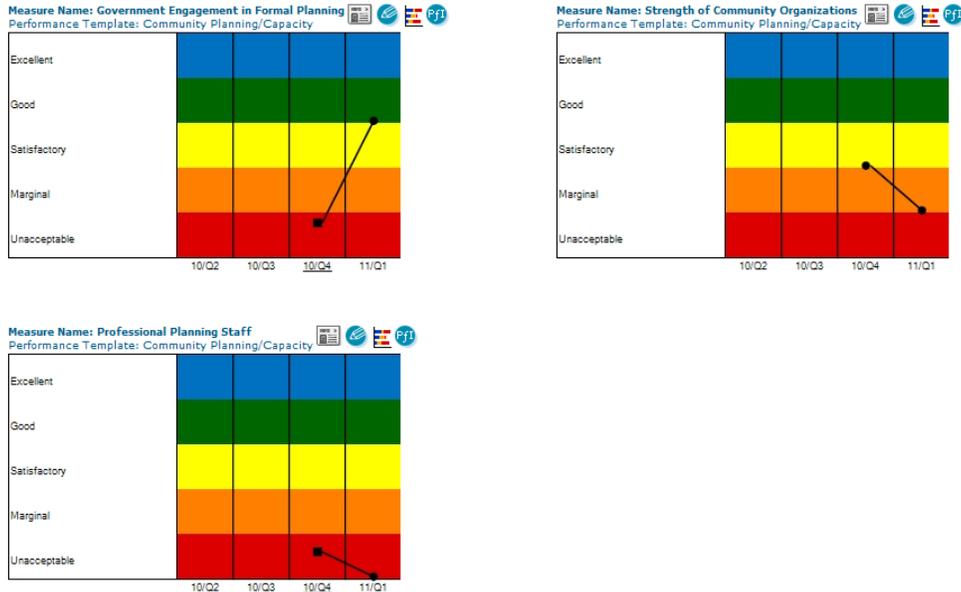
A community assesses its own overall resilience status by evaluating its status in the six CERF key indicator areas. Rating in CERF/ISOX is accomplished by assigning an overall rating for a Measure for an Indicator and commenting on one or more of the Rating Aspects for the Measure. Comments include the Expected Status, Actual Status, and Ideas (for overcoming the difference in expected and actual). Ratings are entered as numerical values in a range of from 1 to 5, with 5 being high. CERF/ISOX displays the status and trends of each measure on a color-banded trend chart containing the following colors and qualitative values:

See the rating guidelines example in Attachment A for an illustration of guidance provided for raters. Similar guidance is provided for each CERF measure.

Criteria	Measure Rating	Color
Excellent / State of the Art	5	Blue
Good	4	Green
Satisfactory/Acceptable	3	Yellow
Marginal	2	Orange
Unacceptable/None	1	Red

**KEY INDICATORS OF RESILIENCE, RCRC, Based on, Monterey, CA, 2/18-19/2010, R&D Meeting**

CERF/ISOX averages the numerical ratings for each of the 18 measures. Status for the Measures is displayed longitudinally by assessment period (e.g., weekly, monthly, or quarterly, semi-annually, or annually). For example, for the key indicator Community Planning and Capacity Building, there would be the following three trend charts for its Measures:



Then based on the assessments (ratings of the measures) conducted during each assessment period, CERF/ISOX uses a weighted algorithm to calculate and assign a color value to each Key Indicator (e.g., Community Planning and Capacity Building).

Resiliency Index	
Community Planning and Capacity Building	⊕
Cultural and Natural Resources	⊙
Economic Development	⊕
Health and Social Community Services	⊖
Information and Communication	⊕
Infrastructure planning	⊕
Trend: <u>Stoplights / Measures</u>	

Plus signs indicate a positive change since the previous rating period. Minus signs indicate a lower rating since the previous period. A square surrounding a “stoplight” circle indicates that a Plan for Improvement (PFI) has been developed. A “white” circle means the Indicator has not been rated for the time period indicated.

Using the same weighted algorithms for assigning color values to Indicators, CERF/ISOX assigns a color value to the overall resiliency index. The status of the overall Resiliency Index and the Key Indicators are available to view so their change can be observed over time.

**KEY INDICATORS OF RESILIENCE, RCRC, Based on, Monterey, CA, 2/18-19/2010, R&D Meeting**

Name	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
<b>Resiliency Index</b>						
Community Planning and Capacity Building	●	●	●	+	+	+
Cultural and Natural Resources	○	○	○	○	○	○
Economic Development	●	●	●	+	+	+
Health and Social Community Services	●	●	●	●	●	●
Information and Communication	●	●	●	●	●	●
Infrastructure planning	●	●	●	+	+	+

Through successive iterations of the assessment process and development and active management of PfIs, a community can change its resilience status. PfIs developed at the community level provide the means of improving and maintaining resilience. A community may use local resources or external outreach and technical assistance to work the improvement plans.

An example Plan for Improvement is attached to the end of this document.

**CERF/ISOX AND THE COMMUNITY**

CERF supports community leadership in other community activity areas through the bottom-up, community-engagement nature of the framework, empowers the community, and engages local leadership for continuous improvement in resilience with a dual-use economic development benefit. Benefits to a community include:

- ❖ Provides a framework for community engagement and empowerment and development
- ❖ Develops capability to take advantage of community expertise
- ❖ Leverages communities’ resources and volunteers
- ❖ Provides a community-based continuous improvement capability through measurable outcomes

### Benefits to the Community

**Developing, Improving, Maintaining Resilience**

**Economic Benefits:**

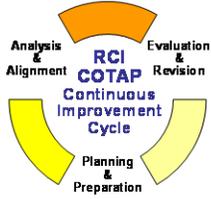
- ❖ More attractive for economic development
- ❖ More resistant to adverse events (manmade, natural, economic downturn)
- ❖ Recover more quickly from adverse events
- ❖ Supports common community goals for planning and development

**Social Services and Community Development:**

- ❖ Reinforces community vision
- ❖ Community stakeholder buy-in and support for new initiatives
- ❖ Better basis community for outreach/stakeholder communication
- ❖ Better social services (social, health education)
- ❖ Better Quality of Life



Stakeholder Involvement



The CERF will be accompanied by a Community Outreach and Technical Assistance Program (COTAP) to assist communities with improving and maintaining resilience status. COTAP resources include RCRC-developed resources, third-party resources, referral to other resilience programs and Federal agency resources and programs, and community-developed best

practices. The emphasis is on helping communities identify resources that can help them address specific areas of resilience improvement.

Currently, these Indicators and Measures and their Rating Aspects are being tested through an alpha pilot trial of CERF in the Resolution ISOX online system using a mock, or mythical, community. The members of the mock community are representative of the types of community group members who would be found in a Citizens Corps Council, a Local Emergency Planning Committee, an economic or community development planning group, or a specially appointed community group. Results from the mock community trial will be used to improve CERF, inform development of a Community Outreach and Technical Assistance program (COTAP), and prepare for a full trial of CERF in selected pilot communities.

The mock community group learned to use the CERF system residing in Resolution/ISOX in an hour and a half webinar. Follow-on technical support was available from both an RCRC coordinator and a Resolution staff member, but assessment group members were able to complete assessments in the online data entry system with no or minimal support. A group webinar was also used to complete demonstration Plans for Improvement (Pfis). Working collaboratively with an RCRC coordinator as facilitator and with a Resolution staff member as technical support, the group completed three Pfis using report data compiled from their Key Indicator assessment data entered in CERF previously. In a full trial of CERF, we will train community members to be facilitators for webinar and face-to-face facilitation of Plans for Improvement. We will also provide leadership training for community group leaders to help them manage resilience change and Plans for Improvement. Plans for Improvement may be developed around any combination of Indicators and Measures, including within Indicators and across Indicators.

Full trials of CERF are projected to be conducted over a three-year period to provide sufficient time to observe change across time and the application of resources in plans for improvement. In year one, we will ask pilot trial groups to use the six key indicators to create a baseline for the pilot trial. In years two and three, we anticipate that communities may wish to add additional indicators specific to their community’s planning processes. The CERF system can accommodate additional indicators.

**RESILIENCE CHANGE MANAGEMENT PROCESS**

Resilience planning occurs through community self-assessment and awareness-to-action engagement in a change process. Community engagement and consensus on actions to take enable integrated improvement planning that leverages community capabilities and resources and that acquires external and technical assistance when it is needed and can be used effectively.



CERF provides a community capability for self-assessment and change process management. Community engagement and consensus on actions to take enable integrated improvement planning that leverages community capabilities and resources and that acquires external and technical assistance when it is needed and can be used effectively.

## **RESILIENT COMMUNITIES RESEARCH CONSORTIUM (RCRC) RESEARCH AGENDA**

The mission of the Resilient Communities Research Consortium (RCRC) is to conduct sustainable, university-based, multi-institutional, collaborative, multidisciplinary, empirical and applied community resilience research, to disseminate Consortium research results, and to implement results to improve the resilience of American communities in respect to their disaster preparedness and response stance and their economic viability. The overall goals of the Consortium are to develop an understanding of how communities decide to engage in resilience planning, model how they engage, and develop tools and resources that enable communities to become more resilient.

Resilience is determined by the planning, response, and recovery processes necessary to ensure viability of communities that experience disasters or catastrophic events.

Resilience is characterized by the ability of community and its infrastructure and systems to withstand a disaster event, restore essential services quickly, and return to normalcy. Normalcy, in this case, refers to establishing a state of equilibrium acceptable to the community and may be different (better, worse, almost the same) than pre-event conditions.

The RCRC research agenda in community resilience is focused around these themes:

- ❖ Understanding how communities view themselves.
- ❖ Understanding barriers and what factors commit a community to resilience building and maintenance engagement.
- ❖ Identifying tools that are effective for helping communities change resiliency status (assessing its own resilience, prioritizing and taking action).
- ❖ Identifying specific hazards and vulnerabilities communities face.
- ❖ Identifying the indicators of resiliency.
- ❖ Evaluating a research-based approach to a technical assistance and outreach program for helping community establish and maintain resilience.

The RCRC builds on previous research and experience of the Consortium Partnership including programs such as: the Florida A&M model for community visualization; the University of Pittsburgh capability for disaster modeling simulation, and visualization; the West Virginia University model for community outreach and technical assistance; and, Consortium partner models for working with communities to develop disaster preparedness in targeted, diverse communities. The Consortium research agenda (theme areas and projects) is designed to develop and evaluate replicable models for engaging communities, citizens and the private sector in building resilient communities. The research agenda builds upon knowledge of existing research and successful models to improve resilience nationally in rural and urban communities. The Consortium will work with other academic research centers, government agencies, and the private sector to perform its research agenda.

**KEY INDICATORS OF RESILIENCE, RCRC, Based on, Monterey, CA, 2/18-19/2010, R&D Meeting**

For additional information about the Resilient Communities Research Consortium, please contact:

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**Attachment A  
Plan for Improvement Example Generated in CERF/ISOX**

*Plans for Improvement (Pfis) are created by an individual or by a team group working in CERF/ISOX Facilitation Mode. This plan was developed in Facilitation Mode using comments for the Expected Status, Actual Status, and Ideas (for overcoming the difference in expected and actual) entered in CERF/ISOX by a rater group. A report of the comments was generated in CERF for advance review and was available online during creation of the Pfi. Please see the following page for explanations of the Pfi headings.*

**Pfi Owner:** Rusty Russell

**Entity to Improve:** WV - Elaine

**Measure to Improve:** Government Engagement in Formal Planning

**Potentially affected measure(s):** N/A

Created Date	Plot Date	Expected Complete Status
06/07/2011	12/15/2010	In Progress

**Expected:**

A formal community planning process in place, and managed for resource development and allocation.

**Actual:** There is not a managed planning process in place.

**Barriers**

- 1 - There is a lack of time by responsible people.
- 2 - There is no budget or other funding for planning.
- 3 - There are not people assigned and available for planning.
- 4 - Planning is not a priority for the community.

**Ideas**

- 1 - +Introduce the Town to various community development programs available to West Virginia Communities. i.e., On Trac, First Impressions, Community Design Team, HubCap, Power of Ten, Create West Virginia, ARC Flex-E-Grant Program, Community Development Institute
- 2 - +Education on why community planning is needed and should be a priority.
- 3 - +Develop ideas for a plan to fund a formal community planning process. Explore areas where the town budget could be economized, or alternative funding source to hire consultants or a planner for the city.
- 4 - ?Network with communities that can offer best practices in community planning.
- 5 - +Select someone to attend regional planning meetings to ensure a good communications flow.
- 6 - +Create a task force of community members who represent key stakeholders. Set up a task group to develop a plan for participation.

**W3s**

Rusty Russell, Select someone to attend regional planning meetings to ensure a good communications flow., by 06/07/2011

Mike Dougherty, ? Network with communities that can offer best practices in community planning., by 06/07/2011  
Tomoko Tamagawa, Introduce the Town to various community development programs available to West Virginia Communities. i.e., On Trac, First Impressions, Community Design Team, HubCap, Power of Ten, Create West Virginia, ARC Flex-E-Grant Program, Community Development Institute, by 06/07/2011

Jerry Iwan, +Education on why community planning is needed and should be a priority, by 06/07/2011

Rusty Russell, +Develop ideas for a plan to fund a formal community planning process. Explore areas where the town budget could be economized, or alternative funding source to hire consultants or a planner for the city., by 06/07/2011

Kevin Taylor, +Create a task force of community members who represent key stakeholders. Set up a task group to develop a plan for participation, by 06/07/2011

Rusty Russell, Call next meeting to review status of W3s. Perhaps with other groups, by 06/07/2011

**Recommendations beyond our authority**

Council has approval authority for naming someone to attend regional planning meetings. Council has budget authority.

Communicate to council the results of this planning activity and requests/recommendations coming their way. Funding may require

**W3 Reminders Sent:** N/A, 2/23/2011 2:54:56 PM, 2/18/2011 12:09:48 PM

## Terminology Explanation RCRC CERF/ISOX Plan for Improvement

**Pfl Owner:** The team member who originated the Pfl.

**Entity to Improve:** The community.

**Measure to Improve:** An Indicator Measure chosen by the team as a priority area for improvement.

**Potentially affected measure(s):** Other Measures that maybe be affected by action on this Measure.

Created Date	Plot Date	Expected Complete Status
Date printed.	Date created.	Status: In progress, completed, or cancelled.

### Expected:

The desired status for the Measure of interest. In this case level 5 or Blue as indicated in the Rating Aspect Guidelines. For the CERF Measures, extracted from the Rating Aspect Guidelines.

**Actual:** The actual status of the Measure as judged by the Pfl creator or team, For the CERF Measures, it can be expressed in language based on the Rating Aspect Guidelines. See the following page for an example of the Rating Aspects Guidelines.

### Barriers

Barriers to improvement identified by the individual creating the Pfl or the team.

### Ideas

Ideas for improving the status of the Measure that are identified by an individual creating the Pfl or team if the team is working as a group.

+ = Must do this item. Carried over from the idea generation phase.

? = May do or do if time and resources allow. Carried over from the idea generation phase.

Note: “-“ signs are not carried over from the idea generation phase because they indicate an activity that was not selected for performance.

### W3s

Who will do What by When. These can be developed collaboratively or assigned by a task or area lead.

### Recommendations beyond our authority

Notations on actions or resources that affect the outcome of planned actions, but are not controlled by the team. An example would be authorization of a budget. These notations can be used to alert up chain that a planning task is taking place that will result in a request for approval for an action or resource obligation.

### W3 Reminders Sent:

Date and time that notice of an action assignment was e-mailed to team members with action (W3) responsibility.

A task leader can use the Pfl and assignment notices to track progress against the team’s timeline for completing actions.

Indicator: COMMUNITY PLANNING AND CAPACITY BUILDING STATUS MEASURES GUIDELINES:

Measure: Government Engagement in a Formal Planning Cycle

STATUS:

Aspect/Rating	1	2	3	4	5
	None	Marginal	Acceptable	Good	State of the Art
	A low status for a formal planning cycle might have these attributes:		A medium or average status for a formal planning cycle might have these attributes:		A high status for a formal planning cycle might have these attributes:
Community Planning Process	No formal community planning process in place.		A formal community planning process in place, but not managed.		A formal community planning process in place, and managed for resource development and allocation.
Community Planners Availability	No community planners employed in local government agencies.		Community planners employed in local agencies, but assigned to multiple duties or not full time.		Full-time experienced or certified community planners employed in local agencies with responsibility for developing plans and advising elected officials and program managers.
Participation in Regional Planning	No participation in regional planning efforts.		Membership in a regional planning effort/council.		Active membership in a regional planning effort/council and engagement in carrying out plans.