

THE INSIDER



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Bridging the Knowledge Gap: Getting Applicable Research into Practitioner's Hands*

**This is the first installment of what we hope are many highlights of promising research coming out of academia. This month we profile a project from one of ASFPM's partners, the [DHS Coastal Resilience Center](#) at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. ASFPM and CRC are bridging the gap of great research getting into the hands of flood risk professionals who could apply the research into their everyday work lives.*

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### Practitioner's Guide and Resilience Scorecard

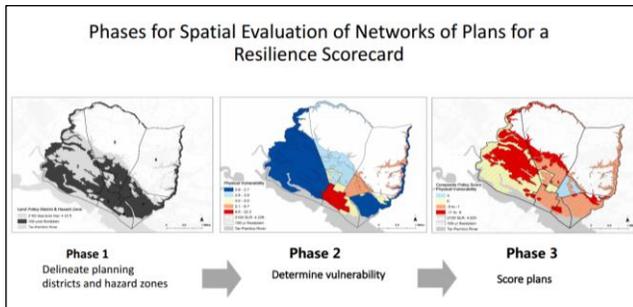
Fragmented and poor integration among a wide range of planning sectors has led to silos, or standalone plans, where mitigation planning is isolated from other types of planning. This lack of coordination between these various sectors can mean a community will be even more vulnerable to natural hazards, which can also significantly compound future risks due to climate change.

Researchers from the Department of Homeland Security Coastal Resilience Center asserted that a "resilience scorecard" is instrumental in determining if these multiple plans (hazard mitigation, transportation, land use and development, parks and recreation, wildlife habitat management and/or Coastal Area Management Act land use plans) were conflicting with each other, or even increasing the physical and social vulnerability to hazards. They further asserted that the resiliency scorecard could be used to identify priorities and areas in how to coordinate resiliency efforts.

**Philip Berke**, the principal investigator for the Coastal Resilience Center project, "[Local Planning Networks and Neighborhood Vulnerable Indicators](#)," and his colleagues put the concept for a resiliency scorecard to the test during a previous project in Washington, North Carolina, a town situated along Pamlico River, which drains into Pamlico Sound and eventually the Atlantic Ocean.



The [resulting research paper from that project, published in the Journal of the American Planning Association](#), details the phases of first delineating the planning districts and hazard zones; determining vulnerability; evaluating plans; developing and comparing the scores of the various plans; and finally, evaluating the resilience scorecard itself.



The research shows the “resilience scorecard” can be used by communities to evaluate the degree of coordination in place among local planning programs. It can also be used to evaluate the level of vulnerability for current hazards and future climate change. Community personnel, such as floodplain managers, can then take a holistic approach by asking questions that look at priorities, goals and needs, which ultimately will improve the integration of measures and policies that reduce vulnerability across plans.

The research also recommended FEMA and other federal agencies charged with hazards vulnerability reduction should consider developing databases that facilitate the use of the resilience scorecard, and making that data transparent, readily available and widely applicable.

The product of this project will be a “Practitioner’s Guide and Scorecard” to provide local practitioners a tool to identify when and where their community plans are in conflict. Two current pilot cities being studied/assisted are League City, Texas and Norfolk, Virginia.

The bottom line is that community flood risk professionals need to be participating in the process as well. **Chad Berginnis**, ASFPM’s executive director and CRC advisory board member, sees this research being used by communities. “Given the approach by the research team, including the incorporation of a lot of advice from the project advisory planning committee that has several practicing planners, this scorecard stands out from many of the other scorecards being developed for various evaluations. In a very practical sense, I know from past experiences the frustration of working on a hazard mitigation plan, developing goals and objectives, only to learn that the community’s land use plan had goals and objectives pulling in the exact opposite direction. A tool like this scorecard can identify these potential conflicts among all planning and guidance documents a community has early on, and gives a good way to evaluate them through the lens of resiliency.”

Interested in other [CRC research projects](#)? Many fall into these categories: Coastal Infrastructure Resilience, Building Resilient Communities, Disaster Dynamics Education and Workforce Development.

*Written by Michele Mihalovich, ASFPM’s public information officer.*