



CLIENT SPOTLIGHT

# Deloitte: The quiet strength behind the Joplin recovery

## How long-term planning is helping Joplin recover from natural disaster

It was just another quiet Sunday afternoon in Joplin. “We had some friends and family over,” says Troy Bolander, Joplin Director of Planning, Development & Neighborhood Services. “It was a very nice afternoon actually. We saw the clouds roll in and when I looked up, I noticed the clouds not just going in one direction, but going in different directions.”

On the late afternoon of Sunday, May 22, 2011, Joplin, MO., a town of 50,000, was struck by a catastrophic EF-5, multiple-vortex tornado with

wind speeds exceeding 200 miles per hour, killing 161 people, injuring an estimated 1,150 and causing damages totaling \$2.8 billion. The tornado that struck Joplin was the costliest and one of the deadliest in US history. More than 8,000 structures were damaged and destroyed.

## Housing becomes priority one

Rebuilding was required, but where to start? Rather than looking at one or two projects a year, the city faced 30 major projects, many at the same time, one just as important as the next. Joplin’s long-range development plans were delayed to address immediate circumstances.

Like many disaster-stricken communities, Joplin was neither equipped with the staff nor the experience to take on the enormous tasks of developing a long-term recovery plan and handling the administration of hundreds of millions of dollars in government funds.

“They like to announce that you’re receiving this money and we’re here to help you with the recovery, which is great, but what they don’t tell the public is there’s a lot of strings attached and a lot of ways to get in trouble if you miss a step – even if it’s not intentional,” says Bolander. “The result could be as bad as paying back part of that money that you unintentionally misused.”

**+ IMPACT**

Rebuild city with long-term capital plan

**+ IMPACT**

Establish homebuyer assistance program in accordance with HUD’s grants

**+ IMPACT**

Develop computer modeling to measure capital plan progress

Joplin officials recognized that its current staffing levels did not have the resources of experienced professionals and program management services that could address managing funds required to ensure compliance, oversight, and monitoring of the capital plan's schedules, costs, and risk ratings for the \$158 million worth of federal funding. A team of Deloitte specialists assisted Joplin's staff in developing the capital plan, which had four specific deliverables and required Joplin City Council approval:

## Identify

- Identifying, documenting, and understanding concerns and visions for Joplin through meetings with public, business, non-governmental organizations, and service organization stakeholders. Moving beyond City Hall, the meetings helped to analyze community issues, identify potential projects, and collect critical information to help determine how to structure the assistance programs while complying with applicable regulations.

## Define

- Defining components into a capital plan capable of managing the infrastructure program from the US Department of Housing & Urban Development (HUD) Community Development Block Grant-Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) funds. Administration of CDBG-DR funding included development of master schedules, capital budget formulation, and use of program management tools with multiple infrastructure projects across the construction lifecycle phases.

## Design and implement

- Designing and implementing the Joplin Homebuyer Assistance Program (J-HAP) with the objectives of avoiding population loss of impacted residents and potential homelessness. J-HAP guidelines were reviewed and aligned with HUD grant regulations.

## Monitor

- Monitoring and overseeing the funding recipients and eventual closeout of each project in addition to strengthening the City's capacity to manage future funds through technical trainings, strategy workshops, and standards development. To augment monitoring activities, a web-based project management dashboard was developed with geospatial intelligence system and active maps that could be zoomed in, zoomed out, and layered with different aspects.

With these elements in place, the capital plan required only one more step for proper administration of the government funds – the approval of the Joplin City Council. Announcing the 9-0 vote in favor of the capital plan, Joplin Mayor Michael Seibert proclaimed, "We thank our city staff, members of Deloitte, and our staff. This is how Joplin gets it done."

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