

Cedar Rapids Flood Impacted Area Visual Assessment

The Cedar Rapids community has shown amazing tenacity in overcoming the affects of the flood of 2008. There is still much work to be completed to return Cedar Rapids to the safe, thriving city it was prior to the flood. Community Corrections Improvement Association sponsored AmeriCorps*VISTA members have undertaken the task of assessing where each of the 5919 flood impacted residential parcels in Cedar Rapids are on the continuum of recovery.

Method:

The greater downtown area of Cedar Rapids contains those flood impacted structures that are closest to the Cedar River and was the first to be surveyed. This area was split into 45 walking districts. On the morning of Friday, June 5, 2009, seven teams each consisting of two AmeriCorps*VISTA members were dispatched from the Community Recovery Center at 220 6th Street NW to walk the flood impacted blocks and visually assess the condition of each residential structure. Teams were trained by AmeriCorps*VISTA leader Ashley Hawkins, who instructed the teams on how to visually recognize each of the conditions along the continuum of recovery. Each team was supplied with a map of the assigned assessment area drawn by AmeriCorps*VISTA member Blake Christenson and a survey data sheet. The survey data sheet consisted of 8 columns. The first column was blank to write in the street address; the following seven columns corresponded with the condition of the structure.

Address	Demolished	Un-touched	Muck & Gut in Progress	Muck & Gut Complete	Rebuild in Progress	Rebuild Complete	Un-known

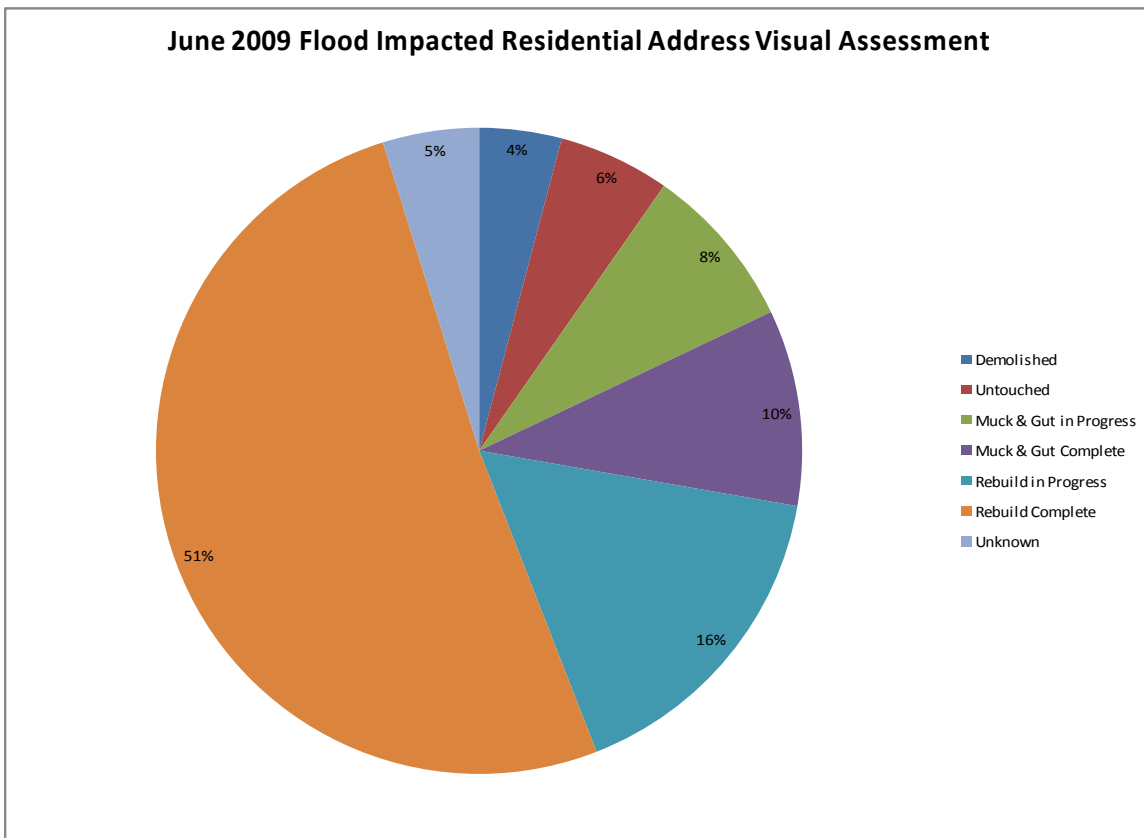
The areas not directly attached to the 'greater downtown area' were mapped and assessed separately by AmeriCorps*VISTA members. These areas were divided into 20 smaller walking districts and assessed over the week of June 22, 2009. An additional 7 maps were created with some overlap to assure that all properties were accounted for and were completed June 29, 2009. In total, 235 AmeriCorps*VISTA member volunteer hours were utilized for visual assessment.

The original list of flood affected residential parcels was provided by the city of Cedar Rapids. This list consisted of 5919 GPN codes. A GPN code is a unique numerical code used for tax purposes by the taxation authorities. Some residential structures such as apartment buildings and duplexes contain multiple GPN codes. Because the purpose of the project was to visually assess each structure, those structures that have been assigned multiple GPN codes were assessed as a single residential address. A residential address, for the purpose of this assessment, has been defined as a single structure which may contain multiple housing units and has been assigned a singular numerical address by the United States Postal Service. A total of 645 GPN codes were removed from the original list because they represent structures with multiple GPN codes. Thus each residential address was assigned only one condition code along the continuum of recovery.

There are 54 garage stalls assigned GPN codes that were not assessed as part of this project. Also removed from the visual assessment were 125 vacant lots, one 'proposed unit', and one 'private trail'. The total number of residential addresses assessed was 5093.

Results:

Number of Residential Addresses	Condition	%
210	Demolished	4.1
284	Untouched	5.6
419	Muck and Gut in Progress	8.2
500	Muck and Gut Complete	9.8
832	Rebuild in Progress	16.3
2603	Rebuild Complete	51.1
245	Unknown	4.8
5093		100%



Overall, 210 residential addresses have been demolished. The recovery process has not yet begun on 284 residential addresses. At 419 residential addresses, the process of having personal property and the interior of the home removed is underway. There are 500 residential addresses that have been completely cleared out but reconstruction has not yet begun. The reconstruction process has begun but not yet completed at 832 residential addresses. There

were 245 residential addresses that were inaccessible for visual assessment due to boarded windows, obstructed windows or trespassing regulations.

Discussion:

The initial condition of the structure has a significant influence on the recovery process. Structures that sustained a high level of damage require more extensive and costly repairs and as a result are less likely to have been rebuilt.

Following the flood of June, 2008, the Code Enforcement Division (CED) of the City of Cedar Rapids inspected many of the flood-affected properties to do an initial assessment of the degree of damage to each structure. The inspected structures were posted with a colored placard representing the condition of the residence.

A Green CED Placard indicated that the property has been inspected and no apparent structural hazards have been found.

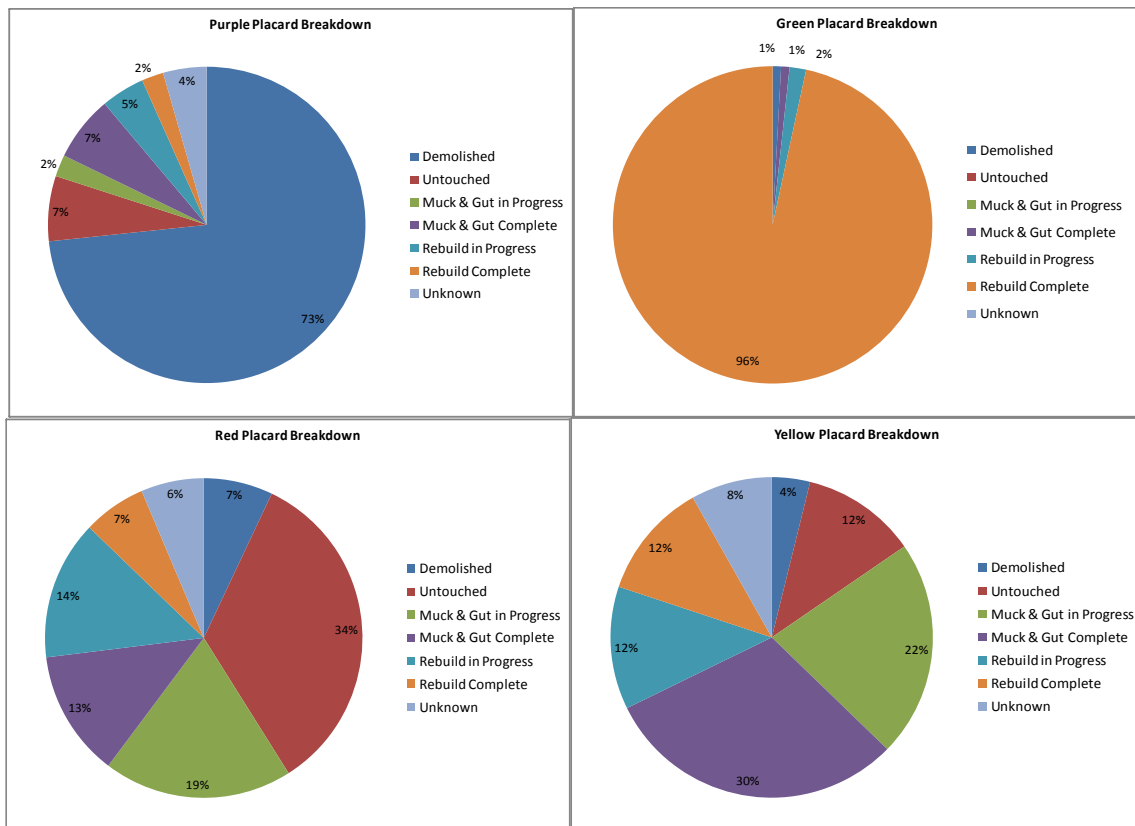
A Yellow CED Placard signified that the structure received some damage.

A Red CED Placard denoted that there was structural damage. For structures with Red CED Placards, the property owner was required to consult a structural engineer for an assessment of the building.

A Purple CED Placard indicated there was very significant structural damage and the property needed to be demolished.

The City of Cedar Rapids provided a database of 1374 residential addresses and the assigned placard color for each address. By cross-referencing the current status with the initial CED placard, a clearer picture of the overall recovery of the city is portrayed.

Purple Placard			Green Placard		
Totals	Condition	%	Totals	Condition	%
33	Demolished	73.3	2	Demolished	0.8
3	Untouched	6.7	0	Untouched	0.0
1	Muck & Gut in Progress	2.2	0	Muck & Gut in Progress	0.0
3	Muck & Gut Complete	6.7	2	Muck & Gut Complete	0.8
2	Rebuild in Progress	4.4	4	Rebuild in Progress	1.7
1	Rebuild Complete	2.2	229	Rebuild Complete	96.6
2	Unknown	4.4	0	Unknown	0.0
45		100%	237		100%
Red Placard			Yellow Placard		
Totals	Condition	%	Totals	Condition	%
11	Demolished	7.1	36	Demolished	3.8
53	Untouched	34.0	108	Untouched	11.5
30	Muck & Gut in Progress	19.2	205	Muck & Gut in Progress	21.9
20	Muck & Gut Complete	12.8	285	Muck & Gut Complete	30.4
22	Rebuild in Progress	14.1	116	Rebuild in Progress	12.4
10	Rebuild Complete	6.4	110	Rebuild Complete	11.8
10	Unknown	6.4	76	Unknown	8.1
156		100%	936		100%



Future Plans:

In an effort to better serve residents of Cedar Rapids, this information will be disseminated to service organizations throughout the area to help identify service gaps. Furthermore, AmeriCorps*VISTA members will be contacting homeowners who have not completed rebuild in order to offer volunteer services.