

Journal of Preparedness in Canada

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Preparedness is powered by relationships

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Editor's Corner



This issue is an important step in the evolution of the Journal of Preparedness in Canada (JPIC). As new endeavours do, we are evolving to provide a voice for diverse organizations and individuals in the disaster and emergency management space. While we continue to offer peer-reviewed services if requested, the main purpose is to present research, opinions and ideas that challenge the paradigms in the field of practice.

This issue contains a unique and interesting survey of the relationships between preparedness and social capital. Our research division is

executing a multi-year program to develop preparedness analytics, an evidence-based survey tool for ascertaining a population's preparedness based upon variables that are known to be correlated to better post event outcomes. It remains a work in progress, but we happily share the results with the research community. The intent is to conduct an annual cross-Canada preparedness survey, with the baseline study in May of 2025.

We need a comprehensive understanding of how to define a prepared individual, household and community, before we attempt to provide preparedness education. Follow us online for debates on questions, content and analysis techniques.

The Canadian Emergency Preparedness and Climate Adaptation (CEPCA) conference was held in Ottawa earlier this month. I offer my synopsis and thoughts on the landscape, opportunities, and enthusiasm found amongst the delegates. This was a turning point, the first intentional collection of individuals interested in a national conversation.

This month's guest article is from the commercial real estate industry, not necessarily our first thought in preparedness, but the manager of a key sector of critical infrastructure. These submissions are a reminder that preparedness is an important consideration across sectors of society.

Finally a quick synopsis of the depth to which the arts and performance community has embraced preparedness, released grants and provided education to studios across the United States and Canada.

Our intent is to publish JPIC three times a year, in September, February and June. This journal is free to contribute and publish, with all costs covered by Preparedness Labs Incorporated. All submissions to the Journal are reviewed by our team and written responses are provided. When accepted, we do not alter the author's submission, other than for legal requirements (slander, libel, hate speech, etc). That is our commitment to the community of practice, a place for your voice to be heard, free of charge, without editorial tampering.

This is a work in progress, please provide your feedback - good, bad or indifferent on our website. We endeavour to contribute to the conversation, to be part of the solution and to advocate for the diverse voices that enrich our society.

If interested, follow us for the call for submissions, which is issued 60 days prior to the planned publish date. Stay safe, be prepared and thank you for joining us.

Jeff Donaldson, PhD
Editor

Preparedness, Social Capital and Resilience

Background

Preparedness, resilience, disasters and emergencies are all concepts that define emergency management. Their formal definitions are reasonably homogenous, with nuanced differences depending on the context and an author's worldview. We know from research that communities with higher degrees of connectedness, sense of belonging and with higher rates of participation in activities fair better in disasters. As well, those with strong connections to the local government trend towards shorter response and recovery timelines. The evidence is robust and generally accepted across the field.

Measurement in social science is always a struggle, determining the variable(s) to choose as indicators of the presence or use of a social norm / skill / ability or relationship. The research is heterogeneous on whether social capital can be measured and subsequently be considered generalizable. Agreeing on key performance indicators (KPI) to understand social capital is less murky, with the majority of the research leaning towards the measurement of outcomes, a result of the presence of social capital. For example, if we measure the membership in community organizations over time, we can ascertain that the level of social capital is improving, falling or remaining stagnant. It remains difficult to quantify social capital in a comparative sense, finding a scale that is useful across different communities and organizations. Some researchers endeavour to create a quantitative scale, allowing a numerical comparison between locations as to their current level of social capital.

This research initiative is designed to seek correlation between preparedness and social capital, to understand whether the current data demonstrating a relationship between recovery and social capital extends to other pillars of emergency management (EM).

Methodology

An online survey of eight questions was conducted the week of September 1st, with 247 responses from across North America. Four questions were posed on the sense of belonging, participation in community events and overall trust of their neighbours. As well, four questions were posed to assess their level of preparedness, their ability to support their households without access to critical infrastructure and where they would seek assistance in times of crisis.

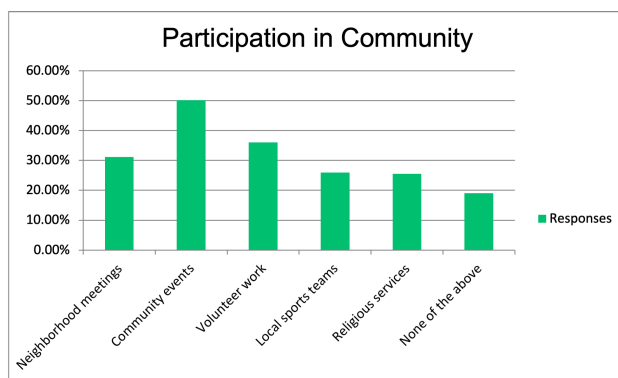
The research team gathered the responses, including demographics information and conducted statistical analysis, considered accurate to a 95% confidence level with a margin of error of 6.24%.

The demographic information includes income and age range as well as gender. The distribution of the responses across geographic regions limits the generalizability of the data to any one specific region of the continent.

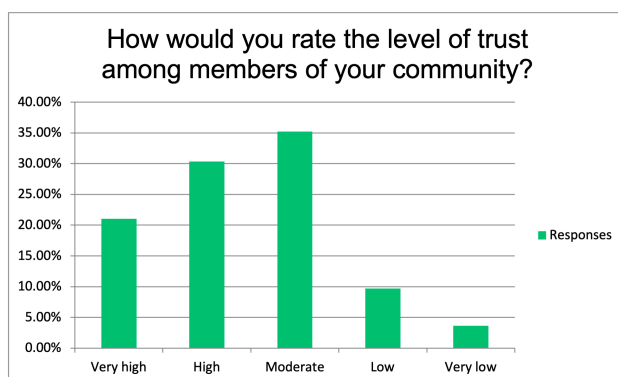
Connectedness & Social Capital

The data presented is a snapshot in time, not a trend analysis.

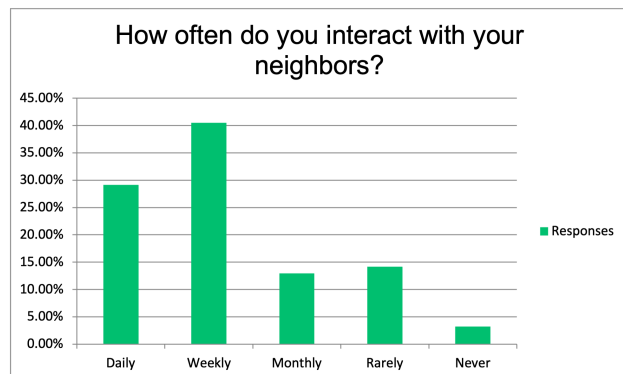
Our research found that 81% of all respondents participated in at least one community organization, indicating a strong level of involvement. Noted that 6% of the population participated in all four options presented, with 13% selecting at least three and 48% choosing two of the options.



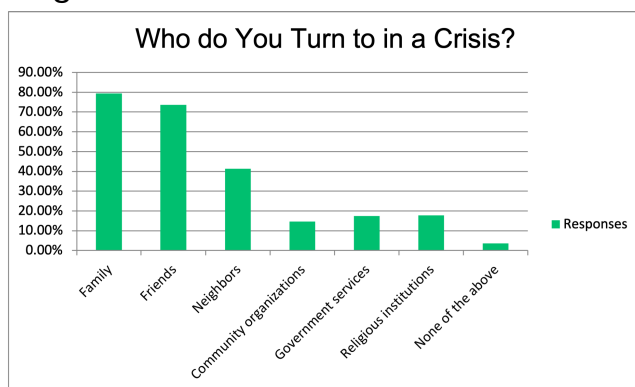
Our survey found that the majority of participants felt a very high or high degree of trust in their community, with only 14% having low to very low trust.



Our survey found that 69% of respondents interacted at least weekly with their neighbours, with 17% rarely or never interacting with those around their residence.



Our survey looked at whom the respondents turned to in times of crisis. The results indicated that 79% would turn to family, 74% to friends and 41% to neighbours.



Of the 14% of the population that had lower degrees of trust, only 7% or 2 individuals participated in any community activity, as well as 37% have daily or weekly interactions with their neighbours.

Of the 52% of respondents with high or very high degrees of trust, 74% of that population participated in at least one community organization. As well, high degrees of trust correlated to an 85% indicating at least a weekly interaction with their neighbours.

We conclude that those residents with lower degrees of trust have nominal participation in the community and less than half the interactions with their neighbours. This reflects the research on trust within the field of social capital. Trust is an important indicator of human interaction, those with predispositions to connect seek verification of trust or lack thereof in order to foster strong

bonds. Stronger sense of connection to the community are indicative of participation, interaction; all grounded in trust.

Preparedness

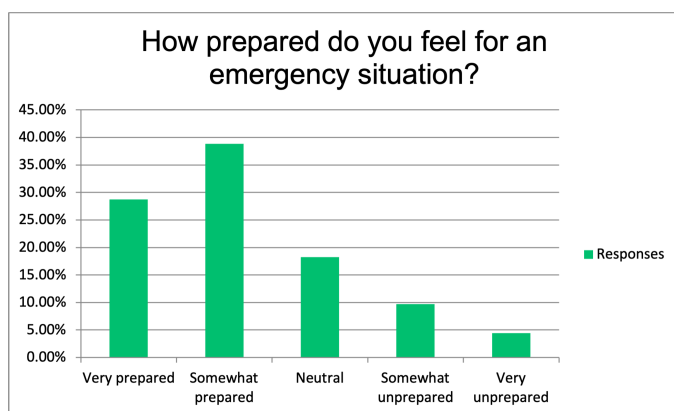
Measuring preparedness remains a contentious issue today, the literature and the community of practice disagree on how to define a prepared individual. Most of the public sector resident-facing preparedness communications provide advice to create an emergency kit, have a family plan and be informed.

There are no research findings to support a statement that an emergency kit fosters preparedness or that better post event outcomes are correlated to the possession and use of an emergency kit. Colloquially, the discipline believes that collecting these items will facilitate an easier navigation of the event, however again, other than belief and opinion, there remains a void of evidentiary support.

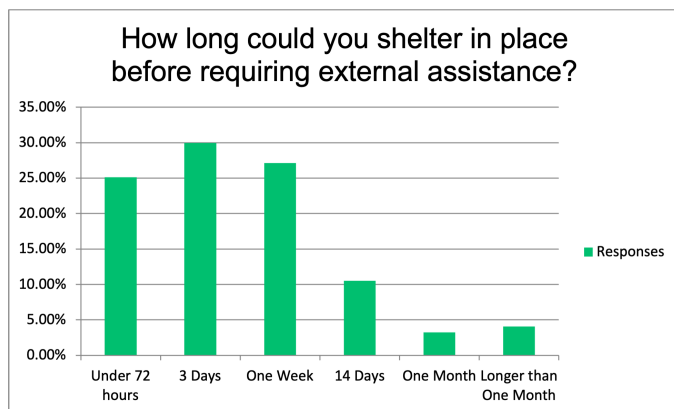
Hence, in launching this study, we determined that first a sense of how the individual felt about their preparedness was an important benchmark, as well as a capability measurement on their ability to navigate a crisis that removes access to one or more sector of critical infrastructure (CI). In a modern, technologically enabled society, the loss of access to CI represents a disruption to a household's normal operations, allowing for differentiating levels of exposure to and dependancy on any one of the ten sectors of CI.

Further, in support of the need for a plan, we queried participants on the types of plans they had created for their household, offering them options that covered the spectrum of possible events that would create a disruption.

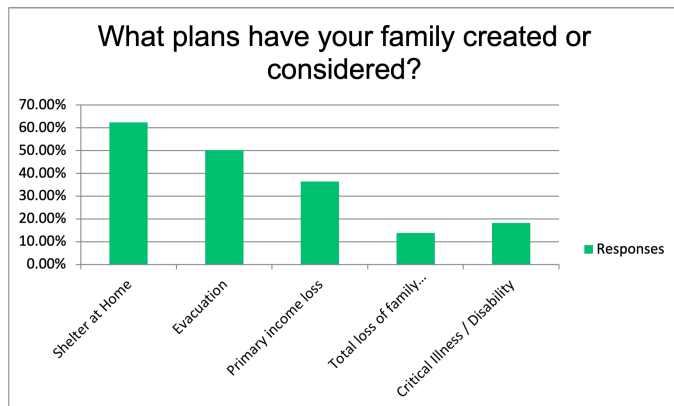
Our survey found that at least 68% of the population felt somewhat or very prepared for an emergency situation, with only 14% feeling somewhat or very unprepared.



Our survey found that 55% of respondents could not last beyond three days, with only 18% being able to support their household at least 14 days.



We found that all respondents had at least one plan, with 28% having both shelter in place and evacuation plans. Three percent had created all five plans.



Noted the fourth option is “total loss of family home”. Of the 68% who felt very or somewhat prepared, only 31% were capable of navigating a disruption for at least two weeks, the recommended minimum level for a household. This may indicate a gap between a respondent’s sense of preparedness and their capability to act in times of disruption. This may be due to views related to the expected impact of a disaster, a level of self confidence or belief in the public sector’s capability and capacity to respond. No data in this survey supports one conclusion. Future iterations of this survey will include questions designed to understand why individuals believe they are prepared, what they consider when determining their household level of preparedness.

Of the 14% indicating they were somewhat or not prepared for an emergency situation, 14% indicated being capable of meeting the standard of navigating a

situation for a period of 14 days, half the rate of those who believed they were prepared. This is a stronger correlation between a negative belief and their perceived ability to sustain themselves, likely due to the relationship of negative self confidence and their perception, but one internal is insufficient to conclude causation. This will be included in later iterations to understand why individuals believe they are not prepared, and whether there are certain events that overshadow, to determine if one major possible calamity interferes with the respondent's ability to consider other and less events they could navigate.

Influence of Demographics

Of the 31% of respondents who indicated a household income of less than \$51,000, 36% have very or somewhat high levels of trust in their community, 36% (not the same individuals) considered themselves very or somewhat prepared and 42% of that population were capable of navigating a situation beyond 3 days.

Of the 30% of respondents who indicated a household income between \$51,000 and \$100,000, 40% have very or somewhat high levels of trust in their community, with 37% considered themselves very or somewhat prepared and 30% of that population were capable of navigating a situation beyond 3 days.

Of the 39% of respondents who indicated a household income over \$100,000, 59% have very or somewhat high levels of trust in their community, 82% considered themselves very or somewhat prepared and 43% of that population were capable of navigating a situation beyond 3 days.

There were no discernible relationships between a gender and any of the findings.

Of the 15% of respondents aged 18-25, 19% have very or somewhat high levels of trust in their community, 62% considered themselves very or somewhat prepared and 41% of that population were capable of navigating a situation beyond 3 days.

Of the 16% of the respondents aged 60+, 62% have very or somewhat high levels of trust in their community, 98% considered themselves very or somewhat prepared and 36% of that population were capable of navigating a situation beyond 3 days.

Conclusion

This first survey provided insight into the state of preparedness in North America and the feelings about trust, a sense of belonging and social capital. One notable indication was the lack of correlation between a respondent's belief in their preparedness and their ability to navigate a disruption that removes access to one or more sectors of CI. Future iterations of these studies completed over the next six months will test a different battery of questions, holding the demographic questions and population constant.

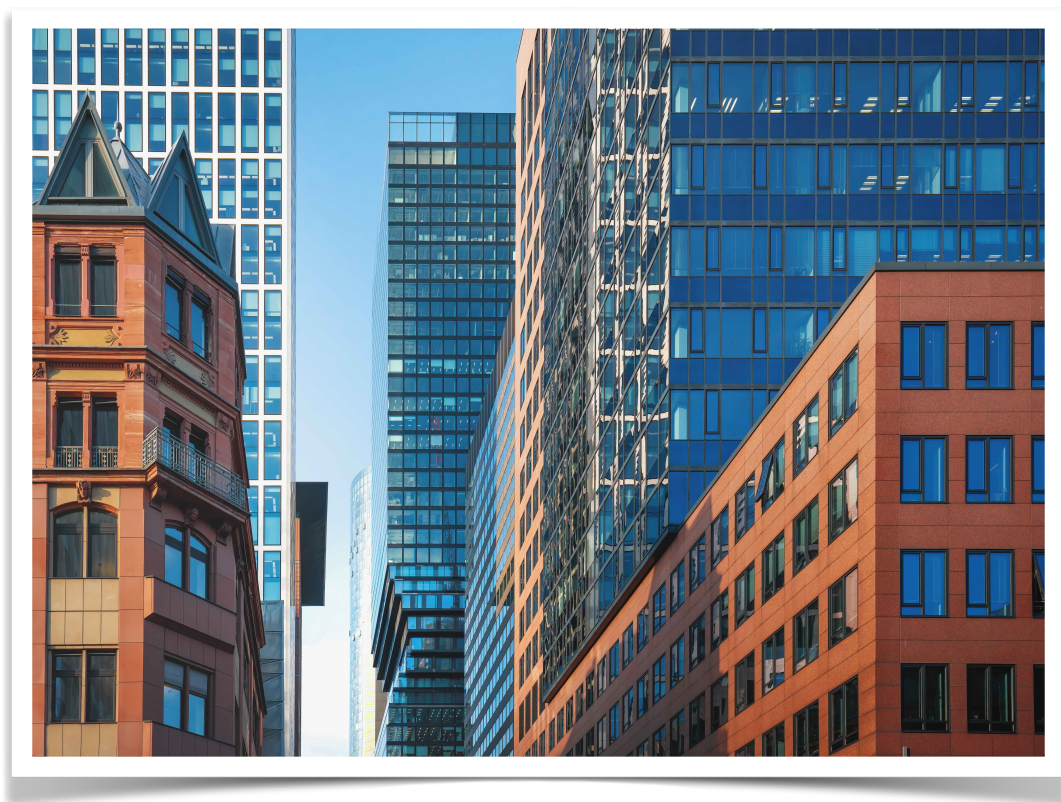
Discussion about question formulation, sampling methodology and construction of the survey instrument will be argued online on the LinkedIn forum for disaster researchers.

A further study will be published in the February and June issue, with the larger cross-Canada survey to be completed for publication in the September 2025 issue.

Preparedness & Real Estate

Alec Cranston
Senior Advisor
Cushman & Wakefield Atlantic

Being prepared is an underlying theme in Commercial Real Estate (CRE). From the perspective of a tenant, or business, when you first sign your lease for your space - whether it be office, retail industrial, land or flex - there are many factors to consider that are within your control, such as your term length, requested rental rates or approximate size of your space. Far too often, however, we do not think about the factors that we cannot control. That is where being prepared as a CRE tenant comes in.



When you sign your lease, you agree to pay a set lease rate, each month, for a set amount of time. This lease rate likely has set increases over the term of your lease, which are pre negotiated. Sometimes 5-10 years in the future. This is good if you can secure a rate with minimal increases and, if there are increases, it is not by much. The market is hard to predict 5-10 years from now, but by locking in a long-term deal, you provide both yourself and the owner of the

building with security. You are willing to take the risk on of having a long-term lease and they are willing to take the risk on of locking in rents for the next half decade or decade. If you are successful as a business, it is a win/win for both parties.

But just like you cannot predict what the market will be like in 5-10, you really cannot predict where the world will be in 5-10 years. More specifically, the country or city you live in. If a natural disaster occurred that affected your ability to get to your space, are you still obligated to pay rent? Depending on what you have negotiated in your lease, you may have to. Some landlords will provide rental abatement, meaning they will forgo your rent for a certain period, but rarely in perpetuity. They still have a mortgage to pay and therefore they still need to show rental income – they cannot let you have the space for free forever. Do you have a plan for when this rental abatement period is up? If you must continue paying rent without the ability to produce income from your business – things can go downhill extremely fast. Negotiate a fair and lengthy rental abatement period, should it need to come into play due to factors beyond your control (we will address this further later in the article).

Another factor in terms of CRE preparation is a Termination Option. These are not always granted by landlords and rarely are they free and clear. If you have negotiated a termination option, it is likely a one-time option that must occur after a set period of time in your lease has passed. For example, you have a one-time termination option that can be used after Year 3 of your lease. If this termination option is taken, the Tenant must pay to the landlord any unamortized costs as penalty for termination of the lease. An unamortized cost, for example, would be any leasehold improvements done to the space by the landlord, or any commissions paid to real estate advisors in the initial transactions. While it doesn't sound optimal to have to pay a penalty for terminating your lease, that penalty could be worth it if it was between paying rent on a space you couldn't produce income from for the unforeseeable future, or paying a one-time fee to get out of the lease and reevaluate what is next for your business. If you want to be even more prepared, keep a fund of the approximate amount that penalty is equal to, on the side, for dire situations. If things go sideways, you want to have that option – without needing to scramble or go into debt. Plan ahead and negotiate a favourable termination option in your lease.

A very important clause to look out for in your leases is a Force Majeure clause – which relates to unexpected events such as war, acts of God, natural disasters, acts of terrorism or pandemics – to name a few. It essentially relieves either party from performing its duties under the lease agreement if events out of their control, such as the above, become a reality. Typically, neither party would be liable in damages or have the right to terminate the lease for any delay or default caused by such conditions. However, you want to make sure this clause is in

your favour, as sometimes the wording will omit your rental payments as being included in this clause (i.e. you are still responsible to pay rent). Make sure you negotiate a fair and just Force Majeure clause that benefits you just as much as it benefits the landlord.

If the unpredictable happens and you can no longer use your space, can your business still run and be successful?” Having a plan to “keep the wheels turning” is essential in CRE. Work from home, hybrid models, essential staff only – these are just some of the solutions – but each solution must be tailored to your business’ needs. Do not wait to formulate this plan, make it now. When the unpredictable happens, life can spin on a dime and there will be a hundred other things that you need to attend to. Already having a plan to continue your business operations is essential – and knowing how to implement it efficiently is key. There are a lot of factors outside of your control, but how you run your business to achieve success is within it.

To summarize preparation when it comes to commercial real estate – you can never be over prepared. Take a thorough look through your current lease, apply an unpredictable event - such as a government shutdown, natural disaster, or war - and see where your pitfalls are. Address them now and plan. Speak to an advisor. Speak to your neighbouring tenants. If you are locked into your current lease for awhile, that is OK. Make note of the areas you want to address when it comes time to renew your lease or when you move to a new location. Identify your current areas of weakness and plan for the worst. Being prepared in commercial real estate will not only set your business up for continue success, but it will give you, personally, peace of mind knowing that if life goes sideways – you have a plan for your business and can focus more attention on your family and their safety.

Canada's First National Conversation on Preparedness and Climate Adaptation

Jeff Donaldson, PhD

Canada is the second largest nation on earth, comprising just under 10 million square kilometres. An eclectic gathering of the world's peoples, with the largest city Toronto anointed the most ethnically diverse city on the globe. This nation possesses immense potential, but sits at a crossroads of a changing economic, political and climate landscape. We host all known hazards, with several locations exposed to multiple simultaneous threats from natural and industrial risk. There have been many gatherings of interested parties, but Canada has never challenged the pressing issues in one place. In Ottawa, with the leaves changing colour to begin the march towards our iconic winter, we began that national conversation. The Canadian Emergency Preparedness and Climate Adaptation (CEPCA) conference was an opportunity for all those with a vested interest to assemble, to indicate through presence a common desire and commitment to improve the human condition in Canada.

This is the story, from the inside.

Background

On January 2, 2024 I received an invitation to join the Governing Body (GB), a group of stalwart leaders in the field from across the nation who would be charged with advising the host, DMG Events, to gather the necessary voices to initiate a national conversation on preparedness and climate adaptation. I viewed this as an incredible honour and opportunity, to collect the ideas that are created at regional events - DEMCON, Disaster Forum, Atlantic Emergency Management Conference and collate those into a program for our first national discussion. The GB met several times in the seven months leading up to the convention, leveraging our networks and connections to seed interest across Canada's industries and governing sectors. This initial conference was seen as an opportunity to cement the need for a place, an annual gathering to continue the momentum, to move the issues through the idea, agenda setting, options analysis, implementation and evaluation stages of policy.

The format of a strategic conference grounded in panel discussions facilitated a number of important debates. Questions of policy, process, governance structures were put to a number of prominent voices in their fields, allowing for challenges to the status quo, planting the potential future paradigmatic changes

that many see as necessary advancements across the pillars of disaster and emergency management.



The inclusion of climate adaptation was critical to bring the nation together, as much of our discourse over the decade has been a fight against climate change, the reality is that the climate is under stress, the world is becoming hotter and we need to adapt. This doesn't replace the policy and ideas to reduce contributing factors, but it concentrates on how we set our nation on a path to change with the climate, to allow our societies to thrive and prosper despite the changes. This was a new theme, something not present on the national stage.

Many of the same experts are involved in climate adaptation and preparedness, some believe they represent a symbiotic relationship, in that adopting preparedness includes making the necessary adjustments required by a changing climate. The convention was initiated to find this common ground, to create a collision space for those two fields to expand networks, build relationships, to foster the social capital necessary to improve the lives of Canadians.

The technical conference portion created a space for industry to demonstrate their commitment and involvement in the sector, as well as a flurry of short but profound presentations at four simultaneous theatres. The schedule was to provide a stage for a diverse set of perspectives on wildfires, flood management, disaster response and recovery, as well as climate adaptation and

innovation. The intent was to ensure that all interests had a platform, a place to argue their positions, advocate for initiatives and most importantly, create discourse. We need to expand the frequency and reach of conversations on climate and preparedness in Canada, the technical conference offered a continuous presence of ideas.

People

The first iteration of any national event is an exercise in hope, not due to lack of planning and coordination, but that marketing is successful in drawing out the key voices from across the nation. Often these events have slow momentum, where many make the commitment to join late in the delivery - providing a few sleepless nights for the organizers and GB, but by end September, a quorum emerged. Arguably difficult to quantify when a sufficient number of participants is deemed representative of the population, but at slightly over 2200, this convention was the largest emergency management and climate change related event in Canada.

From a governance perspective, we were privileged to have the head of the United Nations Americas Office for Disaster Risk Reduction speak in person. This presence speaks volumes to the value of this national conversation, to have such a distinguished guest to launch the first day was noteworthy. The host city of Ottawa and the province of Ontario each committed senior ministerial and public servant representation. A clear demonstration of their commitment to supporting preparedness and climate adaptation, many other provinces sent representatives and municipalities participated from across the nation. The notable absence was the Federal Government, who chose to send two staff members to observe.

When the head of the UN Office responsible for this theme travels to Ottawa to present in person, demonstrating the importance to humanity, not just in Canada, but globally and our national government is absent, this is an embarrassment. I say this as not a member of the GB, but a passionate voice in preparedness and climate adaptation, the lack of commitment from our national government on climate and emergency management was unfortunate. Ignorance was not a possible rationale, a flurry of invitations were provided across the political and public service dimensions. There was simply a lack of interest, with no explanation provided, their message to those of us in the trenches of preparedness and climate adaptation, as well as to Canada, was crystal clear.

Academia demonstrated their commitment to the fields, across the strategic panels and in the technical conference. Interesting research topics across the domains were presented, debates were had and many connections were made

between preparedness and climate adaptation. As well, many post-secondary institutions had booths to market their programs and foster interest in advanced education. As associate faculty in a graduate program, I smiled throughout as I listened to students discuss their research and to hear ideas I either didn't previously consider or had opposing views. We're at risk of losing discourse, of abandoning the traditional stages for debate, the places where those of us that disagree argue passionately, but professionally. That is one of the secondary benefit of CEPCA, it provides the stage for that discourse, for opposing views to collide and struggle. Solutions are not a binary choice, but the product of intense discussion.

This national convention provided the opportunity for many who would not normally meet, from similar fields but different regions. Canada is really a number of regions gathered in a nation, where previous and future local conventions on these ideas continue, addressing issues and hazards specific to a bounded population. Hurricanes are not a national risk, but have national impacts. I've attended regional and local conventions to understand these issues from the coalface, from perspectives not possible at the strategic level. These regional gatherings are the furnace to the national conversation, CEPCA is a place where we bring together the regional challenges, to create a national platform to address preparedness and climate adaptation.

The private sector has a critical role to play in climate adaptation and preparedness. Innovation doesn't occur in other sectors of society as the public sector, NGOs and civil society are not incentivized to produce rapid technological invention, the underlying key to successful adaptation to climate change and to modernizing preparedness education. We've long had an ideological barrier in emergency management against the profit motive, fearing gouging or believing the private sector was incapable of an altruistic interest in improving the human condition in Canada. At CEPCA leading members of the private sector were present, sponsored the event and argued for their voice at the table. To be considered as equal partners in the societal struggle to adapt to our changing climate and to increase awareness of investments in business continuity and preparedness education. All of the equipment and resources consumed in emergency response and recovery are created by and maintained through the private sector.

Place

Ottawa is the seat of national power and the headquarters of many of the national partners in preparedness and climate adaptation. A logical location to foster increased social capital, to build trusting relationships and to create the enabling environment for different views and parties to collide. While there are more populous locations in the nation, there is little argument to moving the

conference to an alternate location in the future. The next iteration will be held in the same location, at a similar time in 2025.

Themes

I attended what I could, across the two days of the conference, this list is not in an order of importance, the comments are my reflections of what I heard, not a presentation of exact or specific organizational positions and ideas.

Common Standards

Across many panels and within a number of technical presentations, a common voice emerged calling for cross-nation standards within EM. From a formal decision on the use of incident command / management system (ICS / IMS) and which version of each, to response and recovery programmatic minimums, many groups found this to be a real and impactful barrier to coordination. Disasters are not geographically bounded, they cross jurisdictional borders and require the coordination of systems from different government levels. When teams from one province deploy to assist others, they often have a learning curve in adopting to the local variation of ICS/IMS, or a unique one-off process. Common terminology, internal processes and administration do lead to synergies and reduce the barriers to rapid assimilation of external support teams. Disasters start and end at the local level, but successful coordination across the four pillars leads to better in-crisis response and post event outcomes. Noted that Canada has had a framework to find a solution for decades, yet one has yet to emerge.

Resource Allocation

Irrespective of your ideological or political frame, every field in Canada is advocating for more resources to address their issues. EM is no different, there are profound calls for significant investments in mitigation, response and for some, a new national effort. Many voices at CEPAC spoke of the value in investing early, to mitigate risk at a large scale payoff in response requirements. Almost in unison, the call for all levels of government to assume a greater role in supporting the advancement of EM and climate adaptation through the allocation of improved resource allocation. The arguments were not simple a call for more, but a few very well defined areas where a smaller allocation could result in outsized benefits, including a national coordination authority for the movement of provincial and territorial resources similar to the Canadian Interagency Forest Fire Center (CIFFC). The argument was not to establish a command and control mechanism, but a methodology and system to allow for the identification of available resources outside a jurisdiction and then coordination their deployment.

Humanitarian Workforce / Civilian Response Agency

In 2021 the Federal government established a national humanitarian workforce program to respond to COVID-19 and other large scale emergencies. The intent was for organizations that had a cross-nation presence to be able to access funding to support response efforts in the public health and EM spectrums. The mission was to provide a formalization of the not for profit sectors response effort across Canada, facilitated through the request for assistance (RFA) process and reimbursed through the disaster financial assistance arrangements (DFAA). The argument put forth is that the current funding expires in 2025-2026, leaving many of the organizations that access the program unable to make long term commitments to staffing core structures, equipment acquisitions and training personnel. Team Rubicon specifically highlighted their difficulty is offering a compelling commitment to key staff, as their funding model requires the involvement of the program. They receive about 80% of their response expenses from DFAA and the remainder are covered by private donations. Without the DFAA model under the humanitarian workforce, their future operations are unsustainable.

A call for a national civilian response agency is grounded in the idea that a coordinated preparedness education and skill generation program would increase the self-reliance of residents and reduce the immediate demands on response agencies. The discussion was on what model, a version of the civilian emergency response team (CERT) or the German government system, a new Canadian version, or a series of regional training initiatives. The common foundation was a belief that Canadians are not accepting a sufficient responsibility and burden for their disaster readiness, placing an unmanageable responsibility on the public sector.

A few very well articulated voices spoke of the synergy between these movements, where a more resilient public through some form of enhanced preparedness education and a long term commitment to a national humanitarian workforce would collectively reduce the burden on the public sector. Further, in times of limited resource allocation, this might be a strategy to move the goalposts forward without demanding significant additional resources.

Climate Adaptation

Nature based solutions were offered as reminder that our ecosystems are capable of supporting efforts to mitigate disaster loss. The argument is to invest in the natural landscape to protect the environment and ourselves through sustainably managing protected spaces. Grounded in the idea that biodiversity is a gift from nature, that these systems emerged over millennia to flourish in local climates. Indigenous voices and history support leveraging the power

inherent in natural spaces, protecting them to preserve sustainable food and water production. Often lost in the discussions is the reminder that the human species is resident in the environment, we are not in control of it. Reminders were provided that nature is flood control, biodiversity is a strength in our systems and that the built environment is altering nature's ability to provide for and protect humanity. I will wholeheartedly admit that I am woefully ignorant in this field and commit to increasing my personal knowledge.

Technology

Industry creates innovation, they are at the forefront of new technologies that have a use in EM. The technical theatres were full of disruptive ideas in the employment of drones, connectivity and a host of breakthroughs across the field. There were side discussions on leveraging artificial intelligence (AI) platforms for conducting data analysis, using AI to scrape social media posts throughout an event and potentially using AI mapping software to improve the command operating picture (COP) for participating response agencies.

Many companies brought their latest products to CEPCA to demonstrate their commitment to improving disaster response and recovery. There are very limited opportunities for public servants to interact with corporations on new ideas, platforms and strategies. CEPCA provided the collision environment for this to happen, and many new networks were created.

Data

One very loud and concurrent theme throughout the conference was access to realtime data, sharing knowledge across the sectors and building a common understanding. Academics and researchers consistently call for access to data, with industry seeking evidence-based solutions to problems. The intent is to reduce the impact of beliefs and opinions and to champion ideas supported through data. Further, the discussion included significantly improving the Canadian Disaster Database, which is homogeneously viewed in its current state as providing limited value. A common repository for data, free for all to access, to leverage the research being conducted in academia, think tanks and the private sector. All three arenas of research are necessary, one not more influential or important than the other, but collectively provide a robust resource to practitioners and industry. There was some differences of opinion on where this repository should reside, but very much a needed advancement in EM.

Resilience

A common thread throughout all the ideas mentioned and the plethora I was not party to, is resilience. While the term has dozens of definitions, we can safely assume that a more resilient society demands less of public services in a crisis,

is impacted for a shorter duration and has better post event outcomes. Each one of the ideas debated at CEPCA contributes to resilience, which is arguable a by-product of other initiatives. Throughout the two days, there was a consistent belief that building resilience is a cross-societal initiative. It cannot be created through a programmatic initiative from government, industry or the not for profit sector, but via a collective series of ideas and strategies that together will improve the human condition.

Most voices believed that there needs to be some organizational commitment to resilience, in the form of a national council. Not a decision making body, but one where the government, corporations, national not for profits and leading civil voices meet to discuss and debate priorities in the field. A place where there is a continuous engagement of thoughts and strategies to improve post event outcomes. This idea made several delegates smile, mainly because it was not another layer of bureaucracy, but an idea generation system, a place for all voices to be heard.

My Arguments Going Forward

CEPCA is a necessary element in creating a synergy in national efforts to advance the agenda across the pillars of emergency management. I've often said that preparedness is where the response and recovery fight is won and this conference reinforced that conviction. These few suggestions are my contribution for where I believe efforts should be concentrated to achieve the greatest outcome.

Governance

Governance encompasses the policies, process and structures that facilitate the administration of society. The goal of governance is to allow for the creation of ideas, translate those into policy and deliver benefits to the population.

In Canada, our national governance structure in emergency management (EM) is exemplary. The Federal, Provincial and Territorial (FPT) framework established shortly after Public Safety Canada (PSC) was created in 2003 allows for the successful functioning of a governance system. The structural foundation within the Federal Government is the Directors General Emergency Management Policy Committee (DGEMPC), where DG from across departments meet to share ideas and develop policy, this committee supports higher committees at the Associate Deputy Minister (ADM) and Deputy Minister (DM) level. At the FPT level, the Senior Officials Responsible for Emergency Management (SOREM) includes participation from all PT and PSC, gathering to discuss priorities, establish agendas and move policy along to the ADM responsible for EM and the Standing Committee of Ministers Responsible. There are other supporting

national organizations, including the Domestic Group on Emergency Management (DGEM) who are national voices for voluntary agencies in the EM field, as well as the Critical Infrastructure National Cross-Sector Forum (CINCSF) and the Canadian Risk and Hazards Network (CRHNet).

This fruit salad of acronyms functions well, the SOREM provides the discussion and advocacy piece, the forum for cross-national issues of local and common importance to be presented and discussed. This allows for policy agenda setting to move issues through to the ADM, DM and eventually to the annual Minister's Standing Committee for decision and publication.

The Canadian Constitution Act of 1982 delineated responsibilities into Federal or Provincial arenas, leaving those excluded and emerging issues to be governed through the convention of cooperative federalism. This requires cooperation, coordination, debate and eventual compromise to create a pan-Canadian policy under these conditions. EM was not delineated in the Constitution, hence it requires the support of an PFT framework to be successful. Arguably beneficial to all, the cooperation created and eventual compromise insulates EM from political and ideological interference, in that a change in government at any level of Canada is unable to unilaterally change the operations, authority and methodologies used in the field.

Across Canada's other FPT frameworks EM stands as a stalwart example of how to move an important and pressing issue forward. The EM FPT has produced multiple important documents, strategies and national plans on climate adaptation, implementing the Sendai Framework, the National Emergency Response System and others.

My argument is that the framework is sound and appropriate. If it has not produced the results that someone believes is necessary, the unsuccessful idea is either not held as a national priority at SOREM and at the DM level, or the wrong humans have been sent to represent the idea. In either case, the FPT framework in Canada is an exemplary model for creating national standards, agreements and processes in EM.

I absolutely concur with the floated idea of a national preparedness or resilience council, a body of leading Canadian industries, civil agencies, not for profit sector and public servants to debate how we increase our collective readiness. Not another level of governance, but a council similar to DGEM and CINCSF.

Resource Allocation

The challenge is that EM is at the Cabinet table in a struggle against other competing issues - healthcare, education, childcare, national defence and a host of other actors. At the national level and across the world, governments are

limiting expenditures. The opportunity for EM to garner a piece of an expanding public pie is past. At best, EM will receive one-time event related or targeted investments. In essence, the reality is that EM will need to innovate and expand influence with existing resources. This is not a call for doing more with less, this is an opportunity to consider options.

The 150 debate. I had this discussion with a few individuals at the KPMG sponsored event at the end of day one. EM governance - from structural organization, authority assignment and policy documentation is an evolving beast. Significant efforts are required to amend even the simplest of tasks. In theoretical frames, EM has evolved into incrementalism, the slow, methodical changing of public policy in order to limit the harm caused to affected parties throughout a change process. Historical institutionalism is the governing theory, where actors assume the structured role and act within those roles, they remain true to their “job description” and rarely embrace radical ideas and change. The 150 debate is a challenge to consider if you had the number of full time equivalents (FTE) in a system, and you had no policy, authority or structural limitations, how would you build it? Often posed to newer entrants to the field, the 150 debate encourages innovation - ideas that call for restructuring positions, moving authorities and re-allocating the existing resources in a new framework that leads to better post even outcomes, more synergy - all within the existing resource allocation framework. While the 150 debate, whose number is an arbitrary figure, is grounded in systemic change, it is useful to local organizations as well.

Structural changes to modernize governance systems at the municipal and regional levels benefit from periodic reviews. I’ve consistently recommended these in provinces, as they hold complete authority over municipal and county systems, therefore are able to unilaterally introduce new frameworks, resource allocations and authority matrix.

Summary

CEPCA was a unique opportunity to bring together a series of voices in EM and climate adaptation; it was a profound success. All initial efforts have challenges, there were some minor issues throughout the conference that will be ameliorated in future iterations, The over 2000 souls who dedicated their time and resources is proof that a national conversation is warranted.

We need all voices, from all corners of society to converge to address critical issues facing society. CEPCA is a national framework discussion, it leverages the necessary work in the regional events, it is a place where governments, corporations, not for profits and civil actors converge to build Canadian resilience. I was proud to be involved and am committed to supporting 2025.

The single most notable takeaway from this event is the enthusiasm. Delegates understood the assignment, they know we collectively face daunting issues, but to the person all I found was a desire to assist, to be part of the solution. The commitment of those with whom I had the fortune to discuss was memorable. Canada is in great hands, we've got this, let's not lose momentum.

Pro Patria

Preparedness and the Arts Community

Every issue we examine a different medium, we've looked at books, podcasts and this issue, we're discussing the involvement of the arts community in the preparedness journey.

Music is the universal language, transcending differences and uniting us all, it tells the story of our lives, is a remembrance tool for oral societies and throughout our lives, certain musical interludes bring great memories. The performing arts, the brilliance of choreographed movements to incredible music have been the foundation of entertainment throughout humanity.

What follows is a brief expose on resilience and emergency / disaster relief related organizations present in the arts community. A fascinating level of focus on building community, social networks and investing in supporting each other. The arts community serves as an example of what is possible when we open our eyes to all sectors of society, not only the ones with lights and sirens.



Performing Arts Readiness (PAR) is dedicated to bringing the preparedness message to those in the performing arts community. This initiative is funded by

the Mellon Foundation and utilizes an all-hazards approach to disaster and emergency preparedness. The intent is to foster a conversation about how vulnerable arts organizations are, in the they are funded by the public audience. A loss in access to an audience can have catastrophic effects on the organization. The goal of PAR is to facilitate a rapid restart of production and resume income generation as quickly as possible, providing a vital mental health and enjoyment service to the affected population. Much research has been done on the value of music and the arts to recovery operations.

PAR facilities grants to the arts community, in 2023-2024 alone, grants of up to \$7250 were awarded to 38 organizations in support of organizational preparedness and continuity of operations plans. Further grants up to \$25000 were provided in support to building new or expanding networks designed to facilitate the support of arts organizations throughout the disaster cycle. Since 2020, PAR has supported dozens of grants across the United States, to contribute to a more resilient society.

The National Coalition for Arts Preparedness and Emergency Response (NCAPER) was created in 2006 as a result of impacts from disasters to the arts community. It encompasses volunteer organizations across all levels of governance that are capable of offering assistance to disaster affected populations in the arts community. Through the provision of training and support, they advocate for changes to policy and administration to provide greater support to affected cultural and arts organizations. NCAPER has created guides for response and user frameworks for accessing public support in a declared emergency.

NCAPER operates in coordination with the Entertainment Community Fund, formerly the Actors Fund, who since 1882 have been supporting actors and entertainers throughout their lives. They contribute to building resilience in the arts and support individuals and organizations with emergency funding and assistance in times of crisis.

The Craft Emergency Relief Fund (CERF+) has been serving the craft artist community for over 40 years, providing insights, guidance and support through preparedness education, emergency relief and advocacy. CERF+ offers grants of \$1000 for individual artists to ready their studios to be more resilient in the face of emergencies and disasters, as well as grants of up to \$3000 for artists facing emergency or disaster conditions. These grants are raised in the craft arts community, an incredible example of building a resilient network, a supportive relationship that provides for those affected in times of crisis. They've authored a comprehensive artist studio protection guide.

The New York Foundation for the Arts (NYFA) created a directory of resources for artists and the community across the United States. They collaborate with the Robert Rauschenberg Foundation to provide emergency grants for dancers, as well as support for those affected by medical emergencies. As well, they maintain a set of resources on emergency preparedness and business continuity.

Arguably many disaster practitioners are unaware of the extent to which preparedness efforts are embedded in arts and performance networks. These are important voices in our communities, who should be at the discussion table, on coordination councils and included in idea debates. The arts community is often not considered an organized sphere in governance discussions or as one with resilience at its core, but hopefully this quick assessment of a few, but notable organizations, will alter that belief.