

# Puerto Rico Data: The Big Picture

A BROAD CONTEXT OF PR'S DISASTER(S) AFTER A LOT OF THINGS, INCLUDING MARIA

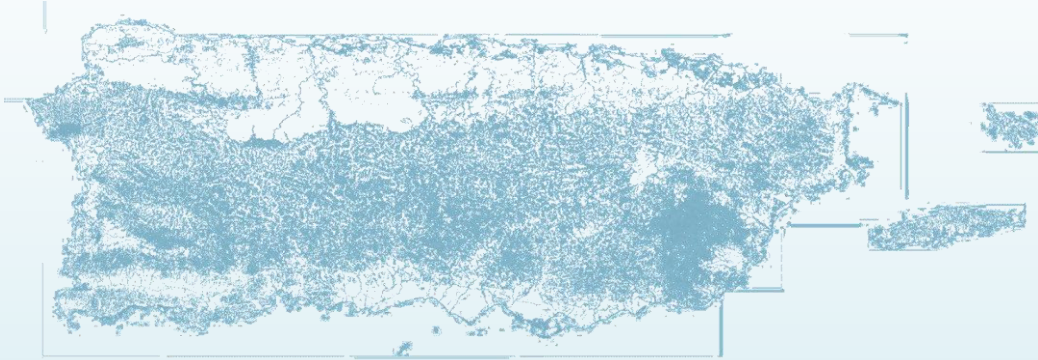


**Plan. David J. Carrasquillo-Medrano, PPL**  
**Urban, Environmental & Community Planner**  
**Puerto Rican Planning Society - President**

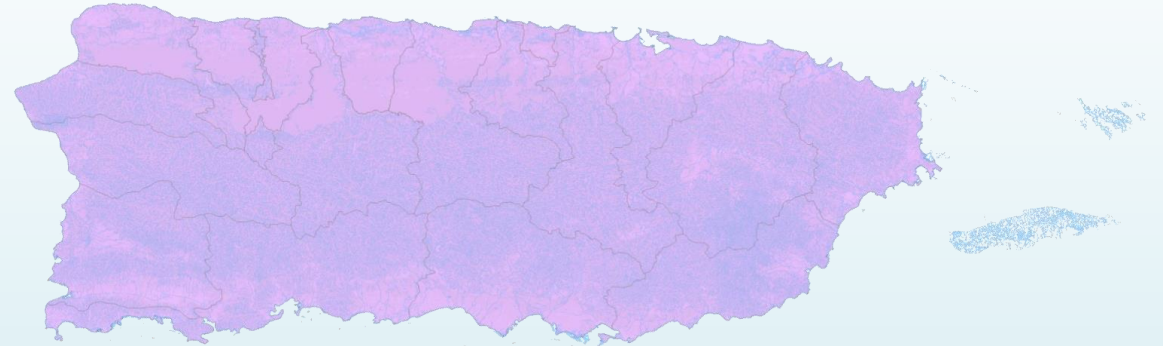
# What do we know?

1. There is a lot of data. It exists.
2. Data is not accessible.
3. Data is not information.
4. There is a huge void or lack of information, especially useful info.
5. People are uninformed, or even worse, misinformed.
6. We have a responsibility to make data into accessible information.

## Rivers and Tributaries...



## Watersheds...



## Landslides Risk...



## Flood Risk...







# Power Generation Centers...

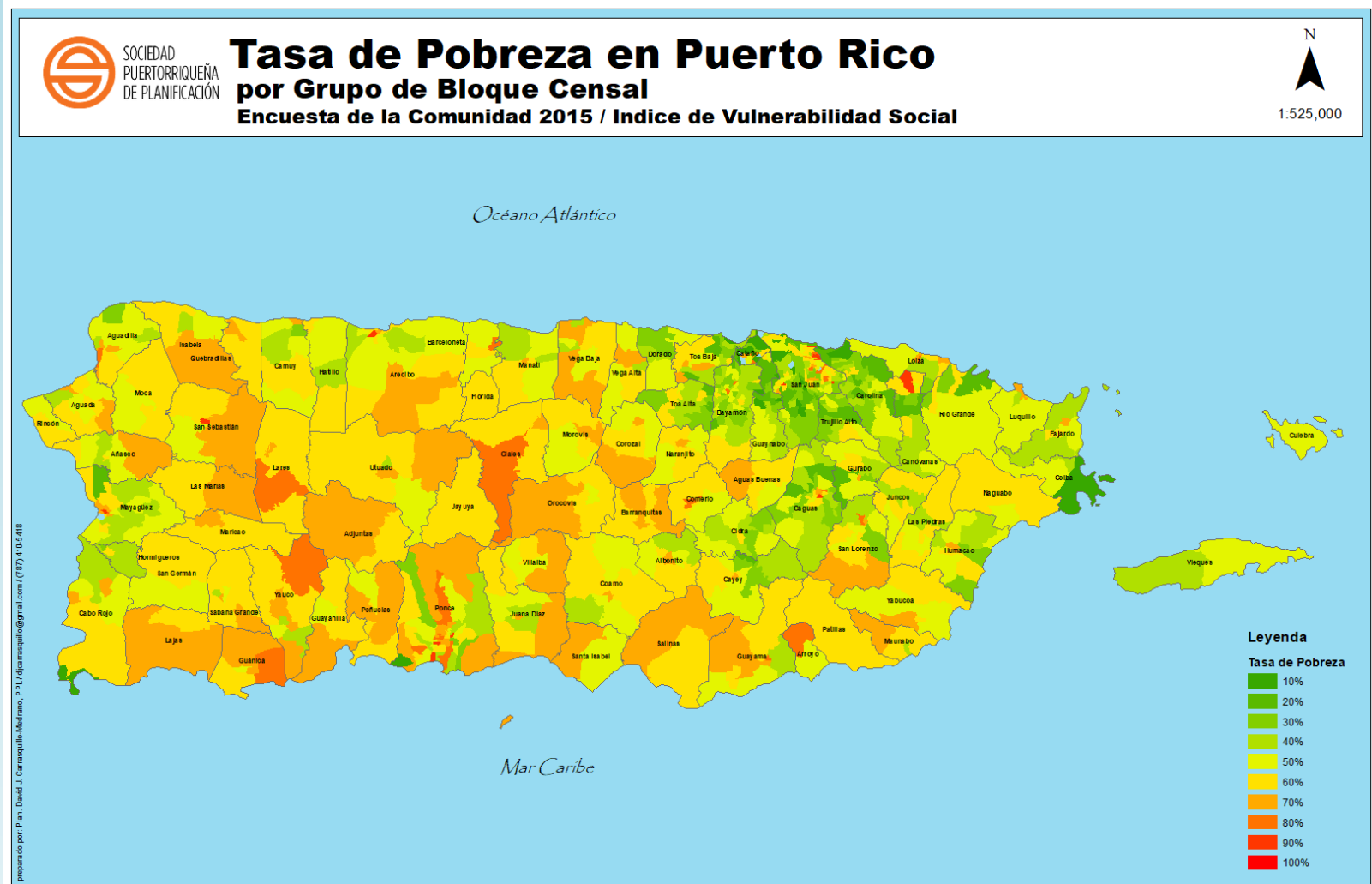


# Puerto Rico's Electrical Transmission Grid





# Puerto Rico's Census Block Group with Most Poverty



# Puerto Rico-scale Land Use Plan



## Mapa de Clasificación - Puerto Rico Plan de Uso de Terrenos Junta de Planificación de Puerto Rico 2015

N  
1:550,000



## These plans also exist...

- PR's Land Use Plan
- Municipal Land Use Plans
- Consolidated Code
- Resource Management Plans
- Multi-Risk Mitigation Plans

...among many other.



# How will Climate Change look like?...

- Less frequent, yet stronger precipitation events.
- Concentration of precipitation events in coastal zones, instead of the high grounds.
- Shorter, yet more violent hurricane seasons.
- Longer hot and dry periods yearly.
- Short and fast transitions between hot season and floods.

CONSEJO DE CAMBIO CLIMÁTICO



# What are we doing?

1. We are gathering, collecting and bettering existing data.
2. We are sharing the data and making accessible the data.
3. We are overlaying and staking the data.
4. We are analyzing the data.
5. We are making information with the data.
6. We are sharing the information to everyone.

# What are we REALLY doing?

- ✓ Georeferencing FEMA/HUD/DV Data
- ✓ Updating Vulnerability Index
- ✓ Lifting Closed Schools Data
- ✓ Mapping Infrastructure Data
- ✓ Mapping NYC-OEM Inspections
- ✓ Advocacy Efforts for Communities
- ✓ Fact Checking
- ✓ Requesting Information (FOIAs)
- ✓ Educating Journalists
- ✓ Celebrating Stakeholders Meetings
- ✓ Learning and Visiting Other Disaster Sites
- ✓ Recommending Public Policy
- ✓ Participating on Public Hearings
- ✓ Writing Articles
- ✓ Serve as Steward for Interest Groups
- ✓ MAKING TONS AND TONS OF MAPS!!!

# FEMA Foia Request..



SOCIEDAD PUERTORRIQUEÑA DE PLANIFICACIÓN  
PO Box 40297 San Juan PR 00940-0297  
www.spp-pr.org - junta@spp-pr.org

February 2, 2018

To: Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)  
William B. "Brock" Long - FEMA Administrator  
FEMA FOIA Offices  
FEMA Information Management Division  
FOIA Request  
520 C Street, S.W. Mailstop 3172  
Washington, D.C. 20472

## Re: Freedom of Information Act Request

Dear FEMA's Information Management Division Offices,

This is a request under the Freedom of Information Act.

I, David José Carrasquillo Medrano, as president of the Puertorrican Planning Society, (or SPP for Spanish acronym) and as citizen of Puerto Rico, request that a copy of the following documents regarding Hurricane Maria (DR-4339) be provided to me:

- **Spreadsheet Data (Format: Excel/xls or csv)**
  - Master Table with all DR-4339's claims for the Individual Assistance Program. (All PR)
  - Master Table with all DR-4339's claims for the Housing Assistance Program. (All PR)
  - Master Table with all DR-4339's claims for the Public Assistance Program. (State and Local)
  - Master Table with all DR-4339's data for the Transitional Sheltering Assistance Program
  - Master Table with all DR-4339's claims for the Rental Assistance Program
  - \*This information would not include personal data (i.e. name and social security number), but is extremely important that includes address and parcel number, for it to be usable and reliable data for decision making and spatial analysis. This data should include inspection data related to the claims.
- **GIS Data (Format: Geodatabase or Shapefiles / Projection: NAD83 / State Plane / Meters)**
  - Master Layer with all DR-4339's claims for the Individual Assistance Program. (All PR)
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- **Reports (Format: PDFs and/or Excel and/or Word)**
  - Totals for every FEMA statistic, by program, collected at State Level (All PR)
  - Totals for every FEMA statistic, by program, collected by FEMA Region (All PR)
  - Totals for every FEMA statistic, by program, collected by Municipality (All PR)
  - Totals for every FEMA statistic, by program, collected by Zip Code (All PR)
  - Totals for every FEMA statistic, by program, collected by Neighborhood (Barrios) (All PR)
  - \*This information should include every Program request and not related to claims. For example, in addition to the already mentioned programs above, there should be totals for Federal Force Lapatin, Volunteer, Survivor requests, Power Restoration, Search, Transport, Transportation requests, Veterinary/Medical requests, Request and Medical Case requests, Community organizations, Points of Distribution, Contracts, Contracts and Long-Term Recovery Efforts among any other program I've fail to mention.

Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)  
February 2, 2018  
Page 2 of 3

Everything that is being requested through this letter has been asked before to FEMA officials appointed to Puerto Rico (DR-4339). Although we are aware that all this data takes time to process, at the same time this data is too important to guide and drive effective decision-making at all levels including public (state and local), private, NGOs (local and foreign), professionals, communities and individuals. We are also aware that some data will be completed soon, especially all claims, since the deadline for assistance applications was extended until to March 30<sup>th</sup>, 2018. Being stressful in the fact the two (2) or three (3) more months waiting for this information would be detrimental for Puerto Rico and its future, we are kindly asking for the information as it is now and for an update once the data is completed.

We are confident that FEMA will deliver on this to ensure the well-being of the puertorrican people and a proper, balanced and responsible transfer of know-how, tools, data, information and responsibilities towards a long-term recovery and readiness for future occasions and disaster events.

The SPP, because of hurricanes Irma and Maria, and other flooding events that followed, has assumed its responsibility to help, at every scale, free of charge, with the data analysis and information management (especially spatial analysis) required for decision making, resource allocation, policy designing, data visualization, and simple-based population orientation on relief, recovery, mitigation and planning efforts and initiatives. This information has so many practical and scientific uses that would be impossible to list on this request. Yet, we can guarantee that this data will not be used for commercial purposes and no one will profit from its use or distribution. The Puertorrican Planning Society is a non-profit organization founded in 1954 with the mission of represent, defend and advance the interests of professional planners and promote a practice of excellence and social commitment of Planning in Puerto Rico.

In addition to the request itself, we are asking for the enforcement of the Department of Justice's standards for an "Expedited Process". Puerto Rico's case falls all criteria, as follows:

**Standard #1: the lack of expedited treatment could reasonably be expected to pose a threat to someone's life or physical safety;**

• There is a huge number of people living on unsafe settlements, including, but limiting to structural damage, blown or broken roofs, flooded neighborhoods, partially and completely torn down homes, as also destroyed housing units. Although the official count of deaths related to the hurricane does not do justice to reality, it is well known that there is a significant percentage of the population living under unlivable and unsafe conditions. Not having this information would guarantee a hike on the amount of unattended people, possibly causing health problems or death, since the people working on trying to find people in need aren't capable of finding them all.

**Standard #2: an individual will suffer the loss of substantial due process rights, expedition is appropriate. In this regard, a request will not normally be expedited merely because the requester is facing a court deadline in a judicial proceeding;**

• After the hurricane, puertorrican people have been deprived of the most basic services: power, water, communications among many other. The case on the performance of the response to Puerto Rico has been subject of an ongoing watch from the United Nations Human Rights High Commissioner with concerns about the adequacy of the US emergency response noting that "The hurricane has aggravated the island's existing dire situation caused by debt and austerity measures", among many other remarks regarding the proper guarantees of civil rights.

Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)  
February 2, 2018  
Page 3 of 3

**Standard #3: the request is made by a person primarily engaged in disseminating information to the public and the information is urgently needed to inform the public concerning some actual or alleged federal government activity;**

• As president of the SPP is my responsibility to offer the people of Puerto Rico the needed tools to decide for themselves their own future. To know what where the effects of such a devastating event on our island will define everything that happens from now on. The SPP represents the collective of urban, environmental, economic, community and technical planners that work on every agency, municipality, community, organization or group that works with all decision-making processes as well as data and information management. As professionals, we are directly engaged in the dissemination of information through the development of participatory processes, plans, official document, maps, statistics, and many other distributional techniques, including public sites, hearings, TV, radio, newspapers, events, gatherings and social media.

**Standard #4: the subject of the request is widespread and exceptional media interest and the information sought involves possible questions about the government's integrity which affect public confidence;**

• The management of Hurricane Maria has been one of the biggest issues - if not the biggest - that has raised questions in the past year on the public opinion on government's integrity and responsibility to its citizens. This proves to be real through the infinite number of articles and pieces on all newspapers, widespread media and day-to-day life not only in Puerto Rico, but also in the US Mainland and beyond, making this a globally watched disaster event.

I am willing to pay fees for this request, as your protocol establishes if there is an option. Yet, given the nature of this request, we don't see any fee should be applied. So, I request a waiver of all fees for this request.

Disclosure of the requested information to me is in the public interest because it will without a doubt contribute significantly to public understanding of the operations or activities of the government managing DR-4339 and is not in my commercial interest.

Thank you for your consideration of this request. And feel free to contact me at any time to clear up any doubts about any detail. The preferred method would be through my email.

Sincerely,

*David J. Carrasquillo Medrano*

Plan, David J. Carrasquillo Medrano, PPL  
President  
Puertorrican Planning Society  
djcarrasquillo@gmail.com  
#69 Calle Ruiz Belles, Urb. Federal Park, San Juan, PR 00917  
(787) 410-5418

# FEMA FOIA Denial..

February 5, 2018

SENT VIA E-MAIL TO: [djcarraquillo@gmail.com](mailto:djcarraquillo@gmail.com)

David J. Carrasquillo Medrano  
President  
Puertorrican Planning Society  
# 69 Calle Ruiz Belles,  
San Juan, Puerto Rico 00917

Re: FEMA FOIA Case Number 2018-FEFO-00431

Dear Mr. Carrasquillo-Medrano:

This letter acknowledges receipt of your Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request to the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), dated February 2, 2018 and received in this office on February 5, 2018. You are seeking a copy of the following documents regarding Hurricane Maria (DR-4339) to be provided to you:

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After careful review of your FOIA request, we determined that your request is too broad in scope or did not specifically identify the records which you are seeking. Records must be described in reasonably sufficient detail to enable government employees who are familiar with the subject area to locate records without placing an unreasonable burden upon the agency. For this reason, (5 U.S.C. 552(b) of the DHS regulations, or C.F.R. Part 1, require that you describe the records you are seeking with as much information as possible to ensure that our search can locate them with a reasonable amount of effort. Whenever possible, a request should include specific information about each record sought, such as the date, title or name, author, recipients, and subject matter of the records, if known, or the FEMA component or office you believe created and/or controls the record. The FOIA does not require a



February 5, 2018

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to create new records, answer questions posed by requesters, or attempt to interpret a request that does not identify specific records.

Please resubmit your request containing a reasonable description of the records you are seeking. Upon receipt of a perfected request, you will be advised as to the status of your request.

If we do not hear from you within 90 days from the date of this letter, we will assume you are no longer interested in this FOIA request, and the case will be administratively closed. Please be advised that this action is not a denial of your request and will not preclude you from filing other requests in the future.

If you have any questions or would like to discuss this matter, please feel free to contact this office at (202) 646-3323 or electronically at [fisma-foia@fema.dhs.gov](mailto:fisma-foia@fema.dhs.gov) or refer to **2018-FEFO-00431**.

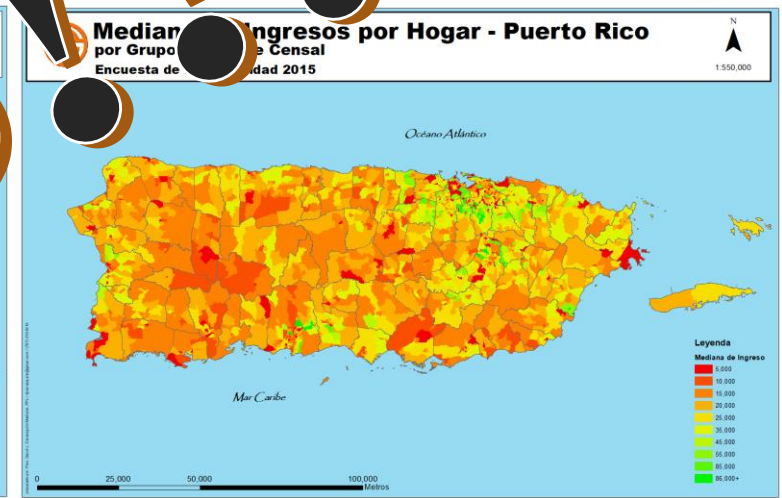
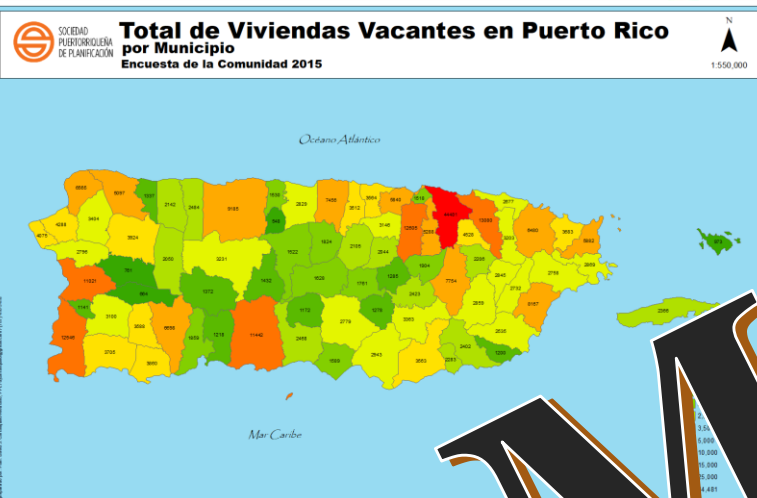
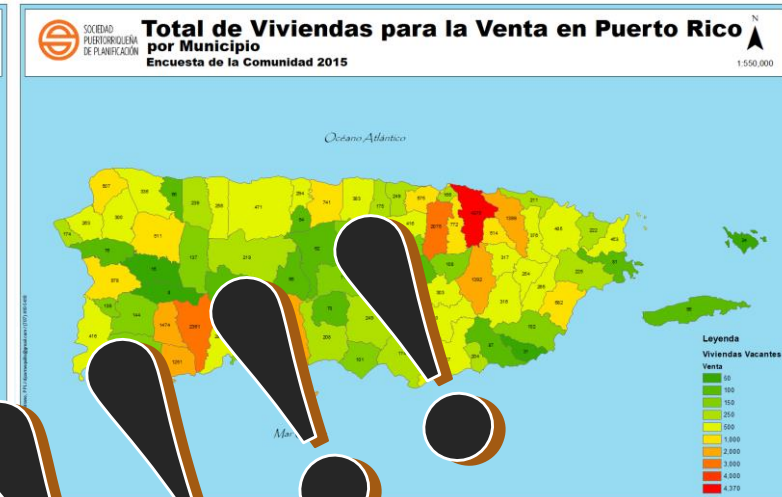
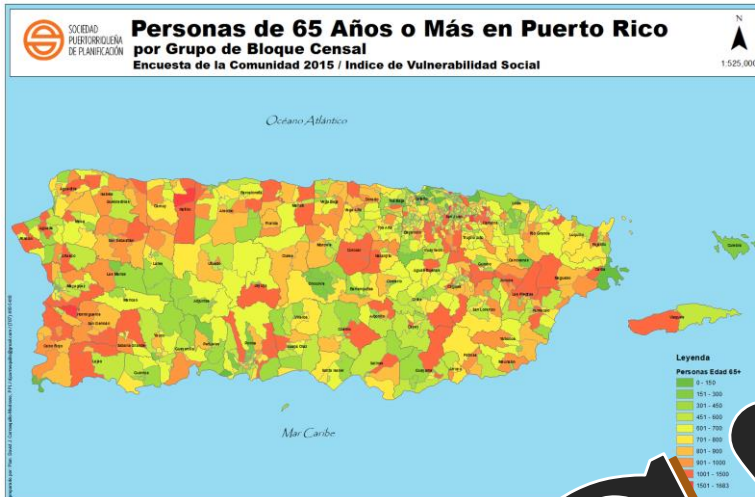
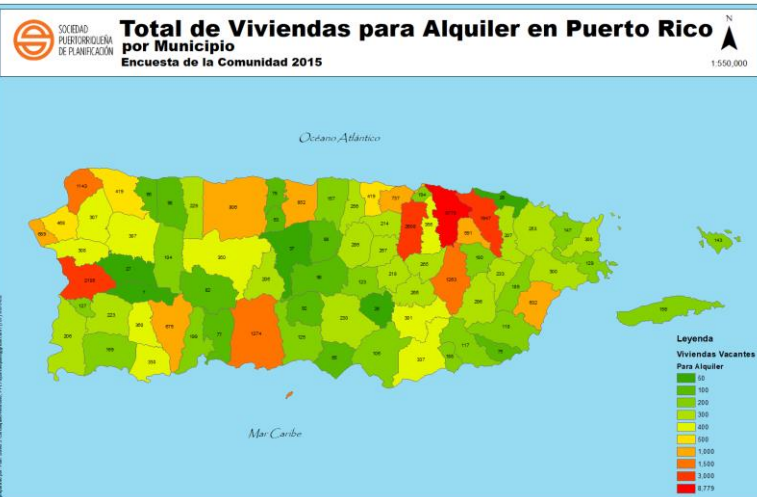
Sincerely,  
Paula Presley  
Paula Presley  
FOIA Program Specialist

Digitally signed by Paula Presley  
Date: 2018.02.05  
06:42:00-0700

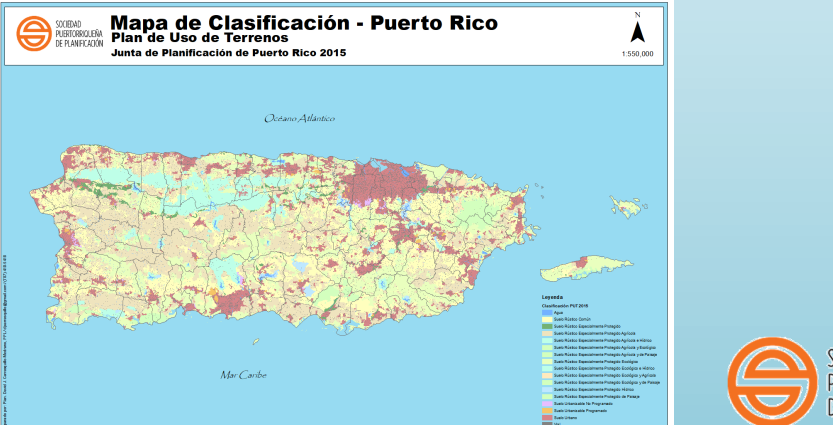
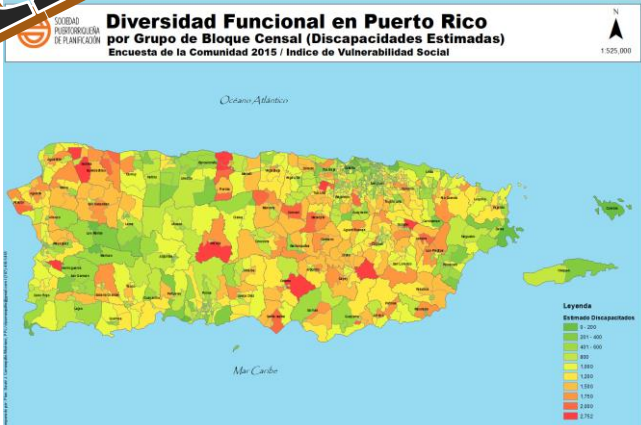
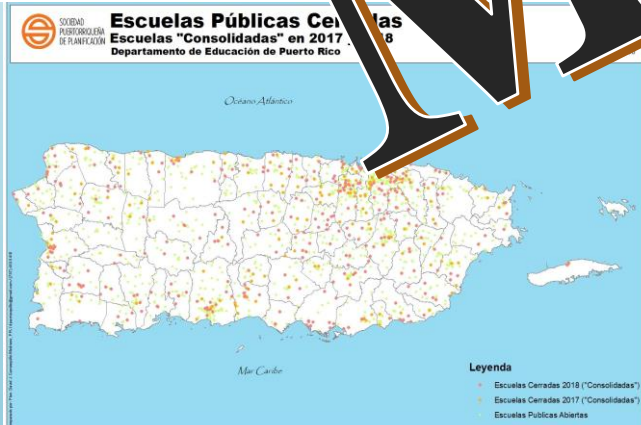


SOCIEDAD  
PUERTORRIQUEÑA  
DE PLANIFICACIÓN



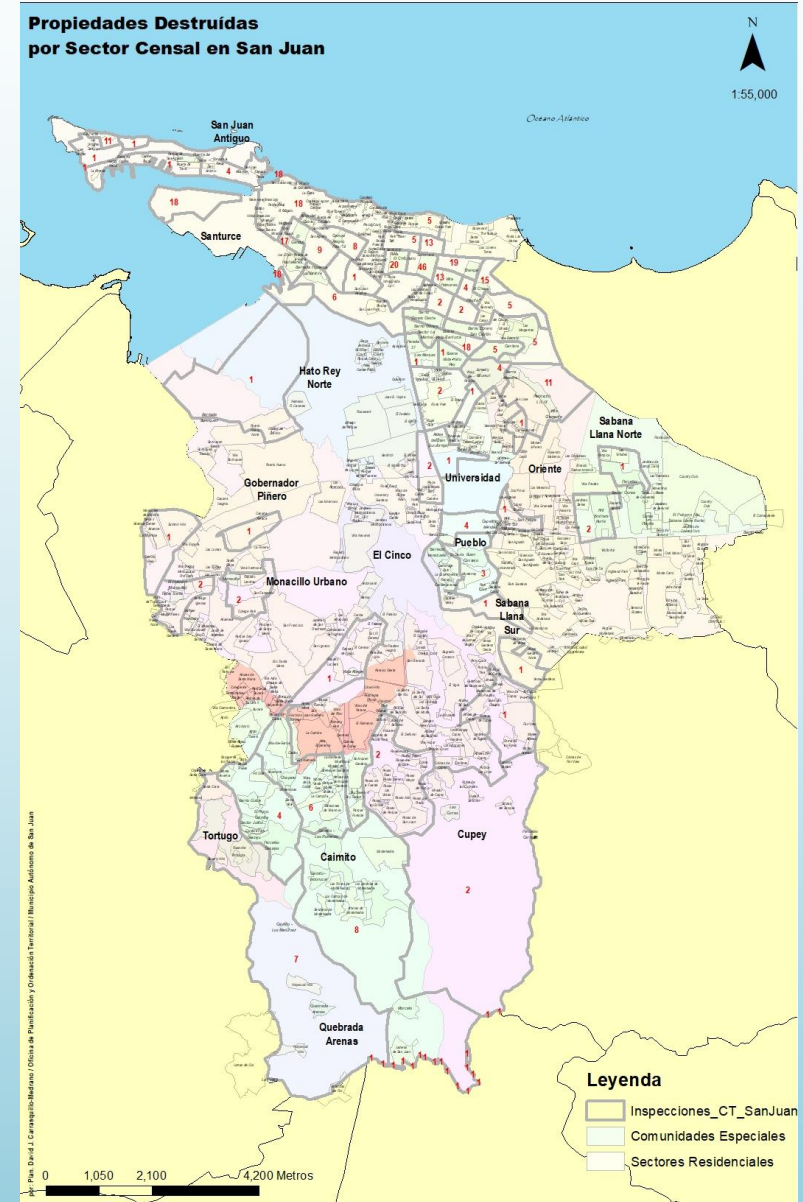
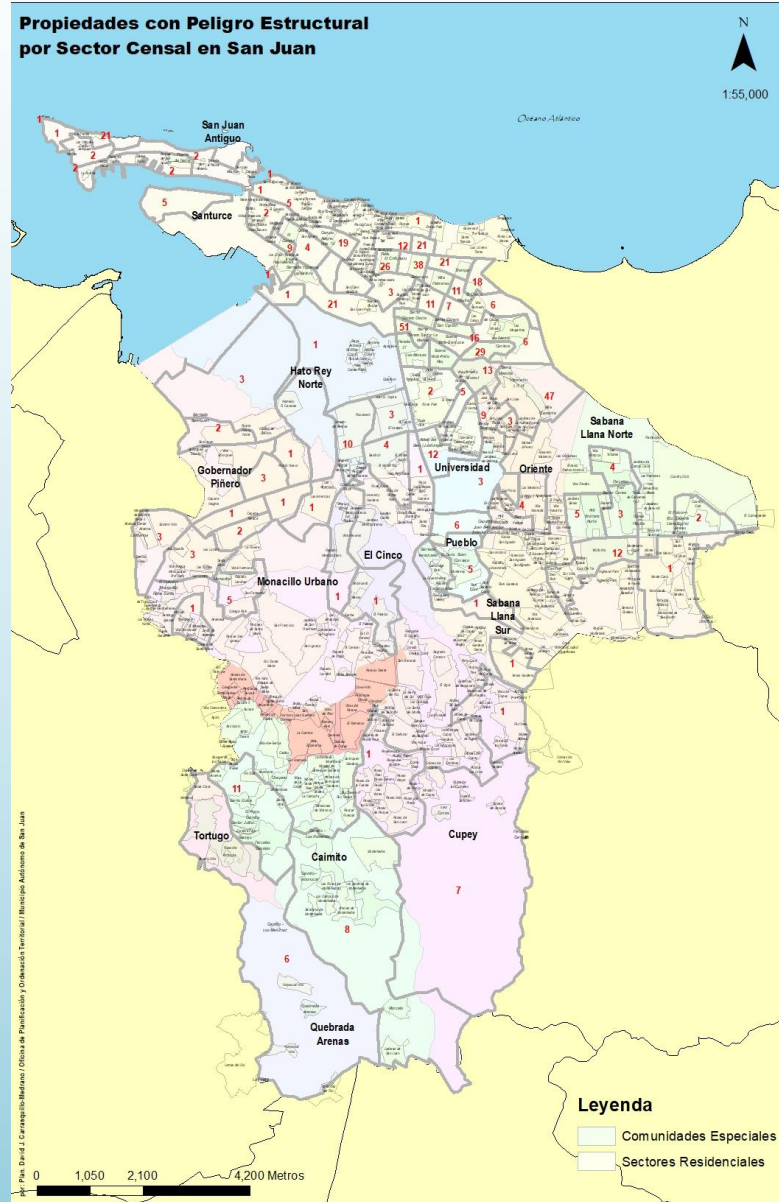
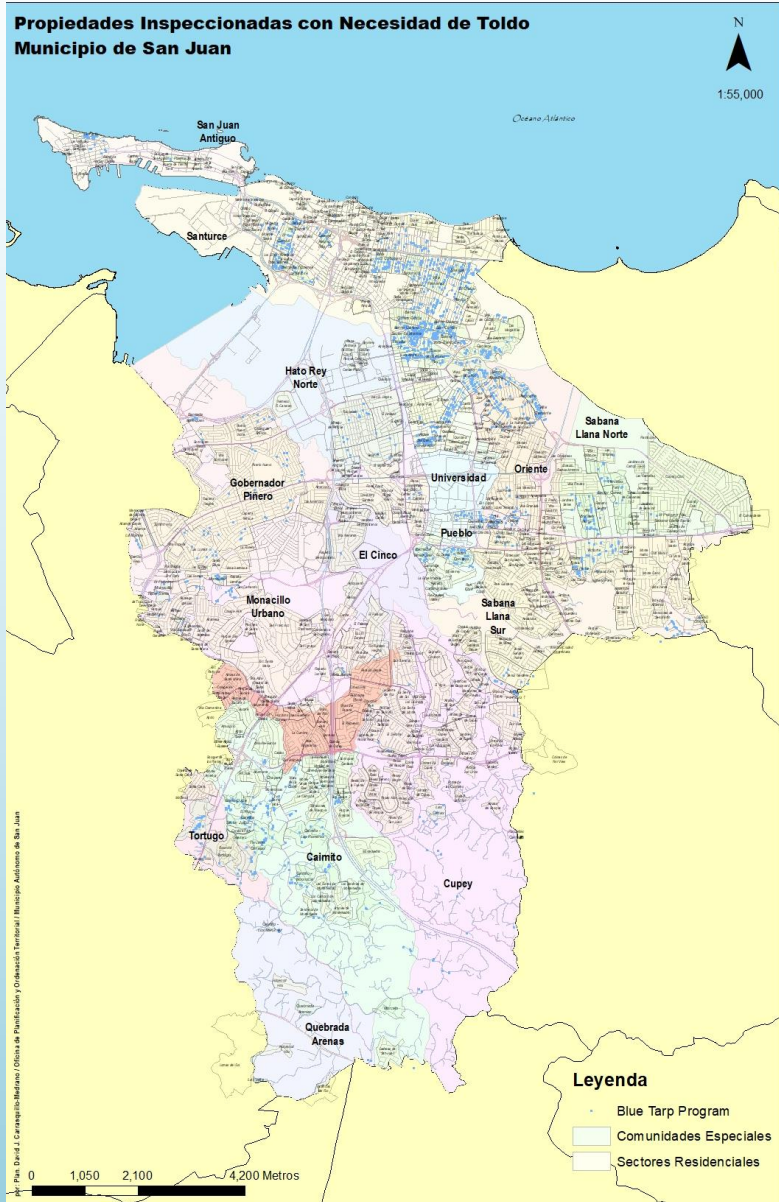


**MAPAS**



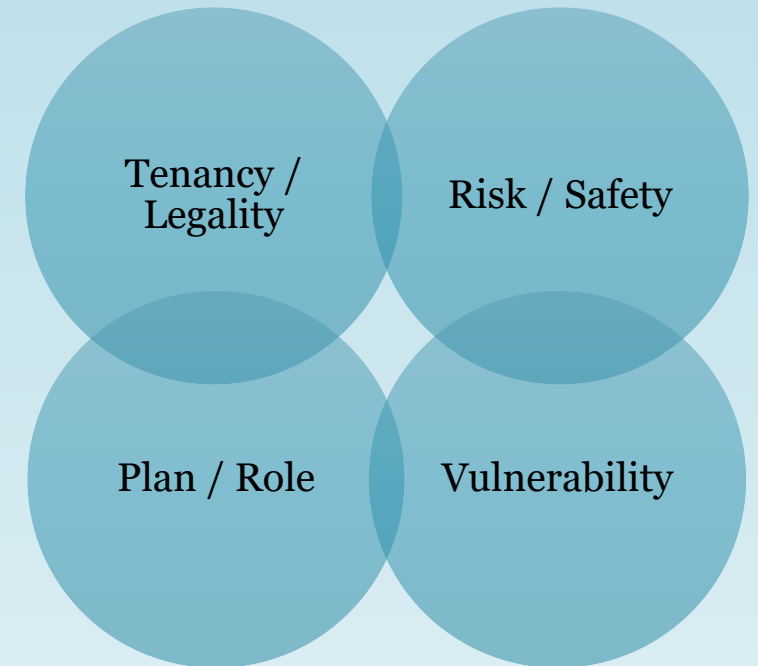


# Affected Residential Settlements...



# What is an informal settlement?

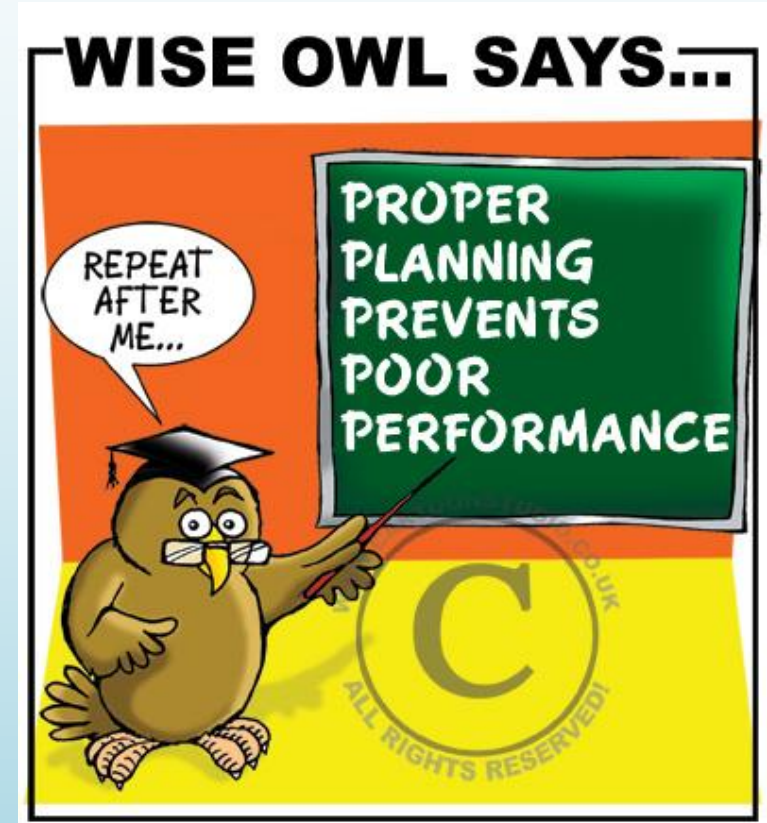
- Are all informal settlements unsafe?
- Are all legal settlements safe?
- How can we decide across the board? Can we? Should we?
- What are the reasons and history behind these practices?
- What options do unsafe settlements have or could have?
- Resilience within Sustainability



# Where do we go from here?

## MAKE SURE THINGS ARE DONE RIGHT

- Let's do real assessment.
- Let's make data available, especially FEMA data.
- Let's produce useful information.
- Let's introduce people into the decision-making process, especially those really hard decisions.
- Let's regulate bad practices that serve as an obstacle to promote social justice and a responsible land use.
- Let's introduce the planning tools into the mix.





# Hurricane Maria just made a lot more visible other ongoing, chronic problems, literally...

- Flash Floods
- Unsafe Aging Infrastructure (homes, buildings, bridges, lampposts, etc.)
- Misplaced Settlements (both, informal and also legal)
- Urban Sprawl
- Emergency Unpreparedness
- Climate Change Unawareness
- Outdated Public Policy, Laws, Codes and Practices
- Proliferation of Blight and Speculation
- Lack of Processed Data (aka Information) and Limited Access to Public Files
- Unknowledgeable Decision Makers
- Absence of Popular and Community Participation

# What should we avoid?

- Let's not replicate the top-down models that put us here.
- Let's not ignore the ones already forgotten long before the hurricane.
- Let's not allow the continuation of a culture of privatization of public information.
- Let's not rebuild inequality, segregation or unsafeness.
- Let's not make anything short-term.



**As planners / professionals...**  
**We are also stakeholders.**  
**We have opinions.**  
**... and we should.**  
**People want to hear us!**

# Please, ask question...I like 'em!



SOCIEDAD  
PUERTORRIQUEÑA  
DE PLANIFICACIÓN

Plan. David J. Carrasquillo-Medrano, PPL

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President

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