COJ Special Committee on Resiliency

Education, Protection of Local Neighborhoods, and Community Outreach Subcommittee

Observations and Action Steps

December 1, 2020

This list of observations and suggested action steps is derived from Subcommittee discussions made by citizen subject matter experts and City Council members from July through December 2020. Here are 10 major observations from the subcommittee to be considered by the whole Special Committee as part of a final report.

Observations and Action Steps

**The subcommittee has adopted this definition of *Resiliency*, and offers it for adoption by the full Special Committee.**

*Resiliency* is the ability to collaboratively prepare for, prevent, absorb, recover from, and equitably adapt to damage from chronic stressors (i.e., aging infrastructure and sea level rise) and adverse events (i.e., hurricanes, extreme heat, and high-intensity flooding).

**Expand the resiliency definition over time to include more than flooding and sea level rise within Duval County**

* The greatest danger that Jacksonville faces is flooding, from the immediate threat posed by intense tropical storms to the steady increase in sea levels that will come over the next years and decades as the climate warms. For Jacksonville, with our thousand miles of riverfront and oceanfront, resiliency begins with keeping water out of our neighborhoods. It’s a multi-billion dollar fight that will be waged over decades to protect the city from changing climate.
* Most metro areas active in resiliency strategies define resiliency more broadly to include: chronic stressors such as income inequality, underinvested neighborhoods, the shortage of affordable housing, lack of healthcare, access to transportation, employment and food insecurity. Using a broader approach to define resiliency fosters more resilient individuals, families, neighborhoods, businesses and communities.
* Resilient305 in Miami, Orlando/Orange County, Tampa Bay, Resilient Houston, Boston, San Francisco and Long Beach, Calif. are examples of this broader approach.
* Consider a Northeast Florida regional approach to resiliency planning over time. Other metro areas – including Southeast Florida, East Central Florida and Tampa Bay – are multi-jurisdictional in their resiliency efforts.

\*Footnotes 1 and 2

**Establish a community engagement structure for the office of the Chief Resiliency Officer**

* Continue meaningful citizens’ engagement work beyond the Special Resiliency Committee to promote creative and lasting solutions that are equitable and inclusive, and enjoy broad community support.
* The City should establish a community-based group or council that includes representation from diverse stakeholders that serve as liaisons for neighborhoods and communities throughout Duval County as well as organizations and associations working in resiliency.
* Establish an annual Resilient Jacksonville event to educate people about sea level rise and climate change, and bring together people who want to help the city become a model of resiliency. This event should make a special effort to include the public schools, and local colleges, employing the energy and passion of students.
* The Chief Resilience Officer should conduct and make public an extensive community survey to find out what the community knows about resiliency and its concerns. This information could also be gathered from a series of resiliency workshops, town halls and mail campaigns**.**
* The Chief Resilience Officer should keep track how many calls the City receives about flooding and drainage issues each month, and create a contact list and calendar of events for how citizens can get help with their problems. This record should be published monthly by the CRO.
* The Chief Resilience Officer should coordinate with the Duval Community Organizations Active in Disaster coalition of government emergency management, nonprofits and businesses to better align disaster services with resiliency strategies.
* Mini grants, cost-share, technical assistance or community incentives should be established to educate communities regarding on-site water storage solutions and also help fund these solutions. See Footnote 3.
* The Chief Resilience Officer should leverage the power of partnerships and educational opportunities with diverse organizations, including the school district, private philanthropy and businesses to encourage community participation in resiliency and climate change initiatives.

**Create a community engagement process that helps City officials prioritize neighborhood resource allocation and support community revitalization plans**

* Community engagement is more than informing and educating the public about City plans and processes, which is mainly one-way communication. Neighborhood and business leaders are worthy experts about their lived experience of resiliency challenges and are helpful partners to find solutions.
* Using infrastructure priorities as an example, Public Works can produce a list of capital improvement projects planned for a particular neighborhood and explain them to neighborhood leaders. Neighborhood leaders then evaluate the list based on their lived experience of what is already included and what could be added to the list. Neighborhood leaders then recommend priorities for funding based on various factors such as (a) does it affect an area where people live and work, (b) whether the area has a history of underinvestment and vulnerable populations, (c) how many residents are affected, (d) how long have they been suffering with this condition, and (e) how the infrastructure might support a community revitalization project.
* All city departments should include the community in the adoption of resilience scorecard matrix to assist government officials in prioritizing resiliency capital

\*Footnotes 4, 5, 6, 7

**Establish education and public engagement tools such as user-friendly websites, newsletters, social media platforms, and resource guides to reach diverse audiences**

* Create a system for disseminating information that is readily accessible and easily understandable by the general public.
* Use communication methods and recruit trusted community messengers who relate to various racial and ethnic groups, ages, income levels and neighborhoods. Include arts, cultural and media groups to shape messages.
* Create common talking points to make sure consistent messages and information is sent into the community.

**Use a social justice and equity lens that will help change public discourse and resource allocations to be more inclusive of various populations and address unfair or exclusionary practices by government and business**

* Employ social vulnerability indexes to insure intentional inclusion of leaders in underinvested neighborhoods to address improvement opportunities as part of resiliency – disparities in health and well-being, employment, safety, wealth and financial security – that have historically reduced everyone’s quality of life in Jacksonville.
* Allocate public resources more equitably to ensure that all neighborhoods are healthy, safe and more climate ready.

**Participate in resiliency learning, advocacy and funding networks**

* Become a member of the Resilient Cities Network (formerly 100 Resilient Cities).
* Join the Adrienne Arsht-Rockefeller Foundation Resilience Center.
* Join in statewide and regional resiliency networks.
* Create a Regional Climate Compact with other Northeast Florida government jurisdictions.

**Promote wide public use of risk exposure tools to warn the public of the risk of environmental hazards such as flooding and sea level rise**

* Examples include Regional Resilience Exposure Tool by the NEFRC that allows demographic data overlaid on coastal and riverine flood risk layers to evaluate the vulnerabilities of low-income, seniors and minority populations.
* Storm Surge/Flood Zone Interactive Map by Scott Ennis for Riverside Avondale Preservation, Inc. that integrates resident photos and stories.
* Flood Factor risk calculation tool by the First Street Foundation.

**Include citizen subject matter experts in selecting the Chief Resiliency Officer**

* Some government agencies or boards hold public meetings so the finalists get a feel for what the interested public thinks, and the public gets a sense of inclusion and ownership in the process.

**Implement these Adaptation Action Area (AAA) Working Group recommendations on education and community outreach and align with other recommendations**

* The City shall educate, inform, and disclose flood hazards to the public through various mechanisms such as real estate disclosures, public mapping resources, community or citywide public information campaigns.
* The City – through educational campaigns, promotional materials, and partnerships with non-profit and for-profit entities – should promote and participate in green infrastructure solutions to mitigate flooding.

**List of Community Assets**

* City of Jacksonville departments such as Planning and Development, Public Works, Emergency Preparedness Division, Neighborhoods, Grants, Ethics, Office of General Counsel, Parks and Recreation, Citizens Planning Advisory Committees (CPACs), Adaptation Action Area Working Group (2019)
* City Council, Council Auditor, Council Research, Council Support Services, Stormwater Resiliency & Infrastructure Development Review Committee (2019), Special Resiliency Committee (2020), Social Justice and Community Investments Special Committee (2020)
* Jacksonville Environmental Protection Board
* Jacksonville Waterways Commission
* JEA, JTA, Jaxport
* Duval County School District
* Jacksonville Public Library
* Soil and Water Conservation District
* Florida Department of Environmental Protection.
* US Army Corps of Engineers, Jacksonville District
* Northeast Florida Regional Council
* Resilient Jax (originally Resiliency and Climate Change Coalition)
* Garden Club of Jacksonville
* St. Johns Riverkeeper
* Groundwork Jacksonville
* Northeast Florida Sierra Club
* Duval Audubon Society
* Scenic Jacksonville
* Riverfront Parks Now
* North Florida Land Trust
* Jacksonville Chapter of the Citizens Climate Lobby
* Northeast Florida LTRO (Long Term Recovery Organization) for Hurricane Irma
* Duval COAD (Community Organizations Active in Disaster)
* LISC Jacksonville
* Riverside Avondale Preservation, Inc
* Springfield Preservation and Revitalization Council, Inc.
* Other Neighborhood-based Organizations
* Florida Housing Coalition
* The CLEO Institute
* Green Infrastructure Center
* Resilient Cities Network
* University of North Florida
* Jacksonville University
* Edward Waters College
* Florida State College at Jacksonville
* University of Florida
* Florida State University
* Northeast Florida Builders Association
* JAX Chamber and JAXUSA Partnership
* Resiliency professionals and consultants
* WJCT Public Media – adaptflorida.org
* Urban Land Institute, North Florida
* African American Economic Recovery Think Tank

**FOOTNOTES:**

1. Integrate the findings of the Northeast Florida Economic Resiliency Task Force recently convened by the Northeast Florida Regional Council (NEFRC) under a two-year grant from the US Economic Development Administration (EDA) 2020 CARES Act Award.
2. Consider the recommendations in the ULI report, *The Business Case for Resilience in Southeast Florida: Regional Economic Benefits of Climate Adaptation* (Washington, DC: Urban Land Institute, 2020).
3. See recommendation from Subcommittee on Environmental Planning, which suggests that mini-grants, cost-share or technical assistance programs could incentivize privately owned and maintained rain gardens, swales, rain barrels, vegetation, living shorelines or stormwater pond improvements that will reduce the impact of stormwater on City-owned infrastructure.
4. This process was demonstrated at the August 5 Resiliency Infrastructure Subcommittee, where staff from Public Works and the Council Auditor explained a list of 18 resiliency-related projects on the CIP list and answered questions, which was informative for leaders in evaluating projects and priorities.
5. This builds on the approach in Bill 2020-417 that requires City staff to obtain CPAC input on the proposed Capital Improvements Plan each fiscal year, and Bill 2020-526 that funds planning district public workshops on the Adaptation Action Areas and resident concerns and priorities.
6. Use community facilitators to manage community discussions and workshops to promote wider citizen participation so government officials can function best in their roles.
7. Communities that engage with their decision makers and each other more regularly can accelerate the adoption of best practices and build stronger support for new and innovative approaches to long-term problems like climate change and natural hazards. – Centre for Livable Cities article (July 2020).