



PASCO EDC  
NORTH TAMPA BAY, FLORIDA

# BUSINESS RESILIENCY & SUSTAINABILITY

TASK FORCE WHITE PAPER

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# BUSINESS RESILIENCY AND SUSTAINABILITY: A COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH TO ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY RESILIENCE

## INTRODUCTION

Resilience and sustainability are integral to the long-term success of Pasco County businesses and residents alike. Resilience refers to the ability to adapt and thrive amidst changing conditions, while sustainability emphasizes meeting present needs without compromising future generations' ability to meet theirs. This white paper explores the intertwined nature of business resiliency and sustainability, offering insights from the recent "Resilient Pasco" report developed for the County by consultants from Halff, Fernleaf, and Taylor Engineering and proposing strategies for enhancing both.

## DEFINING BUSINESS RESILIENCY AND SUSTAINABILITY

### Core Concepts:

- **Economic Resilience:** The capacity of an economy to withstand and recover from shocks, ensuring long-term stability and growth. Such events as natural disasters, economic depressions, and even election cycles need to be considered.
- **Environmental Resilience and Sustainability:** The ability of natural systems and built environments to absorb, recover, and adapt to environmental changes and disasters, while utilizing resources responsibly. These could be ongoing environmental concerns or evolving challenges.
- **Community Resilience:** The strength and cohesion of social networks that enable communities to recover from adverse situations.

#### Business Resiliency Components:

- **Operational Continuity:** Strategies to maintain core functions during disruptions including, but not limited to, document retrieval plans, the establishment of an “off-site” plan to continue operations, and the ability to continue communications amongst staff.
- **Adaptation and Flexibility:** The ability to pivot business models and strategies in response to changing circumstances. This is a core management function that business leaders must learn.
- **Risk Management:** Identifying, assessing, and mitigating risks to reduce vulnerability. Insurance professionals and non-profits such as SBDC can assist the business leader in determining the best solutions.
- **Hurricane/Tropical Storm Preparedness & Re-entry Plans:** Businesses are encouraged to have specific plans to prepare for storms as well as specific instructions for re-entry plans. An oncoming storm can create confusion and fear. Having specific preparation instructions that detail responsibilities and checklists can help avoid unintentional mishaps and minimize damage to a business. Furthermore, certainty for post-storm procedures is encouraged. Having detailed re-entry instructions in a re-entry plan will ensure a clear path back to work that employers and employees can rely on.

#### Business Sustainability Components:

- **Resource Efficiency:** Minimizing waste and optimizing the use of resources and/or raw materials. This includes exploring opportunities to improve efficiencies that can in turn benefit the business and its employees.
- **Sustainable Practices:** Continuing to invest time into improving financial literacy. Many financial institutions like Truist Bank have tools and resources for business owners to understand their financial statements better. Doing so will ensure that businesses carry a proper amount of funds in their savings accounts to weather any emergencies that arise.
- **Corporate Social Responsibility:** Engaging in initiatives that benefit society and the environment. By doing so, the business owner blends the interests of the present and the future, which also yields improved results for the organization.
- **Resource Awareness:** There are many post-storm resources. Ensuring local businesses are aware of and can access much-needed resources post-storm events can help ensure business sustainability.

## INSIGHTS FROM THE RESILIENT PASCO PRESENTATION

### VULNERABILITY ASSESSMENT:

The report highlights various climate hazards impacting Pasco County's business community, including storm surge, tidal flooding, and extreme heat. Key findings emphasize the importance of understanding and preparing for these risks:

- Storm Surge and Flooding: Significant risks to agricultural and industrial lands, necessitating robust flood defenses and strategic land-use planning.
- Extreme Heat: Vulnerabilities related to heat exposure, especially in areas with older adults, affordable public housing, and schools, highlighting the need for cooling strategies and heat management plans.

### ADAPTIVE CAPACITY, SOCIAL VULNERABILITY, AND STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT:

Tree Canopy and Land Cover: Critical factors in mitigating heat exposure and improving environmental resilience. Pasco is lagging behind in many populated areas and future considerations will need to be taken.

Social Vulnerability: Higher risks for older adults, mobile homes, and certain public housing areas, requiring targeted support and resources to enhance resilience.

Stakeholder Engagement: The report underscores the importance of inclusive and equitable approaches, promoting local knowledge integration, and prioritizing resources based on vulnerability assessments.

### BUSINESS RESILIENCY AND SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGIES BASED ON THE RESILIENT PASCO PRESENTATION:

#### Risk Management and Continuity Planning:

- Risk Assessment: Regular evaluations to identify potential threats and their impacts on business operations.
- Business Continuity Plans: Developing and testing plans to ensure operations can continue during and after disruptions.

Preparedness & Re-entry Plans: Many jurisdictions require businesses and new developments in the Coastal High Hazard Area to have specific plans. Pasco County is encouraged to ensure new businesses and developments in the coastal high-hazard area have preparedness and re-entry plans. For example, a new multifamily or Townhouse development west of US Highway 19, should be providing new residents with specific hurricane preparedness and evacuation procedures. Re-entry plans can include helpful re-entry strategies such as designating common areas as potential business office areas for residents or offering other helpful resources to mitigate post-storm impacts. These plans should also specify post-storm procedures for different scenarios, such as no property damage vs anticipated damage or substantial damage to property. In the event of a power outage/electrical disaster, a disaster recovery plan can prioritize what equipment is brought back online first and how.

#### Environmental & Sustainability Practices:

- **Green Building Standards:** Adopting sustainable construction and operational practices to reduce environmental impact.
- **Resource Optimization:** Implementing efficient resource management practices to minimize waste and improve sustainability.
- **Renewable Energy Use:** Transitioning to renewable energy sources to reduce carbon footprint and increase energy independence.
- **Sustainable Supply Chain Management:** Ensuring that all stages of the supply chain adhere to sustainable practices.
- **Having land use strategies that support and incentivize redevelopment in the Coastal High Hazard Area** where development can be older and particularly vulnerable. Leveraging FEMA grant money to elevate older housing structures.

#### Community and Economic Development:

- **Public-Private Partnerships:** Collaborating with local governments and organizations to enhance community resilience and economic stability.
- **Inclusive Growth:** Ensuring that resilience strategies benefit all community members, particularly the most vulnerable.
- **Local Sourcing and Support:** Prioritizing local suppliers and supporting local businesses to boost the regional economy.

#### Technological and Infrastructure Investments:

- **Smart Technologies:** Leveraging technology to monitor and manage risks more effectively including cyber attacks and ever-evolving threats.
- **Infrastructure Upgrades:** Investing in resilient infrastructure to withstand environmental and economic shocks.
- **Innovation and R&D:** Investing in research and development to innovate sustainable solutions.

## CONCLUSION

*Business resiliency and sustainability are critical components of broader economic and community resilience. By understanding and addressing vulnerabilities, implementing robust risk management and sustainability practices, and fostering inclusive growth, businesses can enhance their ability to thrive in the face of adversity. The insights from the "Resilient Pasco" report provide valuable guidance for developing effective resiliency and sustainability strategies tailored to local conditions and challenges.*

*We would like to present this report to Mr. Marc Bellas at Pasco County Organization Performance Management with a recommendation for a Pasco EDC staff member to meet and present this final report in an effort to create tailored programs to meet the needs.*