# GEO-FOCAL GROUP TEMPLATE

## Geo-Focal Group

| Tampa Bay Region |

## Facilitators

| Dr. Terry Johnson, Florida Center for Community Design and Research |

## Participants

- Dr. Jim Griffin, Florida Center for Community Design and Research (Co-leader)
- Brady Smith, Tampa Bay Regional Planning Council (Co-leader)
- Dr. Brandt Henningsen, Southwest Florida Water Management District
- Robert van Ouwerkerk, Robert van Ouwerkerk Consulting
- Dr. Gerold Morrison, BCI Engineers and Scientists
- Sara Hendricks, Center for Urban Transportation Research
- Tom Levin, Ekistics Design Studio
- Betti Johnson, Tampa Bay Regional Planning Council
- Jim Beever, Southwest Florida Regional Planning Council
- Linda McChristian, Insurance Information Institute
- Vicki Parsons, *Bay Soundings*
- Peter Fitzmaurice, U.S. Department of Homeland Security
- Kelly Wallace, Argonne National Laboratory
- Charles Noss, Environmental Protection Agency
- Arno Willems, IV-Infra (Participant from the Netherlands)
- Yvonne van Kruchten, DHV (Participant from the Netherlands)
- Joy Ingram, USF (Scribe)
- Caryssa Joustra (Scribe)
The five highest-priority regional vulnerabilities related to storm surge, urban flooding, and sea level rise identified by the group are:

- Lack of long-range perspective or policy, Inc. natural systems
- Site specific vulnerabilities (re: port, hospitals, other assets) – Ability to respond
- Lack of diversification in local economy
- Threat of losing natural systems and their function
- Risk perception/acceptance of citizens risk attitude – expect public to cover cost of individual loss

Other vulnerabilities that were identified/discussed include:

- Lack of defense (structures, natural systems)
- Lack of required flood insurance
- How trade will affect water resources re: water supplies
- Need for green infrastructure, retaining water
- Climate instability
- Public perceptions of threat/need for education
- Water quality impacts based on storm water systems
- System function – potential failures – need for planning
- Need to involve business/political folks
- Nature of TB population (elderly, disabled, low income, etc.)
- Structures in low-lying areas at risk (mostly residential)
- Ineffectiveness of communication
- Dispersed patterns of development
- Lack of shared identity
- Coast geology impacts
- Cultural attitude – expect public to cover cost private loss
- Post-disaster communication for recovery
- Lack of tools to evaluate ecological services
- New health threats Re: humans, plants, animals, Re: climate change
- Location of business centers in highly vulnerable areas (e.g. downtown Tampa, Carillon, St. Pete Re: recovery)
- Inability for govt. to respond based on loss of environment. Specialists, their
- Lack of land to respond to seal level rise by natural systems
## Status of resiliency planning

Historically, resiliency planning in the Tampa Bay region has focused on response and recovery with regard to immediate disaster threats. Local governments have Comprehensive Emergency Management Plans. Regional evacuation studies provide information to local (county and major city) emergency managers on the potential scope of disaster events and guidance on evacuation strategies to move people out of harm’s way.

More recently, federal, state, and local planning efforts have started to take into account long-term recovery (3 months to 5 years). Hillsborough and Manatee Counties were pilot areas for the Florida Division of Emergency Management’s Post Disaster Redevelopment Plan (PDRP) program, and Pinellas County’s PDRP is currently in development. PDRPs provide plans for recovery across a wide cross-section of social, economic, and environmental issues that will need to be addressed for long-term recovery of the region.

There are also planning programs completed or in progress that look at various aspects of recovery, such as disaster housing (www.fldisasterhousing.org) or response (short- and long term) to a major catastrophic event, such as a Category 5 hurricane (www.tampabaycatplan.org).

In the Tampa Bay area, regional planning programs typically focus on intergovernmental coordination of assets and efforts, as well as coordination between government entities and business and community interests.

## Vision for resilient Tampa Bay and Next Steps

The following outlines the discussion of “where do we want to go and how do we want to get there” in terms of improving the resiliency of the Tampa Bay region to storm surge, urban flooding, and sea level rise:

- 25% of people expect insurance will cover everything – insurance participant
- Who will take responsibility – identify lead group or agency to pick up from this conference and move forward – TB Estuary and TB Reg. Planning Council are good candidates....Agency on Bay Management, Port Authority advisory group, agriculture – IFIS or Farm Bureau
- Responsibility belongs everywhere but who will take the lead? May NOT need a new entity...in current economic environment – no money...Metro Planning Org – transportation...is what we need a steering committee? Existing agency versus new agency...Brady mentioned One Bay plus....
Vision for resilient Tampa Bay and Next Steps (cont.)

- What is the role of elected officials? TB Regional Planning Council IS made up of decision makers ... RPC is political, NEC is science side in Punta Gorda
- Need Master Plan,
  1. Vulnerability assessment plan – formal assessment of risks (this has been done in the past but needs to be looked at again – bring plans from all agencies together)
  2. Options to address vulnerabilities
  3. Make decisions based on the options involve all shareholders
- Disaster recovery plans – will focus be on recovering to same level or to something better – not make the same mistakes again – vision of rebuilding European cities after WWII to be better but didn’t work out – post-disaster redevelopment plans should be determined ahead of time. NEED TO DECIDE what level, Regional coordination is imperative for effective recovery plans – most everything that now exists does not consider outside areas
- What is focus of capacity building? Reliance on data sharing, GIS people up to speed on materials, emergency planners up to speed on new tools; hand-held electronic device apps for disaster planning and preparedness; social media; Capacity building – moving info from one group to another – affects target groups and can vary in content
- Discussion of taking action – based on available money – no policies or directive to the agencies to move forward on the actions required; Punta Gorda taking action by moving critical buildings in harm’s way (like hospital in flood path) but hospitals do not want to move
- How do we make hospitals resilient in the long term? What are the options? Pick an example TGH.....need to have risk standards defined – how safe does it have to be? Will disaster be the only way to get things to change? How many victims are needed?
- Economic vulnerability – resilient economies aid in recovery – other urban problems like poverty drag down recovery; business is aware of vulnerabilities, but public is not; quality of life affects resiliency of cities
- Look at sustainable economic activities, move away from industries that use up resources, in Agriculture – move away from monoculture crops
- Need to “republic” the beaches – more eco-tourism, less Orlando tourism
**Vision for resilient Tampa Bay and Next Steps (cont.)**

- Regional landscape-scale wildlife corridors – need real estate and contiguous space; connect urban and agric
- Create desirable replacement for single family home without losing qualities; design issues; new approach to urban resiliency
- Need carrying capacity decision – how many people do we want in the area to support? Sanibel Island set capacity – court case went to the Supreme Court – won their case; water capacity is/should be a limiter

**Major Recommendations**

- Identify lead group or agency to move the Resilient Tampa Bay effort forward.
- Develop a Strategic Master Resiliency Plan for the Tampa Bay region.
- Improve data collection and capacity building regarding vulnerability and resiliency in the Tampa Bay Region. Thoroughly assess regional vulnerabilities and select a “Top 10” list of adaptations that would have the most impact on improving resiliency in the region.
- Work toward making the economy more resilient by attracting a more diverse blend of industry sectors.
- Improve the mobility options in our regional transportation/transit network for both crisis and day-to-day needs of the region’s residents.
- Preserve strategic lands to promote natural systems and to maintain/develop regional-scale wildlife corridors.
- Develop a comprehensive marketing strategy for relating the nature and extent of the threats we face as Tampa Bay residents and explaining the importance of addressing those threats