



Palm Beach County  
*Office of Resilience*



# FINAL REPORT

## Strengthening Frontline Capacity for Climate Change Resilience Planning

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# THE EFFORT

The Palm Beach County Office of Resilience (OOR), with the support of the Urban Sustainability Directors Network (USDN), desired to engage residents in preparation for the creation of the Vulnerability Assessment and Resilience Action Plan (VARAP) in partnership with residents instead of 'on behalf of residents.

OOR engaged the services of a Palm Beach County nonprofit, Community Partners of South Florida (CPSFL), which has over 30 years of community engagement experience to recruit, co-plan, facilitate, survey, and provide findings regarding the information gleaned during the engagement period.



## PARTNERSHIPS

This effort to engage residents living in communities of significant climate risk, or "vulnerable", meant creating opportunities to build trust. Partnerships were key for this to happen.

The team prioritized three locations overlaying the Centers for Disease Control's social vulnerability index and climate risk mapping data. Since the Glades Region, comprised of Belle Glade, Pahokee, and South Bay, is an area with high concentrations of social vulnerability and climate risk, the team decided to hold 2 workshops there. The central PBC location was selected based on its proximity to neighborhoods that PBC has selected as community revitalization areas. The team selected two library facilities and one community center for the venues.

CPSFL relied on its experience as a trusted leader in comprehensive community development to engage nonprofits operating within those regions to invite them to conversations.

Over 20 nonprofit and County-based departments supported recruiting residents within these regions.

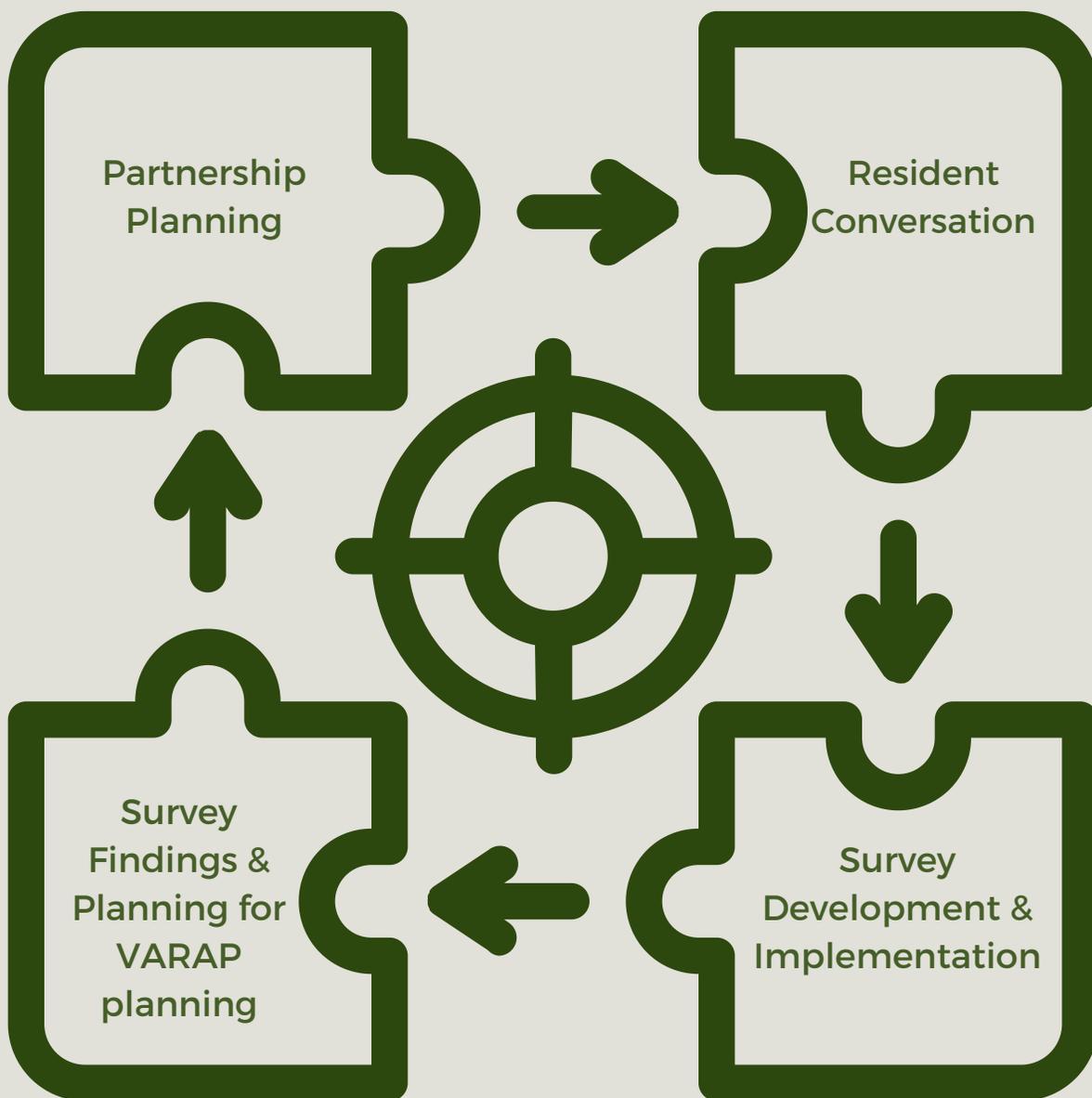
The team invited residents to sustainability conversations that offered residents a meaningful opportunity to provide input in a process that impacts their and their children's lives.

Partners were motivated to ensure there was a resident-informed process.

# PROJECT MILESTONES

Below are the milestones for the effort that aligns with the USDN deliverable expectations.

These milestones were made very transparent during the conversation and surveying stages so that residents understood the process and what will happen next.





## CONVERSATION PHASE

Recruitment for climate risk conversations can be challenging since many individuals living in climate-vulnerable communities can be surviving in the midst of chaos. The team asked residents to explore their present experiences and help envision a more climate-resilient future. This requires trust, transparency, and partner commitment to follow up with the participants. This conversation also focuses on self-actualization while residents engaged were ranging from physiological to safety & security (see Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs below right).

## OUR GOAL

The team's desired outcome of these workshops was to help the team answer three questions that would help OOR integrate equity into its climate resiliency risk assessment and implementation plan.

- What is your baseline knowledge of climate change?
- What climate change impacts are your community affected by?
- What areas of investment are most important to your community?

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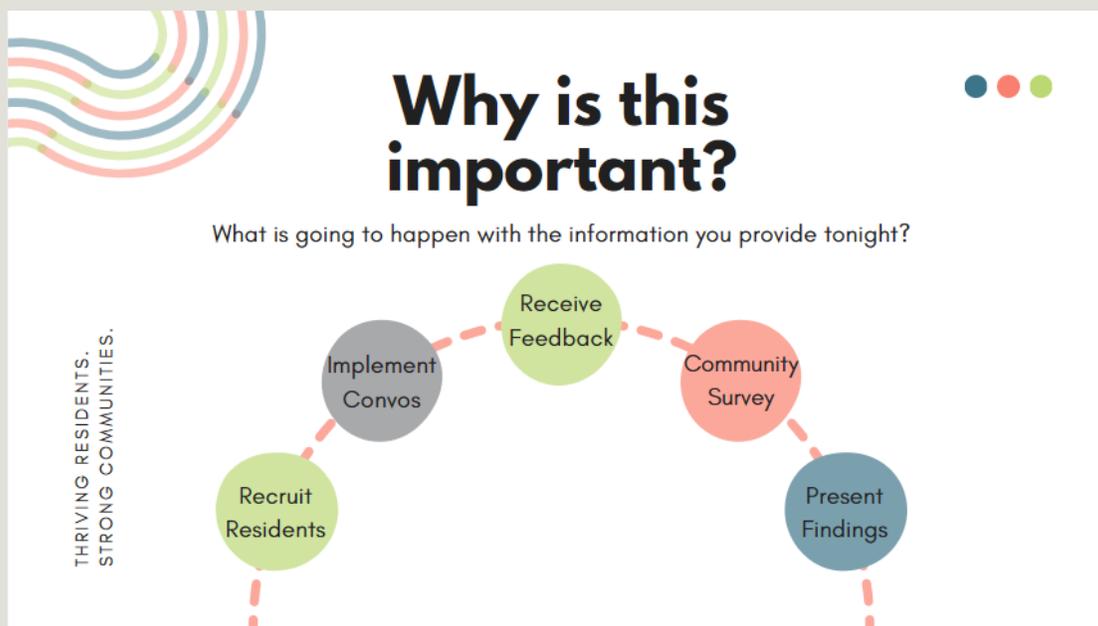
## MASLOW'S HIERARCHY OF NEEDS



# CONVERSATION AGENDA

Below is the agenda the guiding committee created based on the questions that would guide the work:

- Welcome & Introductions
- What are we doing tonight?
- Why is this important?
- Who wants this information?
- FAU Pine Jog - Student Climate Stories
- Office of Resilience Presentation
- Asset Inventory & Prioritization
- Table Top Discussions
- Available County Resources
- Identifying Gaps
- Reflection & Closing



# CONVERSATION SUMMARY

In summary, the conversations were well attended, enriching, and provided amazing insights into what everyday life looks like for participants.

OOR was able to receive the input necessary for the community-wide survey, to guide their next steps in the climate risk assessment, and to even act quickly on a Federal grant.



Please see appendix list for workshop summaries

## Conversation Participants by Region

The participants were invited, as mentioned, through regional partners who a) have residents residing in the communities identified; b) have programmatic components based on increasing resident capacity or voice; and c) are interested in positive community change. Organizations that met those criteria were invited to a partner orientation to outline the effort and process.

OOR and CPSFL are thankful for the partners on the right who ended up engaging 67 residents in conversations.

- Community Partners of South Florida's
  - BRIDGES at Belle Glade
  - BRIDGES at Pahokee
  - Mentoring at Pahokee Elementary
  - Mentoring at Pioneer Park
  - Prosperity Centers
  - Teen Outreach Program
  - Wraparound Case Management
- Healthier Glades
- Glades Initiative
- Boys & Girls Club of Palm Beach County
- Florida Atlantic University - Pine Jog Environmental Education Center
- Palm Beach County Library System
- Palm Beach Youth Services
- Palm Beach County Criminal Justice Commission
- Palm Beach County Office of Community Revitalization
- Palm Beach County Community Services Department

# SURVEY DEVELOPMENT

The team developed survey questions that were focused on determining whether the broader PBC population agreed with the findings from the three small community workshops.

The goal was to validate a) top community assets provided; b) climate impacts experienced; and c) top areas of investment.

Additional questions were included to engage more residents and to offer access to a raffle.



Please see appendix list for survey questions

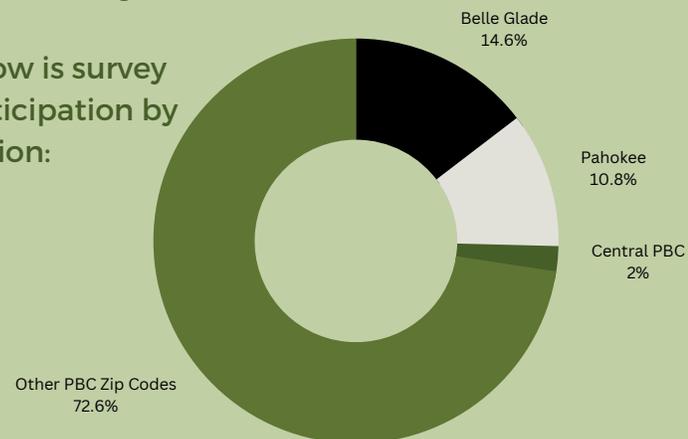
## Getting the word out

During the community workshops, participants learned about the team's entire process that would include the survey. Participants were asked to share the survey once received with all of their peer groups including family, friend groups, and co-workers. They were provided the tools (link, QR code, and images) to help them provide their testimony and to encourage their networks to provide their input.

The survey was also shared using the below methods:

- Conversation participants
- Partners (listed on p7.)
- Mass community mailing lists
- Text Messages
- Mass email lists
- Social Media
  - Facebook
  - Instagram

Below is survey participation by region:





## LESSONS LEARNED

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Throughout the survey process, the guiding committee was happy to see the engagement and response to the survey.

There was one major win and opportunity that the committee will learn from, and improve on when implementing surveys in the future.

The 'win', and one that is often the most challenging to get right, is that the survey was created using the words of the participants. The language was accessible and reflected their feedback.

The major lesson learned and opportunity for improvement is to use a survey tool that features a 'captcha' or any program that prevents bots from spamming the survey. This would ensure clean and accurate data and save a lot of manual labor in distilling bots from humans.

Unfortunately, due to the lack of a captcha, and the allure of a raffle for gift cards, hackers spammed the survey making filtering out real responses with bot responses challenging and time-consuming.

## TESTIMONY

"I appreciated that my feedback and concerns on matters important to environmental sustainability were welcomed and recognized".



Luz Torres, Pahokee Resident



## SURVEY FINDINGS

The survey provided a broad validation of the ideas and concepts brought forward from the neighborhood-based conversations. Out of the 2,935 survey responses, 2,440 were filtered out based on spamming, leaving a total of 495 valid responses.

Some major findings include:

- Survey respondents within 33430, 33476, and 33406 mostly agreed with the assets, climate risk impacts, and investment priorities of the neighborhood conversations. Across the board, despite region, the lack of affordable/available housing stock is an issue.
- Flooding, despite region, is a major climate risk impact experienced by survey respondents.
- There was more desire to further engage in the focus group areas.

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- The top three investments from 'Other PBC Zip Code' respondents were:
  - Increase the stock of, and access to, affordable housing = 82.40%
  - Increase access to healthcare = 82.12%
  - Improve the condition of schools = 81.01%



**Belle Glade**

76% of Belle Glade respondents agreed on the top five assets:

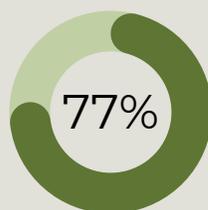
- Winn Dixie Supermarket
- CVS Pharmacy
- Palm Beach Sheriff's Office
- Palm Beach State College
- St. Philip Benzi Catholic Church



**Pahokee**

86% of Pahokee respondents agreed on the top five investments needed:

- Air Quality/Control
- Storm Shelters
- Improve School Conditions
- Affordable Housing
- Road Improvements



**Central PBC**

77% of Central PBC respondents agreed on the climate issues shared from conversations:

- Roads
- Flooding
- Unpredictable & more severe weather
- Lack of tree cover



**Rest of PBC**

Over 82% of PBC respondents said the top three suggested investments should be:

- Access to affordable housing
- Access to healthcare
- Improving conditions of schools



## SUMMARY

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In summary, the engagement of residents throughout this effort has focused on the Gandhi quote 'Whatever you do for me but without me, you do against me'. Engaging residents in decisions that impact their daily lives is a requirement, not a 'let's try to'.

Not only does engaging residents increase feelings of belonging and collaboration on the part of the residents, but it also increases the business benefit on the part of the system. It ensures that the strategies and efforts of the organization are aligned with actual community sentiment, requesting support for strategies on issues that are experienced by residents, and investing in solutions that impact their daily lives.

Throughout the planning, co-creation and collaboration were embedded in the process. Partners came together to develop conversation recruitment strategies, the agenda, and the desired outcomes. The partnership didn't end there. The guiding committee (listed on p13) re-engaged partners and participants to share the survey, created by their conversation feedback, across Palm Beach County.

Finally, this process shows residents that true collaboration, with system representatives, is possible with effort and forethought. Prioritizing the sentiments and contextual expertise of residents' lived experiences can be incorporated and inform policy.

# RECOMMENDATIONS

Moving forward, it is imperative to incorporate the below steps in the VARAP process:

- Climate Risk Assessment
  - Utilize conversation & survey data as prompts within the assessment
  - Re-engage partners and participants in the cocreation of the assessment
  - Provide an opportunity to meet, in-person, regarding the implementation of the assessment
  - Provide the findings, in a collaborative and easy to digest way, to the community and share how the findings of the assessment will inform the action plan.
- VARAP
  - Share with partners & participants how their efforts and insights have helped inform the initial draft of the VARAP.
  - Create multiple touchpoints to allow partners and participants to provide feedback on the draft.



- 'Go Public' with a near-final draft of VARAP to infuse last-minute feedback.
- Unveil the VARAP in a community setting and share 'what this means to you' as the outcome of the event.
- Create a schedule of milestones and touchpoints to keep the community included in the implementation of the VARAP.

# THE GUIDING COMMITTEE

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- Megan Houston (Director)
  - *Palm Beach County Office of Resilience*
- Natalie Frenberg (Analyst)
  - Palm Beach County Office of Resilience
- Gonzalo Castillo (Intern)
  - Palm Beach County Office of Resilience
- Jaime-Lee Bradshaw (Consultant)
  - *Community Partners of South Florida*
- Clarice Redding-Louis (AmeriCorps VISTA)
  - *Community Partners of South Florida*

## THANK YOU

Community Partners of South Florida's Amplifying Impact thanks Palm Beach County's Office of Resilience for engaging residents, meaningfully, and intentionally, to co-create solutions that meet the entire community's needs.

# APPENDIX

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- Deliverable 1: Shared principles and values statements
- Deliverable 2: Partner roles and responsibilities and process evaluation
- Social & Climate Vulnerability Maps Used to Select Locations
- Progress Update 1
- List of Recruitment Partners
- Deliverable 3: Key Questions
- Progress Update 2
- Deliverable 4: Outline of workshop schedule
- Deliverable 5: Belle Glade sustainability presentation & sign-in list
- Deliverable 6: Pahokee sustainability presentation and sign-in list
- Deliverable 7: Copy of outreach materials
- Deliverable 8: Central PBC sustainability presentation and sign-in list
- Deliverable 9: Summary of workshop input
- Progress Update 3
- Deliverable 10: List of proposed stakeholders based on community resident input
- Deliverable 11: Example of workshop survey
- Deliverable 12: Summary of survey results
  - Survey Export
- Deliverable 13: Summary Report
- Workshop Photos
- Budget Reconciliation