



Resilient Ponce Inlet - Planning For Resilience Workshop 1 Summary

A Resilient Ponce Inlet Workshop was held on February 25, 2021 in partnership with the East Central Florida Regional Planning Council (ECFRPC). An in-person option was provided at the Community Center and a virtual option was also available via Zoom. Thirty-eight community members attended

the event. The ECFRPC, a quasi-government agency which works with eight (8) counties and jurisdictions within on a variety of community development projects and programs from emergency management, resilience, economic development, community planning and others, facilitated the conversation and provided a presentation on the Resilient Ponce Inlet project underway. Attendees were provided an opportunity to highlight areas in the Town where current flooding or erosion issues occurred, discuss and prioritize vulnerabilities to the Town's future resilience, and collaborate on potential strategies and next steps for the Town to advance for resilience.

Some major take home messages concerning vulnerabilities facing the town include:

- Resiliency is all about the chronic stressors and acute shocks that a community faces now and in the future.
- Ponce Inlet clearly faces significant threats to storm surge if a hurricane were to directly hit the Town. Sea level rise will also be an increasing issue in the coming decades.
- Many residents have concerns about the management of the sand dunes on the beachside. The overall dune quality is better on the southern end of the Town's peninsula as it is closer to the Jetty, compared to the dunes in the northern end of Town.
- There is was discussion on the management and drainage of stormwater especially between Wilbur By the Sea and the Town of Ponce Inlet.
- Some areas of consistent flooding include portions of Atlantic Avenue near Town Hall during any severe rain event. Discussion also focused on flood impacts from the lagoon, especially in the southern area of the Town.
- Sewage pipes are often over-run and have difficulty during flood events near the southern end of town down Peninsula Drive heading north.
- Heavy discussion revolved around erosion and design associated with sea walls.

- Community members are also greatly interested in engaging in further conversations, especially in discussions about energy, flood, erosion, and impacts on drinking water supplies.

Some strategies identified by participants to address the vulnerabilities discussed include:

- Require rock revetments and living shorelines required in conjunction with any sea wall which should be designed in a curved manner. However, sea walls should be allowed only when nature-based solutions are found to not be sufficient.
- Continue looking at septic to sewer conversions as about half the Town is currently on each on sewer.
- Keep and prioritize natural buffer areas as natural lands (most of the islands on the west side of Town) – this leads to better overall resilience for Ponce Inlet.
- Cap development in the Town, prohibit further high-rise development and encourage low impact development strategies.
 - If new development/redevelopment is to occur, raise building standards to allow structures to be elevated at a higher level above BFE. This would require changing allowable building height.
- Overall, economic impacts should drive the Town’s resilience policy.
 - Potential strategies could involve insurance companies funding resilience projects to help address issues with flooding.
- Contact scientists at University of Florida, FIT, Stetson, UCF and others to construct living shorelines along the coast to prevent coastal erosion.
- Work with the county to incorporate the stormwater/floodwater drainage best practices of neighboring Wilbur by the Sea into the Town’s stormwater system.
- Prioritize low impact development strategies, even for businesses, to capture more stormwater on-site and create visual enhancements throughout the Town.
- Implementation of alternative energy distribution such as renewable energy community microgrid; as well as preventive electrical measures like battery backups and burying electrical lines.
- Reduction of pesticide use, and incorporation of community vegetation and green areas preservation to help protect drinking water supply.
- Increase nature-based solutions against flooding, and provide greater accessibility to flood preventing installations such as residential flood gates

and availability of sand bags. Also, tighten zoning laws to prohibit building near the water.

- Restore and reenforce natural environments for the reduction of erosion (e.g., dune restoration, tree planting and tree ordinance support, nature-based structures and biomimicry, community gardens, zoning and permitting for buildings and public policy for new development, among other measures)



The ECFRPC will take the findings from this workshop, best practices for addressing resilience, and information derived from assessing vulnerabilities to the Town to develop an online survey for residents and business owners to engage with to take a deeper dive into vulnerabilities, strategies and direction for the Town. Results of the survey will be provided to the Town and will

help to drive the update of the Coastal Element of the comprehensive plan to address the legislative requirements associated with Senate Bill 1094 “Peril of Flood”.

Stay up to date with Resilient Ponce Inlet here: [Resilient Ponce Inlet | perils-of-flood \(perilofflood.net\)](https://resilientponceinlet.com/perils-of-flood/perilofflood.net)