Message from the Executive Director

Like it or not, another hurricane season will soon be upon us.

For residents and businesses in the Tampa Bay area, it’s more important than ever to prepare. Storms are growing both in number and intensity each year, and even though our region has been historically lucky, we must be ready for the worst.

Our goal is to help the region prepare in every way we can.

For residents, we are once again preparing hurricane guides for distribution in Citrus, Hernando, Manatee and Sarasota counties. We are also providing content for the Tampa Bay Times’ Hurricane Guide insert, as we did last year.

For businesses, we continue to work with a number of business organizations and local emergency officials as part of our ongoing Project Phoenix 2.0 work. We’ve presented a simulation of what could happen if a Category 5 hurricane hits our area to business and civic groups and facilitated discussions designed to prepare business leaders.

Disaster planning is one of our most important roles at the Tampa Bay Regional Planning Council. If you have any questions on how we can help, please don’t hesitate to contact anyone on our team.

Longtime employee to retire

Longtime employee Marshall Flynn is retiring on May 30. As the TBRPC’s IT and GIS director, Flynn has made significant advancements with his 3D modeling and GIS analysis, modeling and management over his 36-year career.

In 1985 - his first year at the TBRPC - Marshall was instrumental in completing the first evacuation study in the state of Florida, which became a model nationwide for disaster planning. The tools he created for surge limits, storm tide depth and directional surge cluster continue to be used today to update flood zone maps and model potential impacts. In addition, he created the first hurricane disaster guide to help local residents prepare for hurricanes and tropical storms.

His work on sea level rise began in 1994, with the “Cost of Doing Nothing” study. This initial study continues to be updated and been used as a foundation for many other studies, including the recent “Taking Stock” study.

The TBRPC is grateful for Flynn’s many contributions to the organization and field.
Meet the TBRPC leaders

Four board officers are leading the TBRPC in 2021. Pasco County Commissioner Jack Mariano is chair of the TBRPC. He previously served as chair in 2010.

St. Petersburg City Council member Brandi Gabbard is vice chair. She’s been involved with the TBRPC since 2018 and serves on several committees of the Council including the Tampa Bay Regional Resiliency Coalition Steering Committee.

Manatee County Board of County Commission Chair Vanessa Baugh has been appointed as secretary/treasurer, and also serves as chair of the TBRPC COVID-19 Recovery Task Force.

Bradenton City Council member Patrick Roff is immediate past-chair. Mariano and Roff are among the five elected officials in the 59-year history of the Regional Planning Council to serve twice as Chair.

New study shows economic cost of climate change

Tampa Bay is one of the country’s most environmentally vulnerable areas, and the situation could worsen in coming years, according to a new study from the TBRPC.

TBRPC director of planning & research Randy Deshazo quantified the cost of sea level rise and increased temperatures on critical points of the regional economy. The damages accumulate over the years, which amount to a $4.4 billion (or 1%) loss in gross regional product by 2060. These losses include costly impacts on agriculture, mortality rates, labor productivity, energy demand and local infrastructure.

Sea level rise puts billions of dollars of coastal real estate at risk. Nearly $7.5 billion of private property across the region is projected to be partly to fully inundated with a 3.5-foot increase in the sea level by 2060. With these projections, much of Anna Maria Island would be inundated, along with portions of Apollo Beach, Oldsmar and Palmetto.

Sea level rise contributes to half of the economic impact of climate change. Increased temperatures comprise the other half.

Two recent years – 2016 and 2020 – were the hottest on record worldwide. Higher temperatures have significant impacts on health, work and infrastructure. Increased temperatures lead to higher mortality from heat-related causes, and employees with exposure to heat, such as jobs in agriculture, manufacturing, construction and tourism, are less productive and more likely to be absent from work.

Meanwhile, there’s an increased demand for energy during hotter periods. Energy inefficiency and increased use of air conditioning lead to a projected $4.3 billion increase in energy spending in Florida by 2060. It could undermine Florida’s long-term competitiveness.

Future TBRPC studies will take a deeper look at energy costs, labor productivity and insurance impacts.
TBRPC welcomes 3 new employees

Three new employees have joined the TBRPC’s team to assist local governments in planning for the community’s future and to provide opportunities for sharing solutions.

**Alana Todd • Environmental Planner**
Tod joins the TBRPC after graduating from the University of Maryland with a master’s degree in Marine Estuarine Environmental Sciences and is lead staff for the TBRPC Agency on Bay Management.

**Harry Walsh • Economic Development Planner**
Walsh joined the TBRPC last year, and has been reporting on the economic impacts of COVID-19 on our region, among other topics. Prior to the TBRPC, he worked at REMI.

**Jamie Neville • Statewide Economic Analyst**
Neville joins the TBRPC from REMI, an economic modeling company, where she gave more than 200 presentations about the company’s theories and models.

**REGIONALLY SPEAKING**

**DID YOU KNOW?**

**Citrus County’s tie to “The King”**
Elvis Presley’s ninth movie “Follow That Dream” was filmed in Citrus County in 1961. In it, Toby Kwimper (played by Elvis) starts a family-run roadside business, and he runs into trouble when a mob-run gambling business opens next door.

Gambling was illegal in Florida when the movie was filmed, but a local Chamber of Commerce member and a few anonymous gamblers loaned equipment to the filmmakers.

The movie’s pivotal scene where Elvis delivers a stirring courtroom argument was filmed in the old Citrus County Courthouse.

**Hernando County’s brief name change**
Hernando County was named for Spanish explorer Hernando de Soto who first explored the region in 1539. Hernando County was established in February 27, 1843, and a year later, the name was changed to Benton County for Senator Thomas H. Benton who had sponsored a bill to open area lands for settlement.

It remained Benton County until 1850, after residents voted to change the name back to Hernando County following Sen. Benton’s change in position on the Missouri Compromise.

**CALENDAR**

**MAY**
26
Local Emergency Planning Committee Meeting @ 10:30 a.m.

**JUNE**
10
Agency on Bay Management Meeting @ 9 a.m.
14
Council Meeting @ 10 a.m.

**JULY**
20
Stormwater Management Public Education & Training Committee @ 9:30 am
TBRPC completes Conceptual Master Plan

The TBRPC recently provided technical assistance to the City of New Port Richey for a conceptual redesign of the Downtown Rivergate-Palm District.

Senior planner Sarah Vitale, AICP took the lead in researching resilient design solutions to issues like streetscape design, parking, green infrastructure, building resiliency to coastal hazards and stormwater management.

Some of the TBRPC’s recommendations support the installation of a distinctive gateway entry feature to Main Street from U.S. 19, incorporating mixed use developments throughout the district, adding multi-modal transportation amenities and increasing the public’s access to the river. The solutions focused on easing flooding and resiliency risks while providing new economic development opportunities.

The result: a conceptual master plan, 3D model and 3D flyover animation that celebrates the unique value of the Cotee River, is welcoming to residents and visitors and enhances the city’s resiliency.

The visualizations and conceptual master plan for the district are advisory resources that will be considered as the City of New Port Richey continues through its master planning process.