

# **NDRC Regional Consortia Building Webinar Transcript Thursday, December 4, 2014 3:00-4:30pm EDT**

George Martin: Good afternoon everyone and welcome to today's NDRC webinar on Regional Consortia Building. My name is George Martin. I work for TDA, a HUD technical assistance provider. And I will be providing technical support to today's webinar. In just a few minutes, I am going to turn over the event to our presenters. But I am going to take about four or five minutes to go through some technical instructions for today's webinar.

So I am going to start by reminding everyone that you should turn off your cellphones unless you are using that to access this teleconference. And please close your email and other programs on your computer and give our presenters your undivided attention. If you need help, if you are having technical issues with either the phone or the webinar, please feel free to call my colleague, Vicky Grim, at the number on the screen, (410) 547-1825. Or there is a chat function on the right hand side of your screen. You can send a chat to the host. That host is me and I will do my best to help you resolve the problem. So everyone who has joined this webinar, his or her phone has been muted. We have done that because there will be a lot of folks on the call and we do not want any dogs barking in the background or anything while our presenters are talking.

So we will have a question and answer portion at the end of the webinar. And there will be two ways that you can ask questions. I am going to give you instructions on both those ways. The first way to ask a question is written. On the right hand side of your screen, there is a Q&A panel. You can use that to submit a written question. You just enter your question in the field. Please ask the question to all panelists and select send.

The other way you can ask a question is over the phone. There is one step that you need to make sure you have taken care of in order to be able to ask a question over the phone. If you look at the participant panel on the right hand side of your screen, you will see a series of names. There are the presenters at the top. And then there is your name under attendees. And you need to look to the left of your name and see if there is a telephone icon next to your name. If yes, then when the time comes to ask questions and you want to ask one over the phone, you are set to go. If not, you need to find something called the identity code on the webinar and enter that into your telephone keypad. There are two places that you can find that identity code. One of them is at the top of your screen there is a series of tabs. One of them is called Event Info. If you go onto the Event Info tab, you will see a few pieces of information and one of them will be the identity code. Please get that code and enter it into your telephone keypad, including the pound symbol. You can also, at the very top of your screen, there is a drop down menu that says event. Please click on that. The first option will be information. If you click on information a new window will pop up on your screen. And that will also include the identity code, which again is the pound symbol, a series of numbers, and then the pound symbol again. Enter all of that information including the pound symbols onto your telephone keypad. So that is what you need to do to be prepared to ask a question over the phone. When you are ready to ask a question over the phone, you are going to have to virtually raise your hand. If you look on your screen, right under the participant panel, you will see a small hand icon. You can press

that button. And then the host, me, will know that you wish to ask a question over the phone. I can unmute you and you will be able to ask that question.

So just some notes on questions, we are going to answer all questions verbally. So even if you submit a written question, we are still going to answer that over the phone. If you would like a written response, please let us know. And we also may not be able to answer all questions depending on how many there are. We will try to answer the questions that seem to be the most common first.

Finally, as part of the NDRC process, please send any additional unanswered or questions that you want answered privately to [resilientrecovery@hud.gov](mailto:resilientrecovery@hud.gov). And on that note, I am going to turn it over to our emcee for today, Lynsey Johnson from HUD.

Lynsey Johnson: Great! Thanks so much, George. Excellent! Thanks so much. Good afternoon everyone and welcome to the fourth topical webinar on Regional Consortia Building. This webinar series is running concurrently with the National Disaster Resilience Competition. We really hope that this series is an opportunity to learn more about the nine key components to Client Resilience Planning and Projects. As George has mentioned, this is not a NOFA NDRC question/answer webinar. So if there are any questions that come in regarding the National Disaster Resilience Competition, we will direct you to submit those questions to [resilientrecovery@hud.gov](mailto:resilientrecovery@hud.gov).

And then also just as a note, we want to make sure you understand this is a suggested approach on handle and go about resilience planning and that kind of thing--More of a tool for you to use. And you should be able to tailor towards your jurisdiction and making sure you are applying what you need to do to get resilience planning done in your community.

We are very fortunate today to have with us five excellent presenters. First, Chris is with us for the Institute of Sustainable Communities. Chris has led the Sustainable Communities large network of capacity building and peer learning programs including some two hundred communities, twenty professional organizations working to plan and develop on sustainability. Additionally, we have from the Metropolitan Area Planning Council, which is out of Boston, both Amy Cotter and Rebecca Davis joining us. Amy is the regional plan implementation director for MAPC in Boston. She oversees the implementation of Greater Boston's region plan, Metropolitan Future, and she also manages the community's regional planning grant. And she also works as a member of the Massachusetts Smart Growth Alliance. Rebecca has worked with MAPC in Boston since 2008. She is the director of Government Affairs Department and the manager of the Clean Energy Division. And then from the Gulf Regional Planning Commission, we have Elaine Wilkinson. She is the executive director, which is also the Metropolitan Planning Organization or MPO for the Mississippi Gulf Coast. She is an urban and regional planner and has many years of experience planning and administrative experience having worked in both public and private sectors. And then finally, we have joining us, Megan Cromwell from the National Association of Development Organizations. She is the disaster resilience technical assistant manager. She provides stability and capacity building services to regions and communities working to encourage smart growth that have to face economic development.

Today's presentation is going to be formatted by one giving a broad overview of regional collaboration and sustainability. And then we are going to turn to some best practices and case studies both in Boston and in the Gulf Coast. And then finally, we will have Megan end with some recommendations for regional consortia building. And then at the end of that, we will go through

questions from you guys. So with that, I am going to turn it over to Chris to talk a little more about regional collaboration of sustainable communities. We had some phone technical issues. So we are working off of a cellphone here. If you are having any issues hearing us, please let us know. And we will definitely move closer.

Chris Fornash: And I will do my best to project so you might need to turn down the volume what you just had it set on to hear Lynsey. This is Chris Fornash with the Institute for Sustainable Communities, which is a non-profit based on Montpelier, Vermont although I am based here in Washington. This 23-year-old non-profit has worked to develop local capacity to respond to climate issues, issues in general about sustainability since 1991. For the first really 15 years of the organization primarily overseas, but more recently, as the organization's focus has shifted to climate as our number one precedent sustainability concern. We have a five year old US program and significant programs have been in Southeast Asia as well, which of course are hot spots for greenhouse gas production, as well as hot spots for feeling the impacts of climate change, especially in vulnerable countries in Southeast Asia.

So ISB, as I just mentioned, worldwide. We have a staff of about 85 in 10 different offices. So if you have interest in international work in this arena, please let me know. But, of course, today, I will focus entirely on the challenges of building regional collaboration around sustainability in the United States context.

Our approach to capacity building consists of primarily three legs. Peer learning and training workshops so there is a general rubric of the sustainable community's leadership academy. I am guessing there are several of you on the phone that have been involved in one of those over the five or six years we have been providing them on specific topics within the general idea of sustainability. Efficient access to high caliber information by publishing resource guides, case studies, and such. And then ongoing support of direct technical assistance to individual communities.

You can find records of best practices from all of that work at our website with the world's longest URL, [sustainablecommunitiesleadershipacademy.org](http://sustainablecommunitiesleadershipacademy.org). As I always counsel, you only have to type it once. And then your browser will remember it for you. But all of our work is freely available there and well searchable. We have worked with over five hundred communities across the country, undoubtedly including some of yours. And when I say communities, it has been everywhere from the neighborhood scale up to, as you see highlighted here in green, regional, beyond the metropolitan sense. In the sense of multi state regions as well as, of course, the metropolitan scale regions. And much of what I talk about in the next few minutes will be focusing on the metropolitan scale.

So I am guessing that almost all of you are well and truly familiar with the Sustainable Communities Initiative and the Partnership for Sustainable Communities. But I am sure some of you, if you are connected to this webinar series because of the NDRC and you are working at the state level, you may not be as familiar with it. So in those specifics of the initiative as it pertains to this topic, this office, Lynsey's office, the Office of Economic Resilience, gave out grants to 143 communities in 2010 and 2011 including 74 to Regional Planning Consortia. And that is specific, I would not say term of art, but it specifically defines term in the NOFA and in the federal notice that provided them funding. And let me say that has been an extremely competitive grant program. They have this NDRC competition that Lynsey mentioned before. It is also extremely ambitious of what it is asking for. And I am not a federal agent so I can say that as an outsider.

The Sustainable Communities grant funding was also very ambitious in what it asked from those grantees. And many of you have firsthand experience of this. And one of the ways it very ambitious was it required a consortium that from my kind of work in local and regional government was unprecedented. At least consortia included regional, it could be in every case, multiple jurisdictions, counties, and cities within those regions. They also included numerous -- I think in every case, but certainly in the vast majority of these 74 regional Planning Consortia—they included non-governmental groups, community groups, stakeholders, and not just people to have outreach done to. But as people participating and getting funds in many cases through the grant, community groups, anchor institutions, hospitals, and educational institutions. And these relationships were all required to be formalized (not at the time of application, but soon after winning the grant) in a formal consortium.

So for those of you are not part of this program, it has been seeing some successful models about what consortium agreement looks like with an interagency agreement, but also in non-program partners and advises to work among them and make specific commitments. What can that really look like? We have access to a ton of really useful models there if you are trying to get started with this sort of collaboration, with this sort of consortium. A map of the sustainable communities, this map actually is potentially useful to those of you who are not involved in one of the Office of Economic Resilience grant projects. Because there are a lot of other Partnership for Sustainable Community Investments not all of which have this requirement to do broad based outreach as part of this. But many of them can, including the DOT Tiger Grants and some of the other investments and programs that you see listed here. So if you happen to be in a region or a community that has not been a part of a Sustainable Communities Planning Grant, there are also lots of other folks you can look to in your regions that have experience working with the principles, the limitability principles as announced to the partnership, but almost may have some relationship to regional consortia.

So our part at ISC is we have led for the last two years and before that were a part of our own consortium, frankly, of organizations including the ones you see here on the screen. And we branded ourselves loosely in with Sustainable Communities Learning Network. The learning network includes these nine key organizations to here, about a dozen more that are also our partners although not at quite the level of investment as these guys. And the network, of course, also includes the 143 communities that were direct recipients of the HUD grants and another one hundred or so that was recipients of technical assistance through other partnership programs.

So these organizations -- and you can note the breadth of experience and focus represented here from Ambition Utah, which grew up out of the Regional Planning Consortium in the Wasatch Front Region in Utah, the Natural Resources Defense Council, the Minnesota Housing Partnership, which obviously has specific expertise in housing policy, Place Matters. If you do not know these organizations, I encourage you to either reach out to me or directly to these organizations. I put the right contacts up there. There is a wealth of expertise in supporting these regional consortiums that is represented in all these organizations. And Megan McConville will speak at the end of this webinar on behalf of the people at NADO, which you see right here on the left.

So, as I mentioned, our role has been coordinating MET Group. And that is how we have the ability to exceed the lessons across the 74 regional planning grantees about what makes us successful in consortium work. We are happy to serve as a resource for those of you who are trying to figure out the mechanics of giving a consortium either on paper or a consortium that exists on paper to start to

function in reality. And those are separate and related challenges, of course. So feel free. Our contact information is at the end. Feel free to get in touch directly after this.

A specific example that I wanted to talk briefly about is our work in southeast Florida. In 2009, I believe, the origin story of this consortium was that were representatives from four different counties in southeast Florida that were all here in Washington visiting their elected officials and asking for variance on the same sort of assistance and support. And they realized that they would have a much better case to be made if they got together and had some coordinator to ask for assistance and support. So four counties in southeast Florida and to be perfectly blunt about it, two traditionally Democratic counties and two traditionally Republican counties signed a formal charter to work together on climate, resilience, and adaptation. And that charter, the Climate Compact, has been realized and has been real in the five years since then – the four years really since it signed, but five since it was negotiated. This is a region of six million people. This is a region that is incredibly vulnerable to the effects of climate change. And regardless of political differences, saw that they needed to work together from a common base of understanding of what that change means for their region and trying to come up with solutions.

On the basis of that political compact that was signed in 2010, they developed common scenarios and vulnerability assessments working from a common basis of scientific data. And developed an action plan that was finalized in 2012 that included 110 recommended actions. One particular one for me is – I am a transportation standards engineer by profession. One that holds real interest is they developed one that is called Adaptation Action Area. So you can designate within the region specific geographic areas that will receive special emphasis in funding and planning because they are particularly vulnerable. And that can be because of vulnerability, the population to the assets that are in the area as well as the magnitude of the climate change or other impacts that might be felt. So those areas are determined on the basis of several different kinds of populations that live there as well, as I said, the infrastructure and other assets that are located there. Interestingly then, because of that Climate Compact and that existing collaboration, they were able to successfully compete for one of the HUD Sustainable Communities Regional Planning Grants called seven50. That is well integrated now with the goals of that Climate Compact and informed by it.

More recently, we, at ISB, are building on the success of our work helping to pioneer and champion that model in southeast Florida. We pulled together 14 regions from around the country who are looking to collaborate about the climate resilience. That is specifically at the regional level. Here, we are speaking of mostly the metropolitan region. And you see the lift here. MAPC was part of a consortium from the Boston region. So there are five existing regional climate collaboratives now, southeast Florida and four in California. The four biggest metropolitan areas each have a regional climate collaborative that has formed, mostly induced by the Landmark Climate Legislation in California over the past three or four years. There are another eight or nine of them put together who are from various stages of figuring out how we make this work. What are the lessons you have learned about how to build the consortium in a way that can actually translate into action?

So one of the interesting lenses that were put on that at this event is that one of the questions the federal government needs to answer if it wants to put resources into a regional thing because regional things do not really fit any of the boxes. They are not jurisdictions. They are not municipalities. They are not states. What do you do to get resources to a regional thing? Well two of the key questions are does it have a checkbook and does it have a credit card. Can it incur debt on its own? Can it receive funds on its own? So in this case of developing a regional consortium of

some sort is dependent on whether those are federal resources or locally granted or state granted resources. Amy is taking herself off mute. Did you want to interject something here Amy or not?

Amy Cotter: Nope, I am just looking forward to thanking you for including us in all of those leadership academies.

Chris Forinash: We are finding out more about the resources that were developed. And we are still developing more. Not really in event proceedings, that is with limited value, but some lessons learned and best practices coming out of our discussions to better keep track of the specific page on that world's longest URL or get in touch with me. And I am happy to connect you directly to some of those resources. So it is almost time to turn to Amy. I guess it is time to turn Amy. That was my last slide. But I am actually going to hand it back to Lynsey to cue up Amy's presentation. But thanks for your attention. And my contact information, again, will be at the end of the presentation. And I am happy to serve as a resource to connect you to some of the best practices that we have learned about in the first and second half. Thanks!

Lynsey Johnson: Great! Thank you so much, Chris. I noticed that someone had posted that the phone cut out. Is the audio better or is still rather shaky – if someone could just message at the bottom.

George Martin: Lynsey, this is George. It is much better now.

Lynsey Johnson: Okay, sounds great. Thank you so much. So with that, we are going to turn it over to the Metropolitan Area Planning Council representatives, both Amy Cotter and Rebecca Davis. And they will go over their metro future plans that they have developed.

Amy Cotter: Thanks, Lynsey. And thanks again to Chris and to everybody who has joined us on the call. We have had a chance to participate in a few ISC Leadership Academies over the years, most recently focused on climate adaptation. And find them really valuable opportunities to engage with our peers and with experts on these issues.

I will be very quick about giving you a quick overview to the metro Boston region. We were created as a regional planning agency in 1963. And we have 101 municipalities, no unincorporated area. And as of about 40 years ago, we are not the metropolitan planning organization for our region. So we lack that check book. And I think in many ways that has allowed this organization to get creative and very entrepreneurial about the work that we do. We did also have a statute that charged us with developing “from time to time” a regional plan for the region. And interpret that as meaning roughly every ten years we should come together and decide what our goals and aspirations are for the region in the future. We last did that in a plan called Metro Future that was adopted by our council in December 2008. And it is a little bit of information about Metro Future. I think it is typical of many of the Envision Utah-like planning processes, based in scenario analysis that was done about that in mid-2000. And we had a fleet of goals that came out of that. But it was only towards the end of that process that we started really hearing loud calls for us to incorporate climate change and climate mitigation. And at that time, mostly, we were talking about mitigation efforts into this planning process. So we did build some of that into Metro Future. But as you will hear in a moment, we knew that we needed to do more.

So this Metro Future plan, as you can see from these goals, is a fairly wide ranging bold, but achievable plan that led our organization to focus on issues that had not been a part of our work

before, bringing us together with partners and allies well outside municipal government and state government in the regions. And in particular, led us to think about how we foster more equitable as well as more sustainable futures for the people who live and work in this region. We know that implementing this plan, which has been an activity we have been undertaking that since that time, will require a whole host of changes that span from local to private, to federal, to state in nature. And some of these are governmental in nature. But many of them are not. And they are many, many, many decisions in magnitude. We know in particular that we will require political will to make all of these changes happen. That in turn informs our continued engagement with partners and allies across the region.

Our effort to implement that plan gained a significant boost when we received a four million dollar regional planning grant from HUD in 2010. And that opportunity did allow us to go back and focus on filling some of the key gaps like climate change that we knew had left in the Metro Future plan. So we closed our grant. And we are very close to finishing our Climate Adaptation plan for the region, which does include strategies for mitigation as well. But I think in that intervening period, we have realized the need to focus on ways in which we can become a more resilient region as well as to minimize our contribution to climate change in doing so. And you can see the suite of activities that we undertook under the Sustainable Communities Cooperative Agreement in order to advance our implementation of that Metro Future plan.

Now, clearly, we needed to have a broad consortium of people to help us do those implementation activities and to take advantage of this unprecedented opportunity to implement the plan. And we recognized that lacking the purse strings of an MPO and lacking the governmental authority of a commission or some other entity, that we needed to marshal all of our partners in that political will to advance our goals.

We had realized something similar in developing Metro Future in the first place. And kind of building on lessons learned in that process, decided to create a consortium that would never truly be closed to new members. That really everyone has a seat at the table or a potential seat at the table in helping to advance this work. And through the regional planning grant, that also meant they had the opportunity to pitch and be a resource to do whether it is local work, tool creation, or research projects.

Over the course of our – well with an extension, three and one-half year grant, we never closed the consortium to new members. We did have an agreement that each entity was asked to sign that committed to advancing the goals of that regional plan. And the only type of entity that was not invited to participate were profit seeking entities, although trade associations and folks that represent the interest of business, of course, were an important part of this consortium. Not all of our 101 municipalities chose to participate. But 66 cities and towns did. And they collectively represent 80 percent of the region's population.

When we built the Metro Future plan, we had a real committed set of steering committee members. But by and large, they did not have constituencies that they represented or reported back to. So our governance structure for the Sustainable Communities Steering Committee specifically tried to address that by establishing caucuses and a municipal affinity groups that would come together for deliberation in order to make recommendations from their perspective to the steering committee via their elected representative. And you can see the structure here may look a little unyielding and well it barely fits on the screen so I guess I can call it broad. But it did bring together, in a 27 member steering committee, what we felt and then actually operated as a true breadth of perspective that

mattered to achieving a more sustainable and resilient region. And I have to be honest, the engagement of the caucuses, their deliberations, and their participation was significantly greater when they were engaged in decision making about how we would use the funds that were not programmed at the beginning of the grant. In other words, as they were reviewing different proposals for work that was consistent with the grant's goals and objectives, they were really engaged. Because they felt that they had a meaningful input to provide. Once that level of meaningful decision-making had passed in this grant and we were conducting the work that they had helped us to shape. Those caucuses and other bodies lost a little bit of interest in participating. So I think I gained a greater appreciation for giving both meaningful decisions to be a part of.

But within those caucuses, for example, in the regional prosperity caucus, we brought together folks from basically a neighborhood of Boston, Dorchester (some of you may be familiar with it) and folks who were working in some of outskirt suburbs along the I-495 belt, for example. And it was the first time that those two directors who are working on economic development in our region, it was the first time that they had met each other. And the dialogue that we had fostered through this set of caucuses and steering committee participation continues to this day. The steering committee turned out to be a real body for learning and deliberation in addition to being an advisory body for staff. And I can say we truly did our work differently. And did, in many cases, different work as a result of having this broad cast of characters involved.

I think through the work we have done both before the Sustainability Communities Regional Planning Grant and through the Regional Planning Grant, partnerships with our mayors have become all the more important. And in a state like Massachusetts where we all incorporated and there are some cities and some towns that are the size of cities, I think that this group of people coming together to focus on climate is an unprecedented opportunity for us moving forward. And with that, I will turn it over to my colleague, Rebecca Davis, for more.

Rebecca Davis: Sure, so as Chris mentioned, ISC just brought together a group of coalitions or coalitions in the making around climate preparedness. And that is definitely where we are right now at MAPC specifically on the climate adaptation or climate preparedness.

We have our regional climate plan. And we were really trying to figure out how we can take that plan and really implement it on the local level. And with the Metro Mayors Coalition, which is a coalition of the 13 mayors really in the inner core of Boston with the City of Boston playing a leading role, we had a real opportunity to start focusing on climate preparedness. So the Metro Mayors Coalition is actually a coalition that has been around for 13 years. It is a coalition that MAPC facilitates where we bring the mayors together every month to come up with shared policy goals. They work on everything from new violence prevention, transportation funding, municipal finance. And with the new mayor, Boston really focused on climate, specifically climate preparedness. The group has decided to take on this issue together.

In order to form our coalition, we are putting together a summit for the spring where we will bring together really a government driven process. We will be bringing together the mayors from all of the different coalition members as well as top state and legislative leaders and other folks from the business and other important institutions. And what we are really hoping to do there is set the stage for a coalition that will work forward working on collectively setting goals, coming up with principles, hoping to come up with ways to make decisions together.

One great example I will put out is they really want to figure out where are the most important places to invest. So we have this small community of Everett that contains 50 percent of the fuel for the region and takes care of 60 percent of the fresh food through their food processing plant while they are also on a river in a very flood prone place. It is really important to the whole region that we make that area resilient in a way that perhaps the City of Everett itself cannot take care of. They are looking to come up with shared metrics and shared vulnerability assessments as well as shared data. And our goal is to come up with a work plan to really implement these measures for years to come.

So we are really at the beginning and looking forward to hearing more about what other coalitions are doing. And hoping that our coalition can be robust and really attack climate preparedness together.

So with that, I will turn it back to Lynsey.

Lynsey Johnson: Thank you so much, Amy and Rebecca. I will now turn it over to Elaine Wilkinson from Gulf Regional Planning Commission.

Elaine Wilkinson: Okay, good afternoon. I hope everyone can hear me. Our presentation will examine how our group actually was able to incorporate the topic of resilience into our ongoing sustainability-planning program. And we will provide you with some of the lessons we learned undertaking this effort.

We got started with our sustainability planning in 2011. This was to be the first ever regional sustainability plan for the Mississippi Gulf Coast, a region that was still in recovery from several devastating events. We called the planning process and the final report Plan for Opportunity.

But first of all, I would like to briefly describe our consortium and go over two of the key components that have made the project successful. The members of the consortium were in fact originators of the grant application. GRPC was the lead organization to submit the application. The other members of the consortium were organizations with which we had ongoing working relationships. And then we added others that expand our capacity. We needed to meet targeted technical needs that were critical to the project design. Members were from universities, governmental agencies, non-profit groups, and the private sector. The initial consortium of partners because the staff of the project. And we called ourselves the PMC. As part of the grant application, the PMC formalized a partnership agreement. And as you heard earlier, HUD required grantees to have a consortium agreement, which we called it our partnership agreement. Our partnership agreement was executed by the PMC. And it was also signed by the executive committee once they were formed. The agreement proved to be essential to keeping the partnership intact for three years. It established fiscal and reporting accountability. Remember, it was a HUD grant, commitment, commitment, commitment for three years, an exhaustive comprehensive planning process. And we also built in the capacity to expand, which proved vital when we needed to add resilience to the planning. And it was also inclusive of the governance structure.

Now the PMC spent a lot of time crafting the governance structure. We had to make sure there was a commitment to this governance structure. So it was made part of the partnership agreement that everyone signed. Now I would like to point out the effort we went through developing the governance structure was very constructive. It was very early in the whole process so it allowed all of the partners to openly discuss potential problems and issues that could arise. And it established protocols for handling situations that could derail the planning process. Having this done at the

outset minimized disagreements and disruptions once the planning got underway. The governance was also important to establishing credibility that the planning process was explicit, open, and accountable.

This is an illustration of the governance structure we used in meetings to explain the roles and responsibility of the committee. The role of the Regional Governance Committee on the right hand side was assumed by the Metropolitan Planning Organization. Concerning the planning process, we followed a three-stage process that was undertaken by the PMC partners. The topical committees were formed around each system. And those are the six listed on the left. A PMC partner was in charge of one or more systems. The PMC partner had to identify and secure members for their committee. Once the committee was performed, the PMC partner was responsible for development of an assessment of current conditions and a stakeholder analysis of how the system performed. These reports were reviewed and discussed by the topical committee. The topical committee would prepare the final recommendations to be presented to the working group. And then, if approved, to the executive committee for final adoption.

The planning process focused on existing conditions and what gaps or deficiencies existed that would hamper or prevent a system from meeting current and future needs. The projected needs were essentially following linear forecast of sorts based on population forecast, demographics, and surveys of needs. The planning was not focused on how well prepared a system was to respond to sudden incremental change. So almost inevitably, as each system was assessed and definitions of a future sustainable system were discussed, resilience emerged as a recurring characteristic of a sustainable system. Well by 2012, it became clear resilience resonated across all of this as a critical component of a sustainable system. And we needed more in depth discussion and strategic planning.

So the PMC approached the Mississippi/Alabama Sea Grant Consortium and NOAA for assistance and expanded the consortium through its partnership agreement to include the necessary expertise to incorporate resilience into Plan for Opportunity. So the Resilience Committee was formed in 2012. Some of the members were familiar for Plan for Opportunity. However, most were not. So we had to bring everybody up to speed on the work that had been done to date and the goals and objectives of the sustainability plan.

It was critical to define the science that would be used to discuss climate change. And it needed to be from a trusted source, very localized data, and understandable. The process to study resilience was also decided. There would be a facilitated discussion in a workshop format that included members of the resilience committee and topical committee. And once the workshops were completed, the recommendations would then be tied into the final recommendation of the Plan for Opportunity.

So we had a team of facilitators from NOAA, Coastal Services, and Mississippi Alabama Sea Grant. And there were five workshops, one for each of the five topical systems, each workshop about four hours. The air quality was handled outside of these workshops. They had their own programs. The first two hours of the workshop focused on threats to a system. Now I need to say here that the resilience committee had decided not to limit the discussion to climate change. So there were many various types of threats that were raised. But for this presentation, I am just going to refer to some of the threats related to climate that were identified in the workshop. So, for example, the housing workshop has been said in one instance that storm surge, as related to climate, was a threat to housing. While in the transportation workshop, the participants indicated sea level

rise was a threat to the transportation system. And participants in the food workshop reported increasing temperatures was a threat to the food system.

The second thing is what in the system is vulnerable? Here, the groups had to be specific as to what was vulnerable to the threat they reported. So for housing it was the structures; transportation, road beds; food, crops. So then they talked about why it is vulnerable. This brought out a lot of discussion. And it really zeroed in on locations, proximity, construction, education, and knowledge.

What does a resilient system look like? We had a 20-year horizon. So we wanted them to think about it out 20 years. And this question got the group discussing specifically what resilience meant to a system, if it was to endure and achieve its sustainability goals. These are, for example, definitions that were posted, which you will notice is a focus on strong, safe, continuous, locally grown, etcetera, which are indicators of resilience. I think what is of interest is how resilience really delve into conditions that are needed to be in place to a sustainable system to achieve its goals to provide, in our case, opportunities for people and communities to prosper and thrive. Resilience keyed into how to build safeguards into the system.

The last hour or so was to have each group work the vision. They had to articulate specifically how the threats and vulnerabilities that they identified in the previous session would challenge success attaining the vision. For example, in housing, as related to climate, storm surge was stated to be a threat to housing by destruction of homes not strong enough or high enough to withstand the surge. The vision of providing strong, safe, affordable homes was challenged by the escalating costs of insurance for homes located in areas of high velocity flood zones. Once the challenges were stated, the strategies were identified and should be implied to overcome the challenges. So in housing, if communities adopted resilient star building code, the higher construction standard could effectively lower the cost of insurance.

Lastly, but extremely important, each strategy must have an implementer or one or more, however many, quantifiable indicators, not just cities or whatever, but so many cities, and a timeframe during which strategy is monitored to assess the progress being made to achieve resilience. And these are simply examples and are very, very specific to the particular individual plan being developed.

The time from sustainability plan to resilience and we adopted a vision of resilience for the Mississippi Gulf Coast. And within the plan, we identified action items and strategies that were to achieve the vision. You will see that the key words that they spent a lot of time on this vision statement. And the key words that they really focused on for resilience was that foundation of understanding knowledge or practices, ability to implement a culture of resilience that teaches self-reliance. I mean they spent a lot of time on the words they thought needed to be here to say what was needed to create, build, and maintain a resilient Gulf Coast.

So in conclusion, what have we learned? Well our planning process would have benefited greatly by having resilience included as a dimension to be studied at the outset of the assessment phase. Having facilitated discussions that exposed all types of threats, vulnerabilities, and risks would be comprehensive, revealing, and enlightening to the entire to planning process.

When you are bringing climate change to the discussion, be certain to have trusted sources of expertise, data, and tools to guide the discussion. And give thought in deciding on who your stakeholders really need to be.

Last, as a reminder, just as your sustainability plans needs continued monitoring, resilience planning does not stop once the plan is adopted. It must be monitored and reported as you achieve success through implementation. Thank you.

Lynsey Johnson: Great, thank you so much, Elaine. I am going to turn it over Megan McConville of the National Association of Development Organizations.

Megan McConville: Great, thank you, Lynsey. Good afternoon everyone. As Lynsey said, my name is Megan McConville. I work for the National Association of Development Organizations. And I am going to wrap up today's webinar by sharing some work that we have done and some lessons that we have learned in our work on regional resilience with regional development organizations around the country and particularly in rural America.

So just to jump right in and define for you what we think about when we think about resilience, we talk about the ability of a region or community to anticipate, withstand, and bounce back from any type of shock or disruption that it might experience. And that could include natural disasters, hazards, the impacts of climate change, or more economically driven incidents like the closure of a large employer, the decline of an industry that has been important in the area for a long time, changes in the workforce, and any other type of disruption that might occur.

And we like to use that broad and inclusive definition of resilience for a couple of reasons. One of those is that we work, as I said, in a lot of rural areas. And many of you who are from rural areas know that those places have been impacted by so many different types of economic changes, shifts, booms, and busts over the decades that it is really important for them to be thinking ahead 10 or 15 years about what types of economic risks and threats are coming their way so they can have strategies in place to counter those.

We also think that often times it seems like when talking about resilience, communities pay more attention to strategies that build resilience through land use, development, and physical aspects of the community, which are very, very, very important. But we also know that there are economic development strategies that can be put in place to build resilience. So we like to make sure that that piece is added in there as well.

We also like to advocate for resilience to be looked at on a regional scale. Obviously, that is what this webinar is about today. And I have listed many reasons for that on the slide. But basically, we feel that often times the impact of natural disasters and climate change are regional in nature. They do not necessarily – they do not stop at jurisdictional boundaries. And often, recovery can happen more effectively when communities work together.

So just to take a step back and let you all know who we are at NADO and what our role is working on this issue. We are a national membership association of regional planning and economic development councils around the country. So our mission, as it says on the slide, is to strengthen local governments, communities, and economies through regional strategies, partnerships, and solutions. We do that by working with over five hundred regional development organizations across the country. And we use regional development organizations or RDOs for short as an umbrella term for councils of government, regional planning commissions, economic development districts, and other multi county organizations that go by different names depending on what state they are located in. And these organizations work with the communities in their regions on economic and workforce development, transportation, land use, small business finance, services for the aging,

disaster preparedness and recovery, and many, many other issues. And as I said before, a lot of our membership is in small metro and rural areas.

I work for the side of NADO that we call the Research Foundation, the other one being our advocacy component. But we really work with our members on the issue that they address throughout their regions and raise their awareness of best practices through training, technical assistance, and peer exchange.

And in recent years, resilience has really been an important focus for us. So as we do on other issues, we provide training and technical assistance. We do best practices research around regional resilience. And I will not go into detail now on any examples of that. But we have a lot of great resources available on our website, which is [nado.org](http://nado.org). And I would encourage you to check those out.

One of the reasons that we are focusing so much on regional resilience right now is because our membership has been becoming more and more interested in resilience over the past several years due to the fact that they have seen a lot more frequent and more severe natural disasters in their regions. They are thinking about the impacts of climate change. They are seeing more interest in these issues at the federal level. So for a variety of reasons, many of them today play a big role in building resilience in their regions. And on the slide, I have listed several ways in which they do that generally speaking. So I have grouped them into categories. But one of the big roles of RDOs is obviously regional planning and analysis. Many of them create the hazard mitigation plans for counties in their regions. They do a lot of vulnerability assessments looking at, for example, how their economies might be vulnerable to natural disasters or climate change in the region. They plan for economic development. Many of them are economic development districts designated by the United States Economic Development Administrations. And in that role, they are responsible for creating a five-year economic development plan for the region. Those plans, starting very soon, are going to be required to include the concept of economic resilience. So that is an issue or role the regions are thinking more and more about. They also tend to have a very strong GIS mapping department and do a lot of GIS work for the communities in their regions.

That second bullet is another big thing that they do is to build and enhance the capacity of the local governments that they work with. They provide a lot of technical assistance around plan writing, public engagement, and regulatory issues. They do a lot of grant writing for local communities. Many of them have revolving loan funds. And some of them even will share staff with local governments. They will have people who sit with the regional council for part of the week and then go to a different local government for the other days.

Often or always, they are very key players in coordinating between federal, state, and local government partners. They really play a valuable role in knowing what is happening here in D.C. and translating between federal agencies, state agencies, and local agencies helping to translate federal priorities down to the local communities that they work with. And helping to be a voice for those local communities talking back up to federal agencies. And they really do a good job keeping an eye on federal technical assistance funding opportunities that are available and helping their local communities access those.

They are supervised by executive directors who are not elected or appointed. So one of their strengths is that they are able to convene stakeholders to discuss issues in a neutral forum. And they

also contribute really important regional collaborative and long-term perspectives about what is good for the region over the longer term.

So as you can tell, I am obviously encouraging all of you to reach out to your RDO if you are building a regional consortium in your area. They could be a really helpful partner. And just to be clear, they may or may not be working on climate resilience or disaster resilience per say. They may be. But they are probably working on something related to those issues in any case such as hazard mitigation, economic development, regional planning, and other thing. And they also, as I have said, have really valuable relationships across the whole region. So it could be helpful and connect you with their contacts.

There are a number of ways you can figure out who your RDO is if you do not know. One of those is if you go to NADO's website. I have shown on the slide there the link that you can follow to find a map of RDOs across the country. It is a little bit outdated. But it will most likely work for you because things have not changed too, too much since we updated it.

We also have a great new resource that we have created, which is a library of all of our members, CEDS, Comprehensive Economic Development Strategies. Those are the plans that I mentioned that are required by the United States EDA. And we took an inventory of those. And figured out which ones incorporate resilience in some way and have listed those up on our website and categorized them according to how they address resilience. So if you take a look there, you might see your local RDO and be able to get a sense for the types of things they are thinking about related to resilience. Many states have state associations of regional councils. So that is another place to go to look for contacts. When all else fails, you can just give us a call at NADO and we will help connect you to the right person.

So aside from encouraging you to get in touch with your RDO, I wanted to share a few recommendations from our work on regional resilience. So whether your regional consortium includes or is run out of a RDO or not, I think these ideas could be helpful in thinking through how to build your regional partnership, how to make your regional work meaningful, and how to make sure it gets implemented.

First, I just want to encourage you all, as you start out these efforts, to understand the regional landscape where you are and to do a little digging on what is the history of regional cooperation in your regions. Some regions have been working together between cities and counties for many years. They are experts at regional collaboration. They have great relationships. And others, it is not as much of a common thing. They may not have done much regional partnering before. So just knowing that going in I think is really important to help you understand how ambitious you can be, maybe what types of projects you should start out with. If it is a region that has not done much together before, this is your first cut at it, you might want to start out with something a little bit simpler.

As I described before, we also encourage everyone to be resilient in a holistic sense. To look at your vulnerability to natural disasters and hazards, the impact of climate change, and also those economic threats and disruptions that I mentioned. I think that it will help make you better prepared for whatever comes down the road. It will help you identify exactly what is important in your region that you need to be resilient to. And it will help you identify strategies that might be able to identify all the stress and risks that you face together. A lot of times, things that make you more resilient to natural disasters also make you more resilient to economic changes.

I have included a couple of examples on the side of the slide there. We are working right now with a region that is where Vermont, New Hampshire, and Massachusetts come together that was hard hit by flooding after Tropical Storm Irene. And now they are about to experience another major economic disruption in the closure of a big nuclear power plant there that employees 63 people throughout their region. So they are a great example of a region or of a mega-region I guess that is looking at resilience in a wholistic way. Looking at resilience to flooding to this big economic shock that is coming down the pike and also to the longer term trends that they have been dealing with for a long time like an aging population, declining wages at their region, and stagnant job creation. So they are thinking about wholistic strategies that can address all of those things.

We are also working with the Upper Valley Adaptation Workgroup, which also is up in New England that is an example of looking at how climate change is going to impact their region. But they realize that in order to engage the economic development in the business partners as they look to engage, they need to tweak and get the economic aspect of climate change. So taking this holistic view can really help message your work and engage a more diverse range of partners.

Another recommendation, just to think about how you can gather region specific information, anything that you can find on the risks and the impacts as they are going to affect you where you are. And so looking out for the information that is out there and seeing if there is anything you can do to single those gaps.

A couple of examples that we know of, one of our members in northeast Florida recently did a regional action plan to look at the potential impacts of sea level noise on their region. It was something that had not been done before. And they felt like they really needed that information to engage their local governments. And out of that came a stack of regional policy recommendations for helping mobilize people.

So the next example is in Florida. Stuff like there was not enough information on the economic impact of hurricanes to the region. So they did some really good modeling of that actually funded by the United States EDA to figure out what the negative impacts such as unemployment, loss of population, loss of income, regional domestic processes would be of a hurricane as well as some of the positive economic impacts like the infusion of federal funds, the construction spending, and other things. So really fill the important gaps of information there.

A lot of the regions that we have worked with that are beginning this work on resilience have started out by just starting a regional conversation about issues. Helping to educate people, helping to bring people together, I think that is really obviously an important role for a regional consortium based on things like the workshops, peer exchanges, facilitating discussions, put together working groups. And they have found, I think, that those external partners can be really helpful in efforts like that.

We have partnered with several of our members to start the conversations and hold these types of workshops. I know that Chris's organization, ISC, has done similar things. EPA's Office of Sustainable Communities, for example, worked with the Mad River Valley Planning District in Vermont to bring in a panel of experts and look at how communities in that area could become more resilient to future flooding through planning and policy making as part of a new set of recommendations for that region. So resources like that that can provide some information, some education, and get the conversation going.

Also, there is this thing that the previous panelist touched upon. Identifying a small number of key and specific next steps and looking for ways that partnering can take a position that fits within their existing mission and are realistic to the partners to complete. One of the great examples of this is from the Region 5 Development Commission, which is a HUD Sustainable Communities Initiative committee as well. As part of their plan implementation work, they used a thing called the Distributed Leadership Model, which is a way to identify stakeholders that will carry forward each of the themes identified in plan. And then to each kind of take a bite off a piece of that and work on implementing it. And then get together and reconnect, share progress and updates, and challenges as time moves on. So if you would like more information on that, we could certainly provide it.

And then just looking for ways to implement your regional work through existing efforts. Making resilience a part of everything that you do and looking for ways that existing programs, policies, and plans can expand or support your work. So, for example, I mentioned the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategies, which are existing plans that economic development districts across the country already have to develop. So they are great vehicles for implementing resilience and can also help lead to some additional funding sources for doing those projects. The South Florida Regional Planning Council has really done a good job looking at climate change and incorporating that into their regional economic development plans. Southern Mississippi, their planning and development district is on the slide there. And it is undertaking a big effort to look at local plans and hazard mitigations plans throughout their regions and help local governments identify gaps between those two things and to better integrate them so that they get implemented as part of local plans.

I am going to skip that one just to leave plenty of time for questions. So thank you all very much. I am happy to answer any questions that you have during the question and answer now or to follow up with you if you are interested in more information on any of the things I have said. So I will turn it back to Lynsey.

Lynsey Johnson: Great! Thanks so much, Megan. And here you are going to find on this slide all the contact information for all of today's presenters. And so just as a reminder, all of these slides as well as the recording of this presentation will be archived on our website. You will be able to go in the next couple business days and find any of the information you need from the slides as well as their email information. So with that, we will turn to questions. Please feel free to enter through your chat or the function on the webinar software where you are positioned or please feel free to raise your hand on the side there and we can unmute your lines and have you ask your question.

So while you formulate some questions, I just want to make a note that we have some upcoming webinars in the next two weeks. Next week, we are going to have a double week of webinars. One is going to be on December 9, which is Tuesday and is going to be a NOFA NDRC live question/answer for post impact and stress threshold responses. And we are also going to have another one next week, Thursday, for the NOFA NDRC question/answer for the urgent recovery threshold response. So both those are next week. And then Monday, December 15, we are going to have a webinar looking at rural communities. And all those will be at 3:00 p.m. Eastern Time.

So with that, I am not seeing any questions come through. George, do we have any questions over the phone?

George Martin: No, it does not look like anybody has indicated that they would like to ask a question over the phone. Just a reminder everyone, there is a raise your hand icon on the bottom of

the participant panel. And if you would like to answer a question over the phone, you can select that and we will try to get you over the phone. Or as Lynsey said, you can submit a question on the Q&A function.

Lynsey Johnson: All right, I would like to thank all of our presenters again for taking the time to talk with us today.

George Martin: It looks like we do have a question, Lynsey. Alicia Griffin, Ms. Griffin, can you press star-six on your phone because you are muted right now.

Alicia Griffin: Yes.

George Martin: Now we can hear you.

Alicia Griffin: Okay.

George Martin: Yep, go ahead.

Alicia Griffin: How can I get information on regional organization for New Orleans? Even though I am in Chicago, all of my family is there. And there are some areas that are constantly being hit by different types of disasters. And I want to try to find out if there is such an organization down in New Orleans that does this type of work.

Megan McConville: This is Megan McConville from NADO. I suppose you were there when I showed the slide that showed ways onto those websites of finding the regional organizations. But there is one in New Orleans. The organization there is Greater New Orleans, Inc. And they have done a lot of work for resilience particularly as it relates to economic and workforce development and looking at the economy in New Orleans to withstand future hurricanes and being more diversified so that it is more resilient during future natural disasters. And also, they do a lot of work on bridging sectors in New Orleans related to watch management and coastal habitat restoration and other things that are emerging economic opportunities for their region that are basically related to being resilient to climate change. So if you email me, I would be happy to connect you with the staff at that organization.

Alicia Griffin: Okay. I appreciate it.

Lynsey Johnson: Any other questions out there? All right, well again, I want to thank our presenters for joining us today and sharing their best practices and thoughts on regional consortia. Because I think that this is one of the things that I know a lot of state and eligible applicants from the NDRC are trying to figure out how to best wrap their head around pulling together and collaborating at this level. So again, thank you to our presenters.

And we look forward to having you join our next webinar, which will be next Tuesday, December 11. That is specifically a live question/answer for the NOFA NDRC on the most impacted and distressed threshold responses. And again, that is at 3:00 p.m. Eastern. So thanks everyone.