

**CITY OF DELRAY BEACH
OFFICE OF SUSTAINABILITY AND RESILIENCE**

MEMORANDUM

TO: Green Implementation Advancement Board

FROM: Chris Chitester, Resilience and Operational Efficiency Officer

DATE: 2026-06-18

SUBJECT: OSAR Transition from Sustainability Officer to Resilience and Operational Efficiency Officer

Purpose

This memorandum is being provided in place of the typical monthly OSAR report to brief the Green Implementation Advancement Board on an important organizational transition within the City's sustainability function.

I have been promoted into the newly established position of **Resilience and Operational Efficiency Officer**. This position replaces and significantly expands the former **Sustainability Officer** role. While sustainability remains central to the work, the new position reflects a broader and more operational direction for the office.

The purpose of this memorandum is to explain what is changing, why the shift matters, and how this new role will support the City's long-term sustainability, resilience, infrastructure, and operational goals.

Background

The former Sustainability Officer position was primarily structured around citywide sustainability programming, public outreach, energy conservation, climate protection, advisory board support, grants, and sustainability policy coordination.

That work remains important. However, the new position recognizes that sustainability cannot function only as a standalone program or public-facing initiative. To be effective, sustainability must be incorporated into the way the City plans, budgets, designs, maintains, and operates its facilities, infrastructure, public spaces, and services.

The new Resilience and Operational Efficiency Officer role is intended to help move the City from **promoting sustainability** to **operationalizing sustainability**.

This means embedding sustainability, resilience, and efficiency into practical City decisions, including:

- capital project planning;
- facility upgrades and major renovations;
- infrastructure improvements;
- stormwater and flooding considerations;
- energy and water use;
- grant-funded projects;
- asset performance;
- lifecycle cost and long-term maintenance;
- operational risk reduction;
- departmental coordination; and
- measurable cost savings or cost avoidance.

This is a significant shift in direction. The office is moving from a primarily program-based sustainability model toward a more integrated implementation model.

Why This Shift Matters

Many of the City's most important sustainability outcomes are connected to operational decisions.

Energy efficiency is affected by how facilities are maintained, renovated, and upgraded. Water conservation is affected by building systems, irrigation, landscaping, and infrastructure choices. Climate resilience is affected by how the City plans for flooding, heat, severe weather, infrastructure stress, and service continuity. Fiscal sustainability is affected by whether projects reduce operating costs, extend asset life, avoid future expenses, and improve long-term performance.

For these reasons, sustainability needs to be connected directly to the City's operational departments and capital planning processes.

The new role is designed to support that connection. Rather than treating sustainability as a separate initiative, the office will increasingly focus on how sustainability can be translated into practical, measurable, and fiscally responsible improvements across City operations.

Key Differences Between the Former and New Positions

The former Sustainability Officer role focused heavily on sustainability initiatives, climate protection programs, outreach, education, green initiatives, advisory board support, and energy conservation.

The new Resilience and Operational Efficiency Officer role continues to support those functions, but expands the work into several additional areas.

1. Greater Emphasis on Resilience

The new role places stronger emphasis on resilience planning and implementation. This includes supporting efforts related to flooding, extreme heat, severe weather, infrastructure stress, service disruption, and changing regulatory requirements.

This is especially important for a coastal community where long-term planning must account for environmental risk, infrastructure vulnerability, and continuity of public services.

2. Stronger Connection to Capital Projects and Infrastructure

The new role is expected to support capital project planning, project development, scoping, design coordination, procurement preparation, and implementation.

This allows sustainability and resilience considerations to be incorporated earlier in the project lifecycle, rather than added after key decisions have already been made.

3. Focus on Operational Efficiency and Cost Avoidance

The new role adds a stronger focus on identifying opportunities to reduce operating costs, improve asset performance, extend asset life, and improve service reliability.

This is a practical and important change. Sustainability work must demonstrate environmental value, but it should also support fiscal responsibility and operational performance.

4. More Technical and Interdepartmental Support

The new role serves as a technical and program resource to City Administration and departments such as Public Works, Development Services, Parks and Recreation, Facilities, Planning, Utilities, Emergency Management, and other operational areas.

This reflects the reality that sustainability and resilience outcomes depend on coordination across multiple departments.

5. Expanded Use of Data, Metrics, and Performance Tracking

The new role includes responsibility for developing and maintaining tracking tools related to sustainability, resilience, operational efficiency, asset performance, cost savings, cost avoidance, and grant performance.

This will help the City move toward more measurable outcomes and better decision-support materials.

6. Broader Funding and Grant Strategy

Grants remain an important part of the work, but the new role connects grant opportunities more directly to resilience, infrastructure, energy efficiency, water efficiency, operational improvements, lifecycle value, and measurable public benefits.

This better positions the City to pursue funding opportunities that support both environmental and operational priorities.

What This Means for the Green Board

The Green Implementation Advancement Board will continue to be an important advisory body for sustainability-related goals and priorities.

However, the nature of the office's work is evolving. Future updates may place greater emphasis on implementation, interdepartmental coordination, capital project support, performance metrics, resilience planning, grant strategy, and operational outcomes. This does not mean that traditional sustainability topics are being abandoned. Energy conservation, water conservation, green building, environmental stewardship, outreach, education, and climate-related initiatives remain important. The difference is that these priorities will increasingly be connected to City operations, infrastructure decisions, project planning, and measurable performance.

In short, the new direction is to make sustainability more actionable, more integrated, and more directly connected to how the City functions.

Operationalizing Sustainability

The phrase “**operationalizing sustainability**” is central to this transition.

For the City, operationalizing sustainability means moving from concepts and goals into systems, procedures, projects, budgets, and measurable outcomes.

It means asking practical questions such as:

- How can this project reduce long-term operating costs?
- How can this facility improvement reduce energy or water use?
- How can this infrastructure investment improve resilience?
- How can this grant-funded project produce measurable public benefit?
- How can departments coordinate earlier so sustainability and resilience are built into project design?
- How can we use data to track progress and demonstrate value?
- How can we reduce future risk while improving service reliability today?

This is the new direction of the office.

The work will be less about sustainability as a separate category and more about sustainability as a core operating principle.

Looking Ahead

As the Resilience and Operational Efficiency Officer, my focus will be on helping the City integrate sustainability, resilience, and efficiency into daily operations and long-term planning.

Key areas of focus will include:

- supporting implementation of the City's Sustainability and Resilience Master Plan;
- coordinating with departments on resilience and sustainability initiatives;
- identifying cost-saving and cost-avoidance opportunities;
- supporting capital project and infrastructure planning;
- improving tracking of sustainability and resilience metrics;
- supporting grant applications, compliance, and performance reporting;
- advancing building and facility performance;
- helping departments identify practical mitigation strategies for climate and infrastructure risks; and
- translating sustainability goals into operational requirements.

This transition represents a significant step forward. It reflects a more mature approach to municipal sustainability, one that connects environmental goals with infrastructure, operations, fiscal stewardship, risk reduction, and public service delivery.

I look forward to continuing to work with the Green Implementation Advancement Board as this office enters its next phase.

Recommended Action:

No formal action is requested. This memorandum is provided for informational purposes and discussion.