

# Resiliency & Adaptation Resource Sheet

## Making Climate-Ready Places: Strengthening Our Communities Against the Risks of Climate Change

We're now living in a slow-motion climate emergency, one that is only going to get worse. It may not yet affect all of us in every waking moment of our lives, in every season, in every place, but that doesn't mean that it isn't threatening the lives of millions, dozens of millions, and soon to be hundreds of millions of people around the globe, including many [in our own country](#).

We are now at the point where, even as we must all do as much as we can to reduce our carbon emissions by as much as possible, as soon as possible, in order to get to at least an 80% reduction in GHG emissions below 1990 by 2050, we must also strengthen the resiliency of our civilization against the [threats posed](#) by global climate chaos. We must act to adapt our communities against being burned by wildfire, submerged by flooding or sea level rise, or torn apart by tornados, typhoons, or hurricanes. We must provide resources so the members of our communities do not perish due to extreme heat, an increasing threat in a growing number of places; or to the effects of extended freezing temperatures, an increasing threat in places in mid-latitudes where a weakening polar vortex is increasingly likely to send wandering severe winter storms.

We need to act now, as a global collective of communities in a worldwide diaspora of people who must find common cause and work together.

### The Need to Adapt

Every community will need to adapt to become more resilient in the face of the [threats posed by climate change](#). Some will be able to adapt to receive climate migrants, whereas others will need to adapt simply to continue serving current residents. Increasingly, some will be forced to adapt after being destroyed by disaster, and will need to choose to rebuild, or re-locate.

### The Triage Protocol

To be effective, our efforts to adapt our civilization to strengthen it against these threats must be planned and implemented using a lens through which to

assess existing places to determine which category they may fall in, in terms of the threats posed by climate change, and the [costs required](#) to respond to the impacts of those threats, as well as to increase the resiliency of each place against their worst impacts. This analysis will be useful at every scale, from land planning for a single site, to block, neighborhood, city, county, national, and global resolutions:

1. **Category One - Sustainable without outside support:** These places are generally doing OK, and are likely to continue without outside support. These places are blessed with adequate supplies of clean, fresh water; local farming to provide food security; relatively clean air to support human, animal, and crop health; and relative distance from the threats posed by natural hazards. They are able to undertake all necessary adaptations using their own resources.
2. **Category Two - Sustainable with outside support:** These places may be OK today, but will need investments of outside resources in order to attain a state of greater resiliency against future hazards on a timeframe that is faster and will produce better, more resilient outcomes than if these places had to self-fund their improvements within their current levels of resource allocation capabilities.
3. **Unsustainable without outside support:** These places may or may not be OK today, but in the face of increasing levels of natural hazards driven by the climate emergency, the amount of money, time, and resources that would be required to harden them against increasing levels of risk would not ever be paid back by their ability to generate revenue, through taxes, fees, or otherwise.

4. **Unsustainable regardless of outside support:** These places are doomed. No matter how much outside resources are poured into them, they will not stand up against the natural hazards that are coming their way. Their populations will eventually require resettlement assistance, and the only question is whether this comes before or after the disaster hits.
5. There will soon be an increasing number of places that belong to an even more grim class, that of **Category Zero - Gone**. These places no longer exist in a form that is conducive for human habitation, at least not in the ways we are used to.

This classification system is known as the **Triage Protocol for Climate Response**. It's similar to the system used by medics in field hospitals during wars and natural disasters, to allow limited available resources to be focused on the patients most likely to survive.

Unfortunately, it is a tool that we will need to become increasingly more familiar with, as we use it more frequently around the globe to focus limited public and private resources on strengthening the resiliency of places in Category Two to survive and thrive in the face of the worst, most likely impacts of natural hazards.

Places in Categories One and Two will further need to take action to be made ready to receive waves of [immigrants and refugees](#) from places in Categories Three through Five, so that a higher, more sustainable standard of living is waiting to aid and comfort those who are fleeing disasters.

### Legacy Cities

Throughout the Northern Hemisphere, including in Japan, Europe, and America, we have large numbers of [Legacy Cities](#) that have experienced population decline in recent decades, but still have infrastructure and available land to support larger populations. These places have good bones to work from, and represent low-hanging fruit to become [receiver cities](#) for climate response. These are places where refugees and immigrants can be pointed towards to find refuge, places to put down new roots, and build new lives.

There certainly are many tools that could be used to facilitate willing immigration to legacy cities from places experiencing climate impacts. The [Heartland Visa](#) concept would give visas to immigrants who agree to move to a location that has agreed to provide opportunity and resources for newly arrived future citizens. There are other proposals to [give visas to immigrants who agree to spend a certain amount of time planting trees](#), providing pathways to carbon sequestration in exchange for the benefits that flow from citizenship in a stable community.

Immigration must be seen as a resource, as an infusion of human capital for places in need of investment, for places in Categories One or Two.

Within Legacy Cities, there are a variety of tools that can be used to speed the process of becoming ready to receive new growth, new immigrants, new residents, and new businesses. One example of this are [Pink Zones](#), where regulations are waived beyond the bare minimum required to protect life safety, in order to allow for quick action to occur to revitalize and strengthen the resilience of local areas. Another is the toolbox of [tactical urbanism](#), which involves quick-deploy projects to create pedestrian-safe areas where commerce can flourish by catering to the needs of people first, setting aside the need to park large numbers of hypothetical cars or other concerns that can otherwise kill initiatives to create walkable centers where community can be built.

### Coalition of the Willing

The PLACE Initiative believes in empowerment, in taking action, in facilitating growth and immigration, in welcoming those in need, in creating opportunities to grow new businesses that will provide new jobs that are firmly grounded in local economies. We believe that there are communities far and wide, large and small, who share these values; we believe that we must pool our resources, through state, national, and international means, to help places in Category Two especially, but also places in Category One, to become welcoming places.

### Help for Those in Need

Even as we invest collective resources to prepare places in Category One and Two to receive new growth, immigration, and refugees, we must also be

prepared to offer meaningful, timely assistance to people from places in Categories Three through Five in response when and after disasters inevitably occur. Mobile warming/cooling, power, water, food, and shelter service pods need to be designed, constructed, and made ready for immediate mobilization ASAP when needed. We now have the technology to provide emergency response services that are themselves carbon-neutral, using solar / wind power, battery storage, [humidity-to-water systems](#), and other 21st century technology. We must coordinate our capabilities, [re-purposing the tools of war](#) to instead provide disaster response to communities in need of assistance.

### **Think Globally, Steward Local Places**

Even as a global crisis requires big-picture thinking, every response is local. We must think in terms of our own blocks and communities first, identifying our own strengths and weaknesses in order to determine what, if any, outside assistance might be required to strengthen our communities to be more resilient in the face of the risks posed to them by climate change, on the pathway to net-zero consumption of energy from fossil fuels, and towards increased carbon sequestration from our natural and working lands.

We must craft and universally implement responsible 21st century growth management policies that plan to accommodate new growth in sustainable formats. While many places already engage in [regional planning](#), few, if any places have adopted regional plans that are being implemented quickly enough to deliver the changes we need [by the time that we need them](#).

We need to act with a sense of urgency as we develop a next generation of regional, action-oriented climate adaptation plans that consider natural and urban areas holistically, as a single unified system that must transition off of fossil fuels and on to renewable energy.

We must re-tool our human communities into more compact, walkable forms that are defensible against the threats posed by climate change, using as appropriate new community-edge buffer zones to defend against wildfires, increased wetlands and natural infrastructure to buffer against [flooding](#) and [sea level rise](#), and increased urban forests to provide

crucial shade and cooling services during excessive heat waves.

*The country is as essential to urban fabric, as silence is to music.* Our countryside, our farm and forest lands, must be protected, restored, and managed for multiple benefits, including carbon sequestration, habitat corridors to allow for wildlife climate migration, sustainable food, fiber, and medicine production, outdoor education and recreation, and ecosystem services such as clean air and water, and flood mitigation.

We must rapidly implement these new plans. In order to generate the funding to rapidly build them out, we must rapidly deploy national and international [carbon credit, carbon tax and/or fee programs](#), thereby decreasing GHG emissions even as we build the communities we need.

We must [plant our own trees now](#), to create the shade that others may benefit from in the future.