

REGIONAL POLICY

Thrive MSP 2040 identifies Sustainability as one of five desired outcomes that define a shared regional vision. Planning for sustainability means providing leadership, information, and technical assistance to support local governments' consideration of climate change mitigation, adaptation and resilience.

WHY DO THIS WORK?

The observed changes and future projections described by the National Climate Assessment (2014) and by the Minnesota State Climatology Office provide insight into how climate trends impact Minnesota. Climate impacts, for instance increased precipitation and extreme heat, can affect community infrastructure, the natural environment, and the public health of residents.

At its best, community planning addresses the needs of all residents. Through long-range planning efforts, communities can embed policies and strategies into official controls to reduce vulnerabilities and increase resilience to climate impacts. Resiliency can take many forms, but it consists primarily of adaptation and mitigation efforts to ensure that a community can thrive in the wake of a climate-related impact.

To create community-specific policies and implementation, a community must first identify its vulnerabilities to climate-related impacts through analysis of its existing conditions, followed by identification of desired conditions for the future. There are certain key ingredients necessary to carry out vulnerability assessment work.

KEY INGREDIENTS TO ADDRESSING CLIMATE VULNERABILITY

Some of the greatest challenges in addressing climate impacts relate to a lack of communication and buy-in, limited resource capacity, and inadequate data.

COMMUNICATION/BUY-IN

Communication and buy-in is the most important component to addressing climate vulnerability in your community. In order to build momentum for conducting this work, consider the following:

- [Define terminology for your community](#) – sustainability, climate change, adaptation, mitigation, vulnerability, resilience
- Be intentional [while engaging with vulnerable or underserved communities](#)
- Consult with your community's Environment Commission, promote youth membership
- Join the [MN GreenStep Cities](#) to raise awareness and benchmark
- [Monetize the impacts of climate change](#) against the benefits of mitigation/adaptation
- Build key departmental alliances, especially with Public Works, Public Health, and Emergency Management staff
- Assign a resilience advocate in the Planning Commission or Council
- Keep community resilience planning on the Commission and Council agenda



RESOURCE CAPACITY

- Create an inter-departmental climate change action team
- Work with the Chief Financial Officer to spend existing CIP dollars differently
- Access project technical assistance through [MN GreenCorps](#), [UMN Resilient Communities Project](#), [St. Thomas' Sustainable Communities Partnership](#), and the [Great Plains Institute Sustainable Communities program](#)
- Partner with community advocacy groups, school districts, and agency stakeholders, including watershed districts, to collaborate on resiliency projects

DATA

- MDH Climate and Health - Planning Tools and Data
- EPA Environmental Justice Screening and Mapping Tool
- National Climate Assessment, Midwest Chapter, 2014
- MN State Climatology Office Climate Data
- MPCA Adapting to a Climate Change
- Watershed District or Watershed Management Organization data
- Metropolitan Council's Localized Flooding and Extreme Heat maps (in testing)
- MDH Online Climate and Health Vulnerability Assessment Tool (in testing)

POLICY AND IMPLEMENTATION

Goal Example

Community will integrate climate change and resilience planning in its planning functions to address the needs of all residents, the environment, and municipal operations and infrastructure.

Policy Example

Community will assess social, environmental and infrastructure vulnerability to identified climate hazards.

Implementation Example

Community will complete a climate vulnerability assessment by [insert date]. The strategies set forth in the assessment will be adopted in official controls, procedures and regulations of the community. The effectiveness of the implementation of the strategies will be evaluated every two years.



CVA EXAMPLES

- City of Minneapolis Climate Change Vulnerability Assessment, 2016
- St. Paul-Ramsey County Public Health Climate Change Vulnerability Assessment, 2016
- Minnesota Climate Change Vulnerability Assessment, 2014

RESOURCES

The Washington Chapter of the American Planning Association (APA WA) published a very helpful document on [Planning for Climate Change](#), focused specifically on the planning process.

Please find more resources on climate change action planning and vulnerability assessment work in the [Resilience Plan Element](#) of the Local Planning Handbook.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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