



DRAFT - for discussion only

## Prospectus: connecting climate resilience and economic resilience

### What?

ISC is collaborating with regional planners and economic developers to produce a white paper on best practices in connecting climate resilience and economic resilience. We anticipate having a draft for review around the end of July 2015. We welcome your participation. Contact Chris Forinash, Director of US Programs at ISC - [cforinash@iscvt.org](mailto:cforinash@iscvt.org)

### Who?

The Institute for Sustainable Communities (ISC) is a 24-year-old international non-profit that works to build the capacity for local leaders to create local solutions to climate and other sustainability challenges. ISC's Urban Program focuses on the intersections between sustainable development, climate adaptation and resilience, economic prosperity, and social equity. Through our work including leadership of the capacity-building program for the Sustainable Communities Learning Network of 150 U.S. regions, we know that many leaders continue to face push-back that climate resilience and economic development are at odds. In March 2015, ISC and our partners at the National Association of Development Organizations (NADO) Research Foundation brought teams from ten regions together in Boston for a three-day Sustainable Communities Leadership Academy on Climate & Economic Resilience. We explored themes of analyzing local risks and assets, developing resilience strategies and projects, communicating needs and impacts, and developing support for implementation, in a peer-sharing format.

We found leaders and regions who get it - Southeast Florida and New Orleans, notably - that offer lessons for other communities seeking forward-looking solutions. But it's clear that beyond those few notable places, most regions are struggling to communicate the need for and benefits from connecting economic and climate resilience. We need to show how climate and economic resilience are mutually supporting, and further develop strategies that reinforce both. The Washington region is poised to take a leadership role, and ISC would like to support that.

### Why?

Whether you frame climate resilience as disaster preparedness, hazard mitigation, or self-reliance, the fact is that preparing for the impacts of a changing climate is critical to the future stability and health of our regions. Regional planning in many places focuses on transportation, the main area where the federal government mandates such collaboration. More advanced regions cooperate to varying degrees on other key systems, including housing, parks, education and workforce development, water supply and treatment, and other systems. Some even include economic development. We must "ask the climate question" of each and all to account for future impacts, and ensure they do not contribute to further damage.

ISC's mission is to help local leaders create sustainability in their communities. We are collaborating with interested regions and writing this white paper to help make those connections around resilience. While we are early in the process, the following outline of levels of integrating economic and climate resilience gives an idea of the scope being considered.

what's possible

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## Levels of integrating economic and climate resilience

### Level 0

- no awareness that climate resilience and economic resilience are linked
- believing that climate resilience is only an economic cost

### Level 1

- recognizing that you have a problem - typically by experiencing a disaster, e.g. Boston's T failing during snowstorms, river flooding cutting off Vermont towns and villages from the outside world, drought disrupting agricultural production
- recognizing that economic prosperity requires the ability to quickly recover from disasters and other shocks - getting people to work, and goods to market

### Level 2

- linking economic systems with climate resilience
- pursuing economic development that ...
  - encompasses a range of sectors, business sizes, etc.
  - builds on regional assets to attract new business on a regional basis
  - supports entrepreneurship and economic gardening
  - considers equity in attraction, cultivation, and location of business and industry
  - limits hidden subsidies that don't reflect public good
  - trains a diverse workforce for a range of occupations
- practicing resilience by ...
  - considering climate impacts OF infrastructure planning, design, maintenance, and operations
  - considering climate impacts ON infrastructure
  - prioritizing investments in critical infrastructure systems, networks, links
  - planning and creating a transportation system with choices of how to get around
  - encouraging creation of walkable, mixed-use, transit-friendly places that people love
  - ensuring a sound fiscal footing for governments

### Level 3

- building climate resilience into regional identity and branding
- developing sectors and businesses that build on resilience expertise

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