

# PRINCIPLES FOR TAKING RESILIENCE ACTION

Preparing a community to be resilient against climate change impacts takes effort on everyone's part, especially municipal leaders and service providers.

Communities must plan for the future, today. First, by identifying their vulnerabilities and risks, and then developing strategies to adapt under new pressures.

Along with increasing community awareness and communication on risks and vulnerabilities, municipalities may need to set new laws and zoning requirements, make significant investments in infrastructure and embrace innovative technology as they take action.

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## **Aim to be climate-resistant, rather than climate-proof**

Climate change creates dynamic and diverse impacts. By preparing for a broad range of impacts, a community will build resilience and reduce possible negative impacts.

## **Anticipate and act, rather than react**

It is less expensive and disruptive to anticipate and prepare for changes and to act now to strengthen resilience. Ignoring risks may lead to significant costly disruptions to community life.

## **Prepare for disasters as well as incremental changes**

Climate change is leading to large, visible impacts like floods and wildfires. And it is also inducing more subtle and incremental changes. These slow-onset impacts include changes to vegetation and water levels, pests, and changes in average seasonal temperatures.

## **Integrate goals and actions**

Goals and actions related to climate change should be integrated with other community priorities and ongoing planning processes as much as possible.

## **Give equal attention to opportunities**

There is a tendency to emphasize the negative impacts of climate change and overlook possible opportunities. Take time to think through and define actions to capture possible benefits for the community (e.g., agricultural innovations, new niche crops, an extended growing season, different tourism offerings).

## **Identify leadership**

The highest priority adaptation actions should have lead departments and people assigned to them who share the vision for community resilience.

## **Take action on obvious priorities**

Even before all the info is in, some actions are obvious priorities or 'low hanging fruit' for adaptation. These 'no regret' measures can be implemented swiftly, even before action planning is complete.

The principles for taking climate resiliency action come from the Pathways to Climate Change Resilience - A Guidebook for Canadian Forest-Based Communities.

[Read the guidebook >>>](#)



# ADAPTATIVE PLANNING FOR RESILIENCE

One of the best tools to respond to climate change challenges is **proactive adaptive planning**.

Community leadership and service providers must come together to be creative, pragmatic and resourceful, as they determine how to maintain and safeguard their community services and assets, protect vulnerable populations and businesses, and maintain a high quality of life for the community.

**External climate change risks** may be inevitable, but we can better prepare ourselves for them internally through **adaptive planning**.

## Adaptative Planning Traps

### OVER-ADAPTING

Your measures waste resources—e.g., a community built an expensive and higher bridge than what available information would justify in anticipation of increased peak river flows.

### UNDER-ADAPTING

You are not suitably prepared or protected from likely impacts, and/or have too great of residual impacts after an event despite the measures.

### MAL-ADAPTING

You've created unintended, adverse consequences that outweigh the benefits of the measure—e.g., thinning forest areas to reduce wildfire risks leading to more more blowdown during windstorms.

### RESTRICTING FUTURE OPTIONS...

You have limited yourself too early—e.g., building new community facilities without accounting for certain climate variables.

## Adaptive planning will look different for each community. Some strategies may involve:

- Improving emergency management and improving preparedness among residents
- Supporting local farmers in adapting agricultural practices for a warmer climate
- Upgrading flood control infrastructure
- Adopting green infrastructure, e.g., street trees for cooling, stormwater ponds for water management
- Changing landscape designs for community spaces to be drought-tolerant
- Creating cooling centres during heat waves
- Developing a vulnerable populations program to identify and support those at greater risk in extreme weather
- Creating/updating business continuity practices
- Pooling resources between communities in a region
- Establishing a complex network of partnerships between government, organizations and Indigenous communities

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