



PE7 Action: Climate Adaptation Plan

3 – 15
Points



BRONZE PRIORITY



SILVER PRIORITY

A. Why is this action important?

PE7 Action: Climate Vulnerability Assessment and PE7 Action: Climate Adaptation Plan are the two foundational actions for adapting to climate change and building resilience in your community, akin to creating a greenhouse gas (GHG) inventory and climate action plan for GHG mitigation.

The goal of creating a climate adaptation plan or chapter is to address vulnerabilities uncovered in your [PE7 Action: Climate Vulnerability Assessment](#) and planning gaps from your [PE7 Action: Evaluate Policies for Climate Resilience](#). Climate adaptation planning outlines a vision and set of strategies to improve a community's resilience to climate change based on its local physical, economic, and social vulnerabilities. When local leaders work with their communities to adapt to climate change, they build the capacity to evolve with changing conditions and protect resources for generations to come.

During the planning process, local governments should work with residents and local groups to establish a shared vision of a resilient future and define specific local climate adaptation strategies to reduce vulnerabilities and achieve their vision. A climate adaptation planning process should consider diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice (DEIJ) from start to finish.

B. How to implement this action

Under the Climate Smart Communities (CSC) program, the climate adaptation planning process can be appropriately scaled for the size and vulnerability of a community. For example, a larger city with significant climate risks may choose to do a more in-depth process for a standalone plan. Alternatively, a smaller town or village with fewer vulnerabilities may opt for a more streamlined process to create a smaller plan or create a chapter in a climate action plan or other planning document.

Points for this action will reflect the scope that the adaptation plan or chapter covers:

- **Limited scope:** covers at least one climate hazard for a limited geographic scope (like a waterfront) or one category or sector (like government operations or transportation infrastructure).
- **Moderate scope:** covers one to three climate hazards for the entire geographic area of the community.
- **Comprehensive scope:** covers all relevant climate hazards for the entire geographic area of the community.

You can find a list of climate hazards and further examples of scope in [PE7 Action: Climate Vulnerability Assessment](#).

When conducting a community climate adaptation planning, essential steps to consider include the following:

1. **Analyze the demographic makeup of your community** to understand what a fair representation of citizens will look like. Identify stakeholders who represent different neighborhoods, community-based organizations, and businesses, as well as a range of representatives from traditionally marginalized groups and disadvantaged communities. Consider who has not been at the table in the past and make sure that those groups are meaningfully included. Analyze the municipal departments and committees serving your community to determine who should be involved in this planning process (e.g., departments of public works, planning, police and fire, parks and recreation, economic development).
2. **Convene a diverse and representative working group** (based on your results from step 1) to coordinate the effort and perform public outreach and engagement from the beginning, scaled appropriately to the size and complexity

of the community. The working group should include staff members and a subset of the local CSC task force who are focused on climate adaptation, as well as a cross-section of community stakeholders including residents, business owners, and local and regional organizations. The working group coordinator should strive to achieve appropriate representation of race, class, gender, and all relevant categories.

3. **Develop and implement a public engagement strategy** for the planning process using best practices for inclusive engagement. Review the [CSC Inclusive Community Engagement Primer](#) for a 6-page introduction to concepts and practices for the meaningful inclusion of [Disadvantaged Communities](#) in your local planning activities. Plan meetings to be accessible in terms of location and transportation options, and if possible, provide food, childcare and/or compensation for members' attendance. Solicit public input via multiple channels, including in-person (like public workshops and pop-up stands in public spaces) and virtual options (like webinars and online surveys).
4. **Evaluate information on climate hazards to understand the most at-risk community assets, populations, and systems.** Information on local hazards can be found in your PE7 Action: Climate Vulnerability Assessment] (<https://climatesmart.ny.gov/actions-certification/actions/#open/action/85>), [PE7 Action: Hazard Mitigation Plan](<https://climatesmart.ny.gov/actions-certification/actions/#open/action/90>), [PE7 Action: Evaluate Policies for Climate Resilience](#), and elsewhere. Consider how your hazards and risks may change over time by incorporating the most recent climate projections for your region (see resources below in Section G) and local knowledge of impacts like extreme weather events and sunny-day flooding.
5. **Co-create a vision for community climate adaptation and resilience.** Host public participation session(s) to have conversations about local vulnerabilities, past experiences with hazard events, important community assets and planning gaps, and develop a vision for the community. One possible means of supporting these conversations includes the use of visual aids, such as maps, depicting areas at risk and associated community assets. Community members can identify missing important community assets or hazardous areas or confirm that the existing results are accurate. A vision is a brief, inspirational statement that investigates the future and creates a mental image of the ideal state that a community wants to achieve. The vision should reflect the community's aspirations and values as they relate to adapting to climate change and building local resilience. See examples of resilience visions below in Section G. To create the vision statements, solicit input according to your public engagement strategy. Compile public input into a draft document that describes the vision for the future and what resilience means to the community. Meaningfully share the draft vision document with the community by going beyond posting it on an inconspicuous website page or only sending it to community members already in the know. Establish a system for receiving public comments and revise the draft vision and goals based on stakeholder feedback.
6. **Develop strategies to adapt** to changing conditions and achieve your community's resilience vision. These strategies are based on your community's analysis of climate impacts, prioritized assets, and vulnerabilities, and policy gaps identified during [PE7 Action: Evaluate Policies for Climate Resilience](#). (Also see further guidance on developing climate adaptation strategies below.)
 - Prioritize strategies that reduce risk and provide valuable ecological and social equity co-benefits. For example, training and certifying local workers from disadvantaged backgrounds to install and maintain green infrastructure will reduce stormwater flooding while creating co-benefits of improving local cooling, ecology and economic injustice.
 - Share the draft adaptation strategies with the public according to your engagement strategy. Revise the strategies based on stakeholder input. Revision may include reassessing the prioritization of strategies.
 - Identify lead entities responsible for implementing each strategy. Consider organizing strategies by their estimated timeframes, costs, and co-benefits.
 - Create a timeline and process for regularly revisiting and updating the climate adaptation plan (see Step 7 below), including tracking progress made on adaptation strategies (e.g., number completed, in-process, ongoing or incomplete). A climate adaptation plan or strategy should reflect the most up-to-date climate information and community priorities.
 - Facilitate approval of the plan by the community's elected officials.
7. **Revisit and update your plan.** Local governments should revisit and refresh their adaptation plan every ten years as well (or more frequently) and track progress on adaptation strategies. Plan updates can also be triggered with new understanding of hazards, like a major storm event or updated climate projections. Such updated climate projections could be updates to [ClimAID](#) and updates to [6 NYCRR Part 490](#), for example. These updates should include the latest climate science, data and projections, description of local changing conditions and major events experienced, consider any changes in policy or infrastructure since the last plan, and modify the existing strategies or add new recommendations as appropriate. Significant changes should undergo community input via surveys and other methods as described above.

Additional guidance on developing climate adaptation strategies

In a climate adaptation plan or chapter with a **comprehensive** scope, strategies should cover a range of categories (e.g., municipal planning and operations, zoning and codes, public outreach and education, and capital projects, including structural and non-structural solutions) that address various at-risk sectors (e.g., critical infrastructure, emergency management, natural resources, recreation, agriculture, socially vulnerable populations).

A plan or chapter of **limited** scope will cover at least one climate hazard for a limited geographic area (like the waterfront) or one category or sector (like government operations or transportation infrastructure). A plan or chapter of moderate scope will cover one to three climate hazards for the entire geographic area of the community.

Strategies should directly address vulnerable community assets (like those identified in [PE7 Action: Climate Vulnerability Assessment](#), and local planning gaps (as identified in [PE7 Action: Evaluate Policies for Climate Resilience](#)). For example, if your vulnerability assessment revealed that the community's cooling center is in the floodplain, the plan could include a strategy to floodproof, relocate, or designate a new location. As another example, if the community's capital improvement plan does not consider drought or other climate risks, then your climate adaptation plan could include a strategy to update the capital improvement plan to incorporate such risks. For more strategy ideas, see plans from other communities, Model Local Laws for Increasing Resilience, and other links below in Section G.

Communities should especially consider including strategies to implement many of the actions in CSC Pledge Element 7, like [PE7 Action: Conserve Natural Areas](#), [PE7 Action: Green Infrastructure](#), [PE7 Action: Culverts and Dams](#), [PE7 Action: Nature-based Shorelines](#), and [PE7 Action: Strategic Relocation](#). Several of these strategies could be specific capital projects. Strategies could include more general actions like feasibility studies, to investigate options and/or to create a list of specific projects that will address a specific vulnerability. For example, for flooding, a watershed assessment can highlight the most strategic areas for action. Taking a watershed approach when developing strategies that address flooding, water quality and quantity, and water infrastructure will help the community understand uphill and upstream sources of flooding and assist in prioritizing actions; see [PE7 Action: Watershed-based Flood Mitigation Plan](#) and [PE7 Action: Watershed Plan for Water Quality](#).

Strategies can specifically include recommended changes to the community's comprehensive plan and other relevant plans (like hazard mitigation plans or local waterfront revitalization plans) to include climate adaptation. The implementation of such updates to a comprehensive plan may be eligible for points under [PE6 Action: Comprehensive Plan with Sustainability Elements](#), which includes points for promoting adaptation to climate change.

The plan should identify lead entities responsible for implementing each strategy. To the extent possible, it could also organize strategies by their estimated timeframes, costs and co-benefits.

C. Timeframe, project costs, and resource needs

The timeframe and costs for this task depend on the level of public engagement and the staff resources available. The climate adaptation planning process can be appropriately scaled for the size and vulnerability of a community. Local governments can anticipate a timeline of approximately six months to one year or more to develop a **comprehensive** climate adaptation plan. Project costs include staff time and possibly consultants to support the development of the plan and support for stakeholder attendance in the form of food, transportation, childcare, and/or compensation.

D. Which local governments implement this action? Which departments within the local government are most likely to have responsibility for this action?

This action is applicable to all types of local governments and all departments. The department, office, or committee that leads local climate and sustainability efforts is most likely to be responsible for implementing this action. Or implementation may be led by the chief elected official's office, the department of the environment or planning, or by a volunteer body, such as a conservation advisory council, a watershed group, or a subcommittee of the local CSC task force. Cultivating cross-department involvement and support is also critical since a variety of staff and local stakeholders may be involved in implementation. The climate adaptation plan could also be developed at a regional level, by the county or a regional organization. Local governments claiming credit for participation in a regional initiative will be required to demonstrate substantial involvement in that process to be eligible for points, as per [these guidelines](#).

E. How to obtain points for this action

Points for this action are tiered based on completion of the components described below. Both components must have occurred within ten years prior to the application date, but the two components are separate. In other words, applicants can submit a vision without having a plan in place yet.

	POSSIBLE POINTS
Create a community-developed climate adaptation and resilience vision statement	3
Create and adopt a climate adaptation plan (or chapter) with one of the following scopes:	
a) Limited scope , covering at least one climate hazard for a limited geographic area or for one community asset type/system (e.g., transportation)	5
b) Moderate scope , covering at least one to three climate hazards for the entire geographic area of the community	8
c) Comprehensive scope , covering all relevant climate hazards for the entire geographic area of the community	12

F. What to submit

To be eligible for points under this action, all components of this action must have taken place within ten years from the date of application. Submit the following documentation for the point tiers:

Vision: Submit a copy or web address of the final climate adaptation and resilience vision statement and a summary of the inclusive public engagement process that was used to create the vision, including evidence of event outreach and attendance. (See guidance on inclusive public engagement processes in Section B).

Plan: Submit a copy or web address of the climate adaptation plan or chapter (of a related climate plan). Indicate the scope of the planning effort (limited, moderate or comprehensive). Submit documentation that the plan was adopted by the local government.

The plan or chapter must contain the following:

- The most recent New York State climate change projections and climate hazard data, as of the date of publication of the plan.
- A list of strategies to address local vulnerabilities and build adaptive capacity.
- A summary of the inclusive public engagement process that was used.

If a regional entity (other than the applicant) led the planning process, submit evidence of substantial involvement in that process, as per [these guidelines](#).

All CSC action documentation is available for public viewing after an action is approved. Action submittals should not include any information or documents that are not intended to be viewed by the public.

G. Links to additional resources or examples

Examples of community resilience visions

- [Beacon Sustainability and Climate Resilience Vision](#)
- [Visions And Principles for a Resilient Catskill](#): see page 32.
- [A Flood-Resilient Kingston: Vision for the Future](#): see pages 26 to 30.
- [Vision and Goals Statement \(English, available in 5 languages\), Climate Resilient San Diego](#)

Examples of climate adaptation plans and chapters

- [Resilience Roadmap: Planning for Piermont's Future](#)
- [Planning for Rising Waters: Final Report of the City of Kingston Waterfront Tidal Flooding Task Force](#)
- [Ossining's Waterfront on the Rise, Climate-adaptive Design Studio](#)
- [Vision 2020, New York City Comprehensive Waterfront Plan, Goal 8: Increase Climate Resilience](#)
- Tompkins County Comprehensive Plan – Planning for Our Future [Section on Climate Change Adaptation](#) and [Appendix B, Public Comments and Responses](#)
- [A Stronger, More Resilient New York](#)
- [Climate Resilient San Diego](#)
- [Climate Action Adaptation Plan, Santa Monica, CA](#)
- [Climate Action and Resiliency Plan, Alameda, CA](#)
- [Resilient Los Angeles](#)
- [Climate Resilience & Regeneration Plan: An element of the comprehensive plan](#)
- [Comprehensive Master Plan, Keene, NH](#)
- [Multi-Hazard and Climate Adaptation Plan, Lewes, DE](#)

Guidance for developing climate adaptation strategies

Planning Guidance

- [Climate Adaptation and Resilience Planning, Cornell WRI](#)
- [Resilience Planning Resources and Guidance, NYS DOS](#)
- [Resilience Principles, NYS DOS](#)
- [Greening in Place Guide, A framework for equitable green development](#)
- [Resources for Resilience, Cornell WRI](#)
- [NY Rising Community Reconstruction Program](#)
- [Preparing for Climate Change: A Guidebook for Local, Regional, and State Governments, ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability](#)

Strategy development

- [NYS Flood Risk Management Guidance, NYS DEC](#)
- [Model Local Laws to Increase Resilience, NYS DOS](#)
- [List of Climate Adaptation Strategies, Examples from Communities the Hudson Valley](#)
- [ENVISION™ Rating Tool](#): a sustainability rating program for horizontal infrastructure projects
- [The Sustainable SITES Initiative](#): SITES is rating system designed to distinguish sustainable landscapes, and measure their performance.
- [LEED for Neighborhood Development, USGBC](#)
- [International Green Construction Code](#)
- [FEMA Long-Term Community Resilience Exercise Resource Guide - Designing Whole Community Exercises to Prepare for the Effects of a Changing Climate](#)

Data, mappers, and climate projections

- [Responding to Climate Change in New York State \(ClimAID\)](#): source of New York State climate projections
- [New York State 6 NYCRR Part 490, Projected Sea-level Rise, NYS DEC](#)
- [Hudson River Flood Impact Decision Support System, Center for International Earth Science Information Network \(CIESIN\), Columbia University](#)
- [Disadvantaged Communities Interactive Mapper, NYSERDA](#)
- [Environmental Justice Mapping Tools, NY Sea Grant](#)
- [Hudson Valley Natural Resource Mapper, NY DEC](#)

Guidance for incorporating social equity and inclusive engagement

- [CSC Inclusive Community Engagement Primer](#)
- [Inclusive Planning for Community Resilience, Cornell WRI](#)
- [PUSH Blue program, PUSH Buffalo](#)

- [NYS People First: How To Plan Events Everyone Can Attend, NYS DOH](#)
- [The Path to Environmental Justice is Local, Center for Climate Preparedness, Antioch University.](#)
- [Equity Toolkit, Sustainable Connecticut](#)
- [Antioch New England's Center for Climate Preparedness and Community Resilience: Race and the Environmental Movement Webinar Series](#)
- [Climate Action through Equity, Portland, OR](#)
- [Training and Popular Education, Racial Equity Tools](#)
- [Action Plan Examples, Racial Equity Tools](#)
- [Local Policies For Environmental Justice: A National Scan, The New School](#)
- [People and Place: Understanding social dimensions of resilience in the Climate-adaptive Design Studio](#): see the stakeholder matrix in the outreach strategy section.
- [Social Equity, American Planning Association](#)

H. Recertification Requirements

The recertification requirements are the same as the initial certification requirements.