

An Adaptation Strategy to Prepare for Climate Change in Alaska (version2)

The primary theme for a statewide adaptation strategy is: local empowerment. This means give local leaders the information, the tools and the opportunity to incorporate climate change adaptation in to their current community plans. The goal is to inspire and inform residents to maximize the opportunity for orderly transition.

Climate change adaptation can be most effective not as a separate report or initiative, but as an integral component of all community planning and improvement. To accomplish this policy shift and goal the five basic deliverables needed are:

- (1) A central systematic source of current environmental data from which local authorities and design professionals know “what is” and how “what is” has been changing. I am thinking an internet portal and custodial agency to index and link existing sites, identify the data gaps and organize the requests to fill those gaps. This site could include a new “Environmental Atlas” to replace the one published by the University of Alaska in 1984.
- (2) A statewide set of climate zone profiles summarizing the environmental changes expected based on the best science. The definition of the “best science” needs to be established and consistently used/systematically updated on a statewide basis.
- (3) Local vulnerability assessment tool
 - a. Town site vulnerability & monitoring requirements
 - b. Infrastructure component vulnerability
 - c. Economic impacts
 - d. Natural environment impacts (e.g. permafrost changes, and animal & plant migration, etc)
- (4) Local adaptation information and prioritization tool
 - a. Relocation and incremental relocation strategies
 - b. Life cycle infrastructure replacement/relocation/strengthening strategies
 - c. Community land use/expansion strategies
 - d. Economic change/opportunity
 - e. Example community/personal behaviors and activities that can make a difference
- (5) A statewide information framework to register vulnerability assessments, share successful adaptation projects/outcomes, classify threat levels, organize coordinated responses, and resource prioritization & allocation methodologies.