

Part I. Pathways To Resilience

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I. INTRODUCTION AND PROJECT PURPOSE

A New Climate Reality

In the United States and around the world, we have entered a new climate reality. Our unsustainable, fossil fuel-driven economy has destabilized the climate, and weather-related disasters — drought, wildfires, and “superstorms” — are accelerating in severity and frequency. And the climate clock — that is, the window of opportunity for reducing greenhouse gas emissions so as to avert the most catastrophic effects of climate change — is ticking. As climate impacts multiply, it is time to make dramatically different choices about how we organize our communities and meet human needs.

Cities play a pivotal role in this new reality. They are now home to a majority of the world’s people, and they are central to economies around the globe. Of course, no city is an island — each is connected, through trade and ecosystems, to larger regions and

the world. But, given their cultural and economic importance, cities can take the lead on responding to climate change. They can reduce greenhouse gas emissions by making a swift, large-scale transition from carbon-intensive economic activity to low-carbon and carbon-free models. Cities can also adapt to the impacts of a changing climate even as they try to mitigate these impacts — by strengthening social ties and deepening the practice of democracy necessary for such a large-scale shift.

We believe that those most vulnerable to the effects of climate change — particularly low-income communities and communities of color — must be at the heart of society’s efforts to build a resilient future in which ecosystems, human labor, and cultures are integrated into a thriving regenerative web of life.

The Pathways to Resilience Initiative

To meet the challenge of this moment, social-change practice must make huge leaps in reach, effectiveness, and tangible economic and political impact. To that end, the Movement Strategy Center (MSC) launched the Pathways to Resilience (P2R) initiative in the fall of 2013, in partnership with The Kresge Foundation, the Emerald Cities Collaborative and the Praxis Project.

The goals of the P2R initiative are to support the field to:

1. **Define a new vision of climate resilience and pragmatic pathways** to achieve it. The P2R initiative seeks to advance a holistic resilience frame that incorporates the human, economic, and social impacts of the transition from vulnerability to resilience with the best of technical mitigation and adaptation responses.
2. **Transform the field** and the national conversation on climate mitigation and adaptation, promoting new thought leadership and the capacity to engage low-income communities and communities of color in the venues where climate policies are being formulated and enacted.
3. **Identify opportunities for joint action** and support the ongoing refinement and advancement of the agenda over time.
4. **Elevate the best of what is being done** to advance resilience in communities around the country and bring those efforts to appropriate scale.

The P2R Dialogues

Our first task was to interview more than thirty environmental and social justice thought leaders and practitioners across the United States, soliciting their input regarding how to advance climate resilience in a socially just manner. Then, in February 2014, MSC and the P2R partners convened some forty participants in a four-day “Strategy Lab” where we worked collectively to synthesize a shared framework and vision and define the multiple and diverse pathways through which the vision can be pursued. Lab participants were also invited to submit working papers, articles, and other resources to spark conversations at the convening. Taken together, we call this process the “P2R Dialogues.”

This anthology, *Pathways to Resilience*, is an initial outcome of the P2R Dialogues. Here, we offer a synthesis of the Dialogues as well as three working papers prepared for the Strategy Lab. The anthology captures a diverse range of voices and perspectives, and it is intended to spark an even broader conversation about how to create a just, resilient future — and provide entry points for further reflection, conversation, and engagement.

II. DEFINING CLIMATE RESILIENCE

Mainstream definitions of *climate resilience* focus narrowly on preparedness in the face of crisis and disaster, and on the ability of communities to “bounce back” from climate and other shocks. The current approach advanced by the public sector and some within the philanthropic community is dominated by “fix it” technical solutions. Moreover, decision making in this area is often driven by elites, resulting in policy that fails to address the needs of all populations, particularly those of low-income communities.

By contrast, the leaders who participated in the P2R Dialogues are working from a “bounce forward” definition of resilience, one that addresses root causes of climate change while advancing the social and economic transformation of communities.

The P2R Dialogues offered a range of definitions of resilience, but they share these core elements:

Climate Change Mitigation + Adaptation + Deep Democracy = Resilience

Mitigation is about reducing the greenhouse gas emissions that contribute to climate change. *Adaptation* is about planning and shifting our built environment and practices to account for current and anticipated effects. *Deep democracy* is about fostering social cohesion, inclusion, power, and participation — especially in the communities that are already confronting new climate realities. To be effective, climate resilience must incorporate all of these elements; it is a broad, multidimensional response to the causes of climate change and the potential solutions.

Because there are many different paths that communities can take to build resilience, there is no single road map to get there. But, as we will explore below, the P2R participants identified several priority approaches and strategies.

As discussed in greater depth in the paper *Redefining Resilience: Principles, Practices and Pathways*, which appears later in this anthology, climate change is the ultimate expression of a deep social and ecological imbalance. Thus, building climate resilience requires a holistic view of the challenges we face, and it calls for solutions at the intersection of people, the environment, and the economy.¹ Systems and ecological thinking can help restore and cultivate balance within and between human communities, and between human communities and the rest of the natural world. As we seek to restore balance, we can draw upon rooted and historical wisdom of place and the adaptive capacity that communities have built over generations of hardship and crisis.

The P2R Dialogues highlighted the following elements as essential to a climate resilience agenda:

Human Rights

- **Advance equity and social justice.** The systems that are driving climate instability are rooted in the same processes that generate social inequality. To be successful, a path to climate stability must include the advancement of social equity.
- **Reflect human rights principles.** Responses to climate change must not reinforce the notion that some communities — or some people — are expendable, or that property rights and business interests take precedence over human rights.²
- **Address historical injustices.** Building resilience requires systematic action to address historical roots of vulnerability and the application of interventions that apply “targeted universalism” to create the equity that is the foundation for deep resilience.³

1 Movement Strategy Center, “The Wheel and the Web: Shifting and Sequencing Investment and Impact to Balance Human and Ecological System” *What We’re Learning* paper series, no. 4 (October, 2013).

2 Bullard, R.D. and B.CENTERED. Wright. 2012. *The Wrong Complexion for Protection: How the Government Response to Disaster Endangers African American Communities*. New York: New York University Press.

3 Powell, A. S. Menendian, and J. Reece. “The Importance of Targeted Universalism.” *Poverty & Race* (March/April 2009). http://centered.pprac.org/full_text.php?text_id=1223&item_id=11577&newsletter_id=104&header=Miscellaneous&kc=1

Economy

- **Move beyond fossil fuels.** Because the climate crisis is rooted in the fossil fuel economy, resilience requires a speedy transition to renewable sources of energy.
- **Build local economic infrastructure.** Grow the capacity of community institutions to generate and manage economic activities that advance adaptation, mitigation, and localization of core systems like food and energy.
- **Redefine “the good life.”** Shift toward simplicity, social solidarity, interdependence, and a redefinition of “the good life,” or “*buen vivir*.”

Ecology

- **Reimagine our collective identity and our relationship with natural world.** Develop a sense of responsibility and relationship to other living things, the foundation of caring for the ecosystems upon which we depend.
- **Recognize the rights of nature in balance with human rights.** Cultivate respect and a culture of reverence for the intrinsic value of the natural world.

III. GETTING THERE: APPROACHES AND PATHWAYS TO BUILD CLIMATE RESILIENCE

Some of the climate challenges our communities must confront — heat waves, hurricanes, flooding — are easy to imagine; others are more difficult to predict. How can we take action when faced with a future that is so uncertain? Our best efforts will draw upon the creative actions being taken by communities currently

affected by the causes and consequences of climate change.

The P2R Dialogues discussed two general approaches and six strategic pathways that communities can use to act in the face of uncertainty:

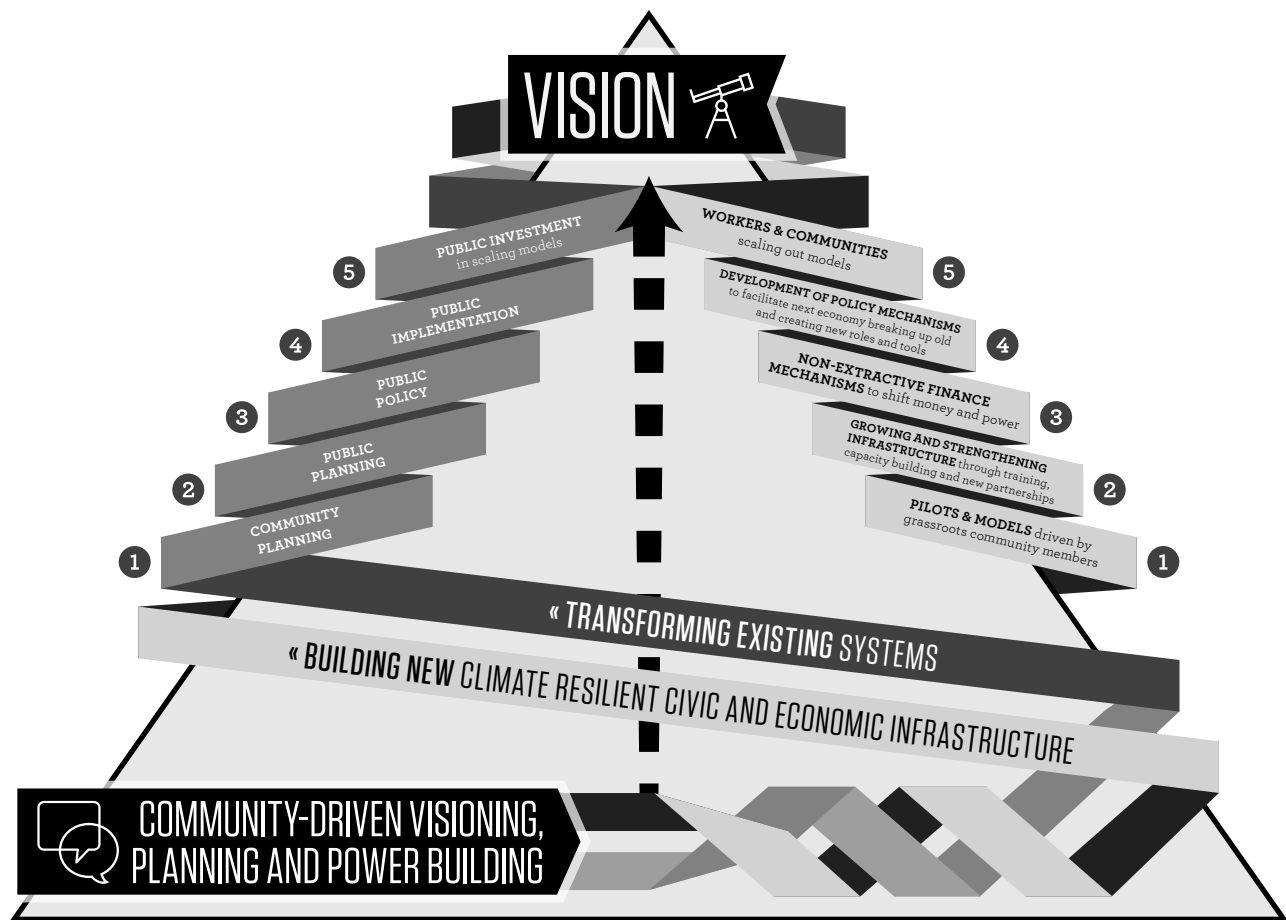
Two approaches

Climate resilience requires us to pursue two distinct approaches that operate in parallel and sometimes oppositional ways:

1. **Transform existing systems.** Shift policy and regulatory environments in ways that incentivize efforts to promote resilience and discourage non-regenerative practices. For example, a tax on carbon emissions can make funds available for mitigation and adaptation efforts.
2. **Build new climate resilient civic economic infrastructure.** Build and scale new forms of political and civic participation and economic infrastructure. Examples include structured, community-driven climate action planning; municipal economic development that focuses on climate resilience; public management of local green utilities and energy production.

To build truly resilient communities, we must pursue both approaches in tandem, integrating them where possible. We must also work toward long-term and near-term goals at the same time. And — importantly — both approaches must be guided by community-driven vision, planning, and power building.

LOCAL PATHWAYS TO TRANSFORM PLACE: CLIMATE RESILIENCE



An example of the “two approaches” to action comes from Kentuckians for the Commonwealth (KFTC). KFTC is a grassroots organization of 7,500 members across Kentucky with decades of experience in organizing, policy, and civic engagement. In Eastern Kentucky, KFTC partnered with the Mountain Association for Community Economic Development (MACED) to establish the Kentucky Sustainable Energy Alliance (KySEA).

KySEA members include organizations with a wide range of goals: protecting the environment; creating affordable

housing; addressing climate change; promoting economic development; growing small businesses and addressing poverty. These diverse groups have aligned around the following objectives for their state’s energy system:⁴

- Make improving energy efficiency Kentucky’s top energy priority.
- Promote the development of clean, renewable energy from solar, wind, hydro and low-impact biomass, and increase the share of our overall energy mix that comes from these sources.
- Create new jobs and opportunities for Kentuckians, including a just

transition for coal-producing communities and workers that includes building new climate-resilient economic infrastructure and engaging stakeholders in transforming existing systems.

As a broad-based coalition of businesses, non-profit organizations, faith communities, and individuals, KySEA has the capacity to engage individuals, homeowners, policy makers and businesses to implement sustainable energy practices and also lobby at the state level to win the policies and funding necessary to support a just transition.

4 For more information, please see <http://centered.kysea.org/about-us>

Six strategic pathways

The P2R Dialogues also identified six strategic pathways — areas where concentrated effort can advance climate resilience. These pathways emerged as themes in our initial interviews and were further defined in background materials MSC prepared for the February 2014 Strategy Lab. At the Lab, participants organized into working groups based on the six pathways through which they enhanced our collective understanding of these pathways and approaches.

The six pathways, discussed in depth below, are:

1. Build Power, Expand Democracy, Increase Community Voice and Transform Place
2. Craft a Narrative Strategy that Moves the Message and Builds the Climate Resilience Constituency
3. Create a New Economy for the New Climate Reality
4. Advance the Climate Resilience Legal and Policy Agenda
5. Strengthen Regionalism and Bioregional Identity⁵
6. Align and Expand Movement Infrastructure Building

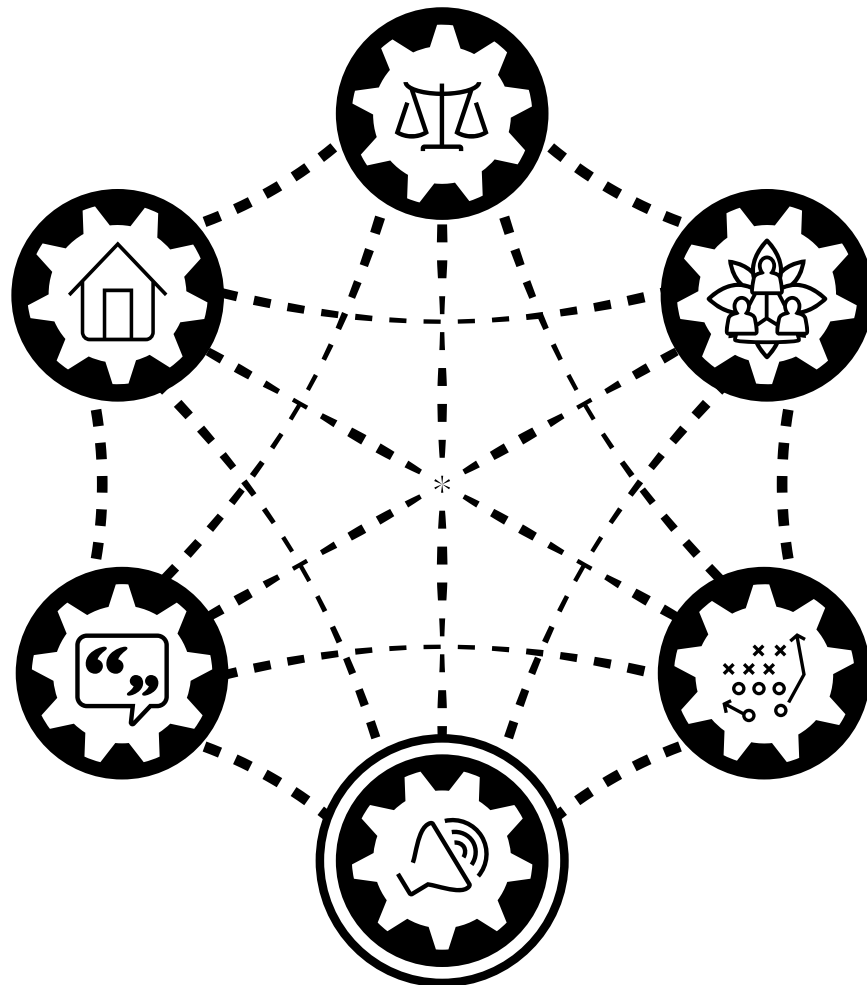
The Importance of Place

One theme that bridges all of the strategic pathways is the importance of place. Climate impacts are experienced locally, so effective actions to build climate resilience are rooted in particular places. Among the P2R Dialogue participants, there was a strong consensus that locally and bioregionally driven solutions should be at the heart of climate resilience

efforts. In addition, special attention must be given to areas with particular climate vulnerability, such as coastal regions, cities, and the most densely populated areas. At the same time, we must build new partnerships between residents of cities and of the rural areas that sustain them.

⁵ Bioregionalism is a political, cultural, and ecological system or set of views based on naturally defined areas called bioregions, similar to ecoregions. Bioregions are defined through physical and environmental features, including watershed boundaries and soil and terrain characteristics.

A WHEEL & A WEB: 6 STRATEGIC PATHWAYS



PATHWAY 1:
Build Power, Expand Democracy,
Increase Community Voice
and Transform Place



PATHWAY 2:
Craft a Narrative Strategy that
Moves the Message and Builds
the Climate Resilience Constituency



PATHWAY 3:
Create a New Economy
for the New Climate Reality



PATHWAY 4:
Advance the Climate Resilience
Legal and Policy Agenda



PATHWAY 5:
Strengthen Regionalism
and Bioregional Identity



PATHWAY 6:
Align and Expand
Movement Infrastructure Building



1 Build Power, Expand Democracy, Increase Community Voice and Transform Place

The central objectives of any resilience agenda include increasing the capacity for self-governance and rendering decision-making more democratic — ensuring that civic responsibility and leadership are widely distributed. Moreover, greater community participation and engagement is necessary to bolster the public will to take the difficult political and economic actions that are required to build resilience. In many cities, community-led interventions are already transforming public planning processes. By connecting and aligning these efforts, it is possible to leverage change at a larger scale. In particular, it is possible to:

- **Build the bigger “we”** by boosting the power of historically marginalized populations and creating alignment with partners from all communities and systems. This means engaging new constituencies — like local, elected officials of color — who may not yet have taken up climate as a primary issue for their communities.
- **Build political power** by enhancing the capacity and willingness of community institutions to take leadership in ‘whole systems’ such as food and energy.
- **Create “super organizers”** by crafting leadership training strategies that are place- and population-specific to ensure that key communities have trained organizers to help guide the transition.
- **Create multipliers and models** by developing new ways of organizing and new blends of social-change approaches — and by ensuring that resilience initiatives in one place help inform and support efforts in other places.

“Resilience Mobilization Hub” model. Strengthening climate resilience calls for building the power and visibility of historically marginalized communities that face the most significant climate impacts. At the same time, it will require the social-change community to build partnerships between actors across all communities and systems, including business and the public sector.

In some communities, aligning these diverse forces and putting them into motion has been facilitated by the formation of networks of collaboration and action in ways that reflect the core principles of resilience, specifically through the inclusion of informal and formal, centralized and decentralized mechanisms and strategies. These “hubs” bring together different communities and institutions within local climate action councils, community

coalitions, alliances, and multi-stakeholder collaborations.

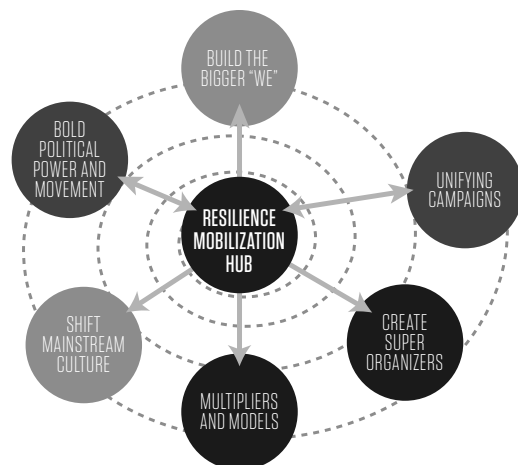
In many cities and regions, the development of climate action plans has spurred the creation of hubs that engage grassroots groups, regional campaigns, regional multi-stakeholder formations, and systems-specific coalitions at the municipal and regional levels.

California, for example, has a concentration of hubs at the community, municipal, and state levels. Community groups are organizing neighborhoods and coming together at the municipal level through structures like the Oakland Climate Action Coalition and the Richmond Environmental Justice Coalition. Regional environmental justice coalitions are forming in the Bay Area through the Resilience Communities Initiative and the Six Wins for Social Equity Network. California is also home to multi-stakeholder structures like the emergent Alliance for Climate Resilience and statewide groups such as the California Environmental Justice Alliance (CEJA).

Similar structures for community engagement in climate resilience efforts are emerging in places around the country. The Kentucky Sustainable Energy Alliance — discussed earlier — is another example of a statewide hub.

A shared purpose is at the core of a successful hub; it is key to bridging differences between people of different roles, from different sectors and contexts.

COMMUNITY RESILIENCY STRATEGY LAP FEBRUARY 2014





2 Craft a Narrative Strategy that Moves the Message and Builds the Climate Resilience Constituency

To advance climate resilience, we must craft a narrative strategy that flows from an overall social-change strategy. As so effectively described in the Praxis Project's *Weathering Together: Resilience as a Vehicle to Reshape Policy and Political Will*, which appears in this anthology, that narrative strategy must go beyond crafting "communications messages" and take up the work of addressing widely held frames underlying concepts of nature, climate, and economy. Without changing those frames, it will be difficult to achieve the degree of public consensus needed to assure climate resilience at scale. It is also critical to differentiate between the narrative and messaging required to transform the climate-resilience movement (internal) from the narrative and messaging required to engage and move the public (external).⁶

Such work requires us to build a deeper understanding and alignment among allied social-change communities about the frames we are advancing and countering. When that alignment is achieved, we can build out communication strategies that move people to a deeper awareness of the solutions that need to be advanced, and a recognition that success necessitates implementing solutions that address root causes.

The P2R Dialogues and our organizing process identified a few key dimensions to keep in mind as we move forward:

- **Address inequality.** Socially just climate resilience requires more than technical fixes for climate impacts such as hardening coastlines against erosion and flooding. It requires addressing the inequalities that create and exacerbate community vulnerabilities. As noted in *Weathering Together*, this means asking the general public to care about low-income people and people of color and to recognize a sense of shared fate with these *others*. This, in turn, requires greater empathy, a more nuanced analysis of the economy, and a clearer understanding of the crisis and what can be done about it.
- **Speak to the base, and beyond.** Our ability to achieve our goals will depend on building a broad and committed base of support. That means we must communicate with current and potential supporters, mobilizing them to action while also seeking to reach the "opposition." To that end, we must craft a set of interlocking narratives to help the public make sense of the climate crisis, the climate clock, and opportunities to take principled and effective action.

⁶ Movement Strategy Center, "Making Another World Possible: A Movement Building Framework". *What We're Learning* paper series, no. 3 (October, 2013).

Multiple frames and the possibility of alignment

Those working to advance climate resilience draw on multiple conceptual frameworks. (See sidebar for a sampling of the frames that emerged in the P2R Dialogues.)

While there is clearly significant overlap among the many frames and sub-frames, there is also diversity in surface and substance. This diversity is both an asset and a challenge. On the one hand, it can feed creativity and fuel a range of solutions. On the other, it can drive fragmentation, which could make it more difficult to create the alignment necessary to advance an inclusive resilience strategy. It remains an open question whether advocates should endeavor to build alignment around a shared “banner” or a framework to align vision, strategy, and policy agendas.

One critical step for the field is to test current narratives with key audiences, to assess which “ally facing frames” are most catalytic in unifying the social-change community, and which externally facing “public narratives” will move key parts of the population and decision makers to build resilience.

A sampling of the frames that emerged in the P2R Dialogues

- *Climate resilience*
- *Gift Economy; Solidarity Economy; Care Economy; Non-Consumption Culture*
- *Non-extractive economy*
- *Local, living, loving, and linked economy*
- *Economy for life — buen vivir*
- *Economy for the people and the planet*
- *Anti-capitalist frame — working across issues and striving for strategic political alignment*
- *Migration — disaster migration, economic migration, political migration*
- *Transportation equity*
- *Energy democracy*
- *No war, no warming*
- *Green jobs and green economy*
- *Green zones*
- *Climate prosperity*
- *Climate gap*
- *Healthy communities*
- *Healthy communities, healthy bodies, minds and souls*
- *Environmental justice and climate justice*



3 Create a New Economy for the New Climate Reality

Climate disruption results from the ways our economy consumes resources and energy. Current economic policies and practices reward financial profit at the cost of driving unsustainable growth and the extraction of natural and human resources, undermining community resilience. Therefore, any meaningful action on climate change will require an *economic transition* — a significant shift in the economic paradigm from an extractive to a regenerative economy — one that restores our connection to place and regenerates (rather than degrades) natural and human resources.

For many P2R participants, economic transition is about localizing the economy and building wealth at the local level. It is also about building effective alternatives that can, over time, become the core drivers of a new economy. Others emphasize the need to connect climate resilience efforts to economic justice efforts, arguing that pathways to economic well-being must put climate vulnerabilities at the center.

Participants highlighted several efforts and approaches necessary to support the transition to a new economy:

- **Localize the economy**, particularly food systems and energy; tie localization to policy incentives that stimulate new and sustainable forms of community-led economic activity that promotes regional and global ecological balance.

Challenges

Several core challenges and tensions must be overcome for this vision to become a reality in the short window of time afforded by the climate clock. Most efforts to transform economies are struggling to move past pilot status. To bring these efforts to scale, it is essential to link localized, bottom-up efforts with top-down, large-scale public and private financing of new economic activity and to build the capacity of communities to receive and deploy existing and potential funds.

- **Integrate public- and private-sector resources**, including direct capital investment, regulatory environments, and direct incentives and disincentives such as tax policies and government subsidies.
- **Capture and redirect disaster funding**: reallocate resource flows for disaster preparedness, response, and recovery, ensuring that those resources stimulate “next economy” activity and build local wealth that can stabilize communities.
- **Shift conditions** so that it is more costly and unprofitable for the private sector to engage in economic activity that exacerbates climate change.
- **Democratize, decentralize, redistribute, and reduce** consumption of resources.
- **Promote adaptation and mitigation efforts that generate jobs** and meaningful work, while shifting the management and ownership of core systems into the hands of local communities.
- **Build partnerships between community, labor, green enterprise and public and social impact investing** to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and generate local enterprise and jobs.



4 Advance the Climate Resilience Legal and Policy Agenda

Enlightened policy can drive far-reaching change — not only in the public sector, but in industry and enterprise. Governments can incentivize economic activity that creates climate resilience while discouraging activity that contributes to environmental breakdown — for example, by taxing carbon emissions and using the revenue to subsidize distributed, community-controlled, alternative energy.

State-level policy is especially important; it can catalyze a cascade of beneficial changes at various levels. For example, California’s Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006 spurred the creation of regulations and market mechanisms to reduce California’s greenhouse gas emissions by twenty-five percent. Similarly, California’s Sustainable Communities and Climate Protection Act of 2008 has shaped many regional processes, including housing and transportation planning.⁷

The local Urban Environmental Accords signed in San Francisco in 2005 provided momentum for the Global Warming Solutions Act at the state level. And now both statutes require locally developed plans and activity, prioritizing climate change considerations in public sector processes and affecting the distribution of multiple streams of state funding that are now flowing to local communities. And the California model has influenced the development of climate policy in other jurisdictions around the globe. California’s success was made possible through the coordination of local and state-level actions and strategy, a complex process that has generated tremendous value.

7 SB375 directs the CARB to set regional targets for reducing GHG emissions but the ultimate responsibility for developing a “Sustainable Communities Strategy” for each region lies with its metropolitan planning organization. According to the CARB, transportation accounts for forty percent of GHGs, which makes SB375 central to achieving AB32’s GHG reduction goals.

Analyze the implications of policy

Because Climate Change Mitigation + Adaptation + Deep Democracy = Resilience, all policies must be viewed through the lenses of both climate and democracy if resilience is to be socially just. Community members and civic leaders can consider these questions as they make decisions that will shape the form and function of their neighborhoods, cities, and regions:

Climate:

- How will climate change affect a particular issue — housing, food, childcare — as well as the solutions that I am putting into place?
- Does the proposed policy/ course of action have implications (positive or negative) for the severity of climate change? How will negative implications be addressed?
- Will the expected consequences of climate change affect the viability or durability of a proposed policy/course of action? If yes, what should be changed?

Democracy:

- Does the proposed policy/course of action reflect the knowledge and priorities of the communities that are most impacted?
- Who benefits and who is negatively affected by the proposed policy/course of action?
- Will the existing disparities and disproportionate impacts be lessened or exacerbated?⁸

Change policy to shift funding flows

Funding is crucial for bringing resilience to scale. And funding deployed for disaster relief or for adaptation can be designed to advance climate resilience — by helping communities “bounce forward” rather than “bounce back.” For example, funds can be used to build climate-resilient infrastructure and to ensure community leadership in disaster preparation, response and recovery. Existing resources that can and should be captured and focused

on climate resilience include: public funding for climate action plans; resources flowing from the fossil fuel divest/invest movement out of universities, pension funds, and foundation endowments; and social impact investment funds looking to address climate change. New sources could include local bonds and a federal carbon tax. It is important that financing mechanisms can be community controlled.

Share information and strategy

P2R participants called for a policy inventory to generate a database of successful efforts, including model climate action plans that are strong from a social justice standpoint, so that groups with varied capacities can both contribute to the inventory and draw from it as it evolves. A survey of climate litigation to inform legal action to stop dirty energy, force damage payments, and transform environmental regulatory standards would also

be invaluable. The process of creating a database would help the field identify investment points and fulcrums for collective engagement.

⁸ These framing questions were informed by the P2R Dialogues as well as Movement Generation’s work on climate resilience, the Center for Clean Air Policy’s early work on climate adaptation, EcoAdapt’s work on adaptation planning, The Kresge Foundation’s design of its Climate Resilience and Urban Opportunity Initiative, and input from Angela Park in the design of the Kresge initiative.

Assert human and Earth rights in policy

Current legal regimes in the United States prioritize the protection of property over human health and well-being, making it difficult to challenge policies and economic actions that harm vulnerable communities. Accordingly, the P2R Dialogues emphasized the need to advance and operationalize a human rights framework in climate policy. To that end, participants suggested that we must: build the capacity of the social-change and climate-resilience sectors; integrate legal and human-rights strategies into current efforts to change policy; and train lawyers, policy advocates, and organizers in the new approach. One way to accomplish these objectives is to establish a “rights school” that can provide clear points of intervention within the current legal framework and proposed policies.

Several organizations have launched innovative efforts to incorporate human rights in law and policy. For example, the Gulf Center for Law and Policy utilizes human rights-based legal services, community training, local leadership development, and grassroots advocacy to challenge policies and practices that produce disparate impacts on marginalized groups.⁹ Advocates for Environmental Human Rights (AEHR) promotes a just and sustainable rebuilding of Gulf Coast communities that respects the right of all residents to voluntarily return to their communities with dignity and justice.¹⁰ P2R participants emphasized the need for a more systematic effort to identify opportunities for legal and policy work that advances these priorities.

Craft policy that reflects geography of opportunity and impact

Policy and legal strategies must map the ways in which opportunity and threat unfold differently in different places. Without a shift in the power that shapes the policy, we cannot get the policy we need. This means that it is necessary to target new and existing resources in communities that are vulnerable but not already engaged in climate resilience. Thus, special attention, as noted above, must be given to resilience efforts in vulnerable areas where people are likely to suffer disproportionate impacts and where the current state of civic and economic infrastructure may compromise the community’s capacity to respond.

⁹ For more information, please see <http://gcclp.org>.

¹⁰ For more information, please see <http://centered.ehumanrights.org>.



5 Strengthen Regionalism and Bioregional Identity

Because cities are connected to rural areas through trade and ecosystems, we must rethink the relationships of cities to the larger “bioregions” in which they are embedded. At the same time, climate resilience requires transformation of the systems communities depend upon: energy, work, food, water, land use, housing, transportation, and more. But, because these systems often transcend jurisdictional boundaries, it is difficult to advance shared decision making when there are so many competing governing bodies involved. Moreover, regional instruments often are weak or limited in mandate, and/or they are dominated by private business and elite interests that are unresponsive to low-income communities and communities of color.

One longer-term answer to this challenge proposed by P2R participants is “people-centered bioregionalism” — efforts to reorganize culture, identity, power, and governance to reflect bioregional and regional boundaries; and ensure broad,

democratic participation in large-scale planning and decision making. Through people-centered bioregionalism, communities can pursue what David Orr calls “full-spectrum sustainability” by looking at resilience across multiple systems and building regional systems that balance community, ecology, and economy.¹¹

Many efforts to build socially just climate resilience — for example, on the Gulf Coast and in Appalachia — are already tackling the difficult question of how to make the promise of bioregionalism a reality. In the coming years, we must continue to build out and propagate these efforts and tie them more deeply to policy and governing agreements. At the same time, we must address and transcend limitations in the ways bioregionalism has been pursued in the past; too often, bioregionalism has emphasized natural resources management and ecosystem restoration without addressing the critical needs of communities.

Principles

People-centered bioregionalism:

- Recognizes the essential role of humans in all ecosystems.
- Reconnects people to place.
- Promotes “right relationships” between people and the natural world.
- Creates bioregional economies that encourage local sourcing.
- Fosters interrelationships between systems to ensure that regional decisions are not made in silos.
- Balances the three-legged stool of democracy, ecology, and economy without compromising one for another.

Practices

We can make people-centered bioregionalism a reality by:

- *Accounting for all potential impacts on people and ecosystems both inside and outside the boundaries of the bioregion during planning*
- *Connecting urban and rural organizing and increasing investment in rural democratic capacity*
- *Reorganizing jurisdictions so that bioregional decision making is incentivized by state and federal investment*
- *Creating and monitoring feedback loops that provide critical information about the well-being of people and ecosystems*
- *Developing and promoting regenerative business models and enterprises that are democratic and scaled appropriately to advance long-term solutions in ways that are bioregionally sensitive*
- *Analyzing and managing trade-offs carefully so as to meet current and future needs within the bioregion*
- *Framing the scope of the problem and matching solutions to the relevant geography of the solution*
- *Using ratepayer organizing to increase public control and management of utilities and build partnerships with unions connected to utilities because utilities are often providing energy municipally and regionally*

11 See, for example, *The Essential David Orr*, a collection of Orr’s writings from 1985 to 2010. Orr, David. *The Essential David Orr*. Washington, DC: Island Press, 2010.



6 Align and Expand Movement Infrastructure Building

To implement the strategies outlined above, we must align and expand movement infrastructure. Key priorities for infrastructure capacity building include:

- **Invest in the base.** Significant climate resilience work is happening in local communities but it is vastly under-resourced. Resources must be available for base building; integrating justice and equity concerns; and planning, policy, and implementation efforts.
- **Nurture and accelerate trans-local work.** Support existing networks and launch new regional, national, and issue-based networks that can support learning, solution building, and shared strategy development. Resources are needed for convening, peer-to-peer learning, mapping, and leadership development, as well as to develop platforms for communications and alignment.
- **Bridge movement divides; engage key allies.** Link socially just climate resilience to other movements and

communities of practice. Connect systematically with allies, such as the public health community, labor, public planners, and others who are driving climate-focused or resilience-focused planning and/or responses.

- **Align philanthropy.** In the mid- and long-term, given the scale of the need, the bulk of resources to support climate resilience strategies will need to come from local communities, the public sector, and some elements of the private sector. In the near-term, we need philanthropy and philanthropic investment to better align with the strategic pathways we have identified.
- **Align strategy.** There is too much fragmentation in the strategies of social-change actors important to building climate resilience, and some very large gaps that we must fill if we are to move forward effectively. Accordingly, the field must align strategy across regional, issue, and even political boundaries.

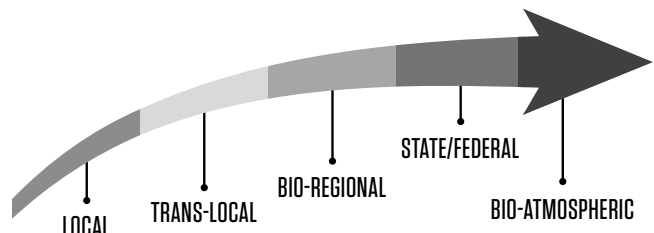
Community resilience at scale

Climate resilience begins in the neighborhoods and communities we call home. The P2R Dialogues affirmed that locally driven solutions should be at the heart of climate resilience efforts. At the same time, we must build the capacity of social-change advocates to intervene and engage at larger scales — the state and federal levels — to devolve and distribute resources to grassroots economies to implement local solutions.

To reach the scale needed for success, we must consider the full picture and define — at each level of scale — the core change model and assumptions and all the “necessary and sufficient” steps to generate the needed outcomes. Movements that build and refine a comprehensive strategy are best able to identify and leverage short-term opportunities toward long-term goals and ensure that momentum from victories is funneled and focused into the next wave of innovation and impact.

To build community resilience at scale, we need to build the capacity of social-change advocates to intervene and engage

at the federal and state levels to drive and distribute resources to grassroots economies to implement local solutions. We also need to consider the full picture and define — at each level of scale — the core change model and assumptions and all the “necessary and sufficient” steps to generate needed outcomes. Finally, we have to build out comprehensive strategies that can leverage short-term opportunities toward long-term goals and ensure that momentum from victories is funneled and focused into the next wave of innovation and impact.



IV. CONCLUSION

As the impacts of climate change are increasing in frequency and severity, we must confront the new climate reality without desperation but with maximum speed and efficiency. We must use our sense of urgency to seek bold changes and to address the root causes of the climate crisis. And we must do so at a meaningful scale, without sacrificing broad democratic engagement.

To achieve climate resilience, we must align efforts to transform existing systems with efforts to build new ones. By focusing our attention on governance and alternative systems, we can proactively define and manifest the world we want.¹² This will require social-change movements to collaborate and adapt as never before.

If we align our efforts, we can:

- **Win what is worth winning.** Focus on real solutions that address root causes and build momentum for deeper structural change;
- **Win what is winnable today.** Look at existing openings and opportunities given the current balance of forces. For example, a policy that is a non-starter at the federal level may be winnable locally and in some states;
- **Change what is winnable.** Use short-term victories to shift the balance of forces, change the rules of the game, and create the possibility of more significant victories;
- **Consolidate the choir,** move the **congregation** and reach the **unaffiliated.**¹³

The challenges we face are real, and time is short. To advance socially just climate resilience, we must balance urgency and hope. The longer we take to address climate change, the more painful it will be for all of us — especially the most vulnerable. ■

12 Movement Strategy Center “Movement Pivots: Five Steps to Collective Impact and Transformative Social Change”. *What We’re Learning* paper series, no. 1 (May, 2013).

13 Movement Strategy Center “Transition Framework for a Just Climate Resilience Agenda”. *What We’re Learning* paper series, no. 6 (September 2014).