

Transportation System Resilience, Extreme Weather and Climate Change

A Thought Leadership Series

**Final Report
September 2014**

*Prepared by the Office of Strategic Initiatives
for Research and Innovation, Volpe*



U.S. Department of Transportation
Volpe, The National Transportation Systems Center

Volpe

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Contents

Executive Summary.....	1
Transportation System Resilience, Extreme Weather and Climate Change: Driving Forces.....	2
1. Assessment of Climate-Change Risks and Vulnerabilities.....	5
Indicators of a Warming World.....	5
Changes in Sea Levels	6
Changes in Average Temperature and Rainfall.....	7
What’s Causing Climate Change?	9
Impacts of Climate Change on Transportation Infrastructure.....	12
2. Climate Change Adaptation Strategies	14
Adaptation Benefits, Co-Benefits, and Challenges	17
Adaptation Success Metrics	17
Climate Change Adaptation in New York City.....	18
Pre-Super Storm Sandy NYC Task Force Climate Risk Assessment	21
Post-Sandy Damage Assessment and Lessons Learned.....	21
Perspective on Federal Response to Super Storm Sandy	23
3. Mitigation of Climate Change Consequences	25
Beneficial Effects of CAFE Standards as a Mitigation Measure	25
Adverse Impacts of Fossil Fuels on Rates of CO ₂ Concentration	27
4. Resilience in the Face of Climate Change Impacts and the Importance of Planning.....	28
Importance of Planning.....	29
Appendix A: Video Library.....	33
Appendix B: Stakeholder Engagement Statistics	34
Appendix C: Stakeholder Engagement.....	35

Executive Summary

September 2014

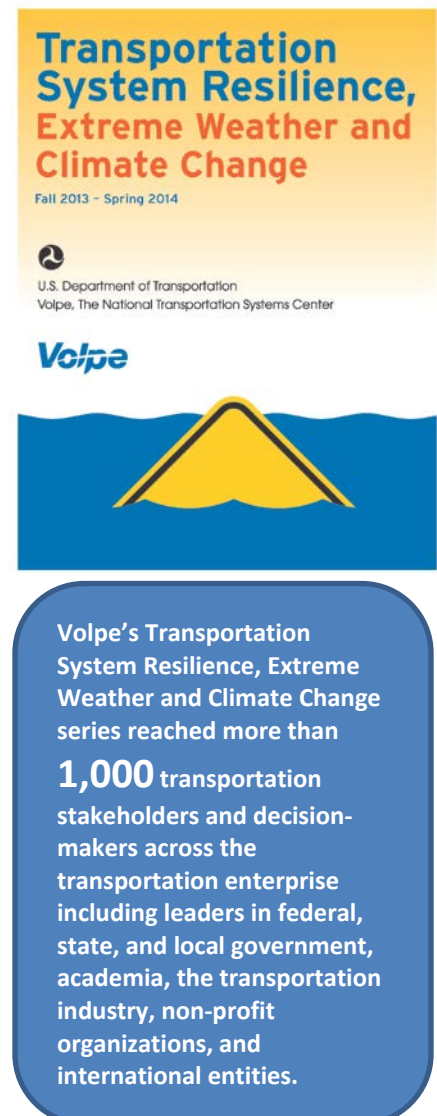
Global transportation infrastructure today is confronted with significant vulnerabilities, including the escalating threats of our changing climate. The infrastructure and systems that we use to move people and goods are particularly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, from rising sea levels to rising temperatures to more intense storms to extreme drought.

This report summarizes the Volpe, The National Transportation System Center's recent thought leadership speaker series on *Transportation System Resilience, Extreme Weather and Climate Change*. From October 2013-April 2014, Volpe, part of the U.S. Department of Transportation, convened notable and influential voices in transportation system resiliency and climate change to present the current state of climate science and to discuss challenges, opportunities and fresh approaches related to these pressing multi-modal, multi-sector issues.

Transportation decision makers representing a broad spectrum of the transportation community from across the country and around the world participated in this series and joined Volpe in person and via webinar to learn about transportation adaptation and resilience and to engage in the dialogue.

The insights, research, and experiences of Volpe's guest lecturers provide a framework for tackling transportation challenges arising from the escalating threats of our changing climate. This report summarizes the strategies and realities within this framework that emerged from Volpe's recent thought leadership series.

Appendix A provides links to selected video clips as well as full videos of each presentation. Appendices B and C provide stakeholder engagement statistics as well as the state, regional, and local stakeholders that participated in these climate discussions.



Transportation System Resilience, Extreme Weather and Climate Change: Driving Forces

Several landmark reports on climate change were recently released or were in development at the time of the Volpe Center thought leadership series on Transportation System Resilience, Extreme Weather and Climate Change.

Recent Landmark Climate Change Reports and Initiatives

1 - [The President's Climate Action Plan](#), June 2013, released by the Executive Office of the President, outlined a broad spectrum of executive actions and a plan structured around three key pillars: Cutting Carbon Pollution; Preparing the U.S. for the Impacts of Climate Change; and Leading International Efforts to Combat Global Climate Change and Preparing for Its Impacts.

2 - [The United States Climate Action Report 2014](#) was issued as the first Biennial Report of the U.S. under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), and consistent with the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Working Group III recommendations on meeting the challenges of reducing greenhouse gas emissions from fossil fuel.

3 - [National Climate Assessment](#), May 2014. The National Climate Assessment summarizes the impacts of climate change on the United States, now and in the future. A team of more than 300 experts, guided by a 60 member Federal Advisory Committee, produced the report. Dr. Jerry Melillo, one of the Volpe thought leadership series' speakers, chaired the Committee.

4 - [The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change \(IPCC\) Working-Group Reports](#). The IPCC is the leading international body for the assessment of climate change, established by the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP) and the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) in 1988 to provide the world with a clear scientific view on the current state of knowledge in climate change and its potential environmental and socio-economic impacts.

5 - [Risky Business: The Economic Risks of Climate Change in the United States](#), June 2014. This report documents the economic risks from damage to coastal property and infrastructure from rising sea levels and increasing storm surge, climate-driven changes in agricultural production and energy demand, and the impact of higher temperatures on labor productivity and public health.

With the input of hundreds of experts that contributed to this set of major climate change reports, assessments, and plans providing a backdrop, Volpe brought together thought leaders to focus on the challenges related to transportation system resilience, extreme weather and climate change. U.S. Department of Transportation's Assistant Secretary for Transportation Research and Technology Gregory Winfree and Associate Administrator and Volpe Director Robert Johns kicked off the series on October 8, 2013.

Program of Events and Speakers

Series Kick-Off: October 8, 2013

Gregory D. Winfree

Assistant Secretary for Research and Technology
U.S. Department of Transportation

Robert C. Johns

Associate Administrator and Director, Volpe
U.S. Department of Transportation

Steve Winkelman

Director of Transportation and Adaptation Programs

Center for Clean Air Policy

[*Can We Get There from Here? Transportation and Climate Adaptation: Prospects for the Future*](#)

November 19, 2013

Dr. Klaus H. Jacob

Research Scientist, Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory

Adjunct Professor, Columbia University

[*Pre-Sandy Impact Modeling of Storm Surge*](#)

December 4, 2013

Susanne E. DesRoches

Assistant Chief, Resilience and Sustainability

Port Authority of New York and New Jersey (PANY/NJ)

[*Super Storm Sandy*](#)

December 17, 2013

Gregg Fleming

Director, Center for Environment and Energy Systems

Volpe Center

[*U.S. Initiatives to Reduce Transportation-Related Global Greenhouse Gas Emissions*](#)

February 25, 2014

Dr. Kerry Emanuel

Cecil and Ida Green Professor of Atmospheric Science

Massachusetts Institute of Technology

[*Extreme Weather and Climate*](#)

March 11, 2014

William M. Lyons

Principal Technical Advisor, Transportation Planning

Volpe Center

[*The Challenges of Transportation Planning for Resilience*](#)

March 18, 2014

Vinn White

Senior Policy Advisor for Transportation Policy

U.S. Department of Transportation

[*Federal Program Adaptation Post Sandy*](#)

April 10, 2014

Dr. Jerry Melillo

Distinguished Scientist and Director Emeritus

Marine Biological Laboratory, Woods Hole, MA

Professor of Biology at Brown University

[*The Third National Climate Assessment: Lessons Learned, Paths Forward*](#)



The ideas, observations, and findings documented in this summary report capture the four dominant forces that drive global climate-change research and planning:

1. Assessment of climate-change risks and vulnerabilities;
2. Adaptation strategies;
3. Mitigation of the consequences; and
4. Planning for resilient infrastructure systems.

1. Assessment of Climate-Change Risks and Vulnerabilities

Understanding the current state of climate change begins with risk assessment. What are the potential outcomes of climate change? What happens to our natural environment if we do not take action? What happens if we take aggressive action?

Researchers estimate climate change risks, consequences and vulnerabilities. Several speakers pointed out that before presenting research evidence on climate change risks they first document past trends in changing climate indicators, such as air and water temperatures, sea levels, and precipitation rates. After researchers understand existing vulnerabilities and risks they can begin charting a course for future strategies and preventive measures.

Indicators of a Warming World

Dr. Jerry Melillo, chair of the [National Climate Assessment and Development Advisory Committee](#) (NCADAC), summarized the 10 key indicators (see Figure 1) of a warming world documented in NCADAC's 2014 report *Climate Change Impacts in the United States*:

- Rising air temperature near the earth's surface;
- Rising water vapor;
- Rising temperature over oceans;
- Rising sea levels;
- Rising sea surface temperatures;
- Rising temperature over land;
- Rising ocean heat content;
- Declining sea ice levels;
- Declining glaciers and ice sheets; and
- Declining levels of snow-cover.

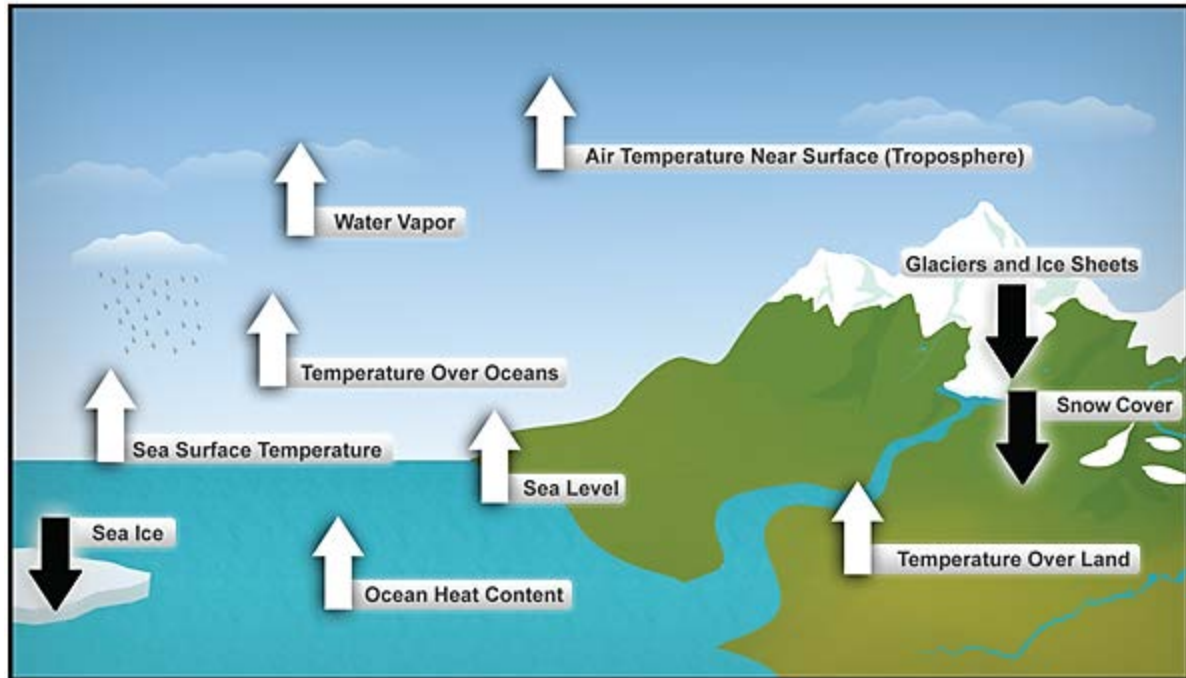


Figure 1. Ten indicators of a warming world.¹

Changes in Sea Levels

Dr. Melillo detailed the historical trends of several of these climate change indicators, including historical [changes in sea level](#) from 1800 to 2100, with actual and projected data (see Figure 2). By 2100, sea levels are forecast to rise from 1 to 4 feet. Dr. Melillo pointed out that while the 19th century data were based on proxy records, the early 20th century data were based on tidal-gauge data. Since mid-century, satellite signals have improved the overall quality of data and made them more precise.

¹ Melillo, Jerry M., Teresa (T.C) Richmond, and Gary W. Yohn, Eds., 2014: *Climate Change Impacts in the United States: The Third National Climate Assessment*, U.S. Global Change Research Program.

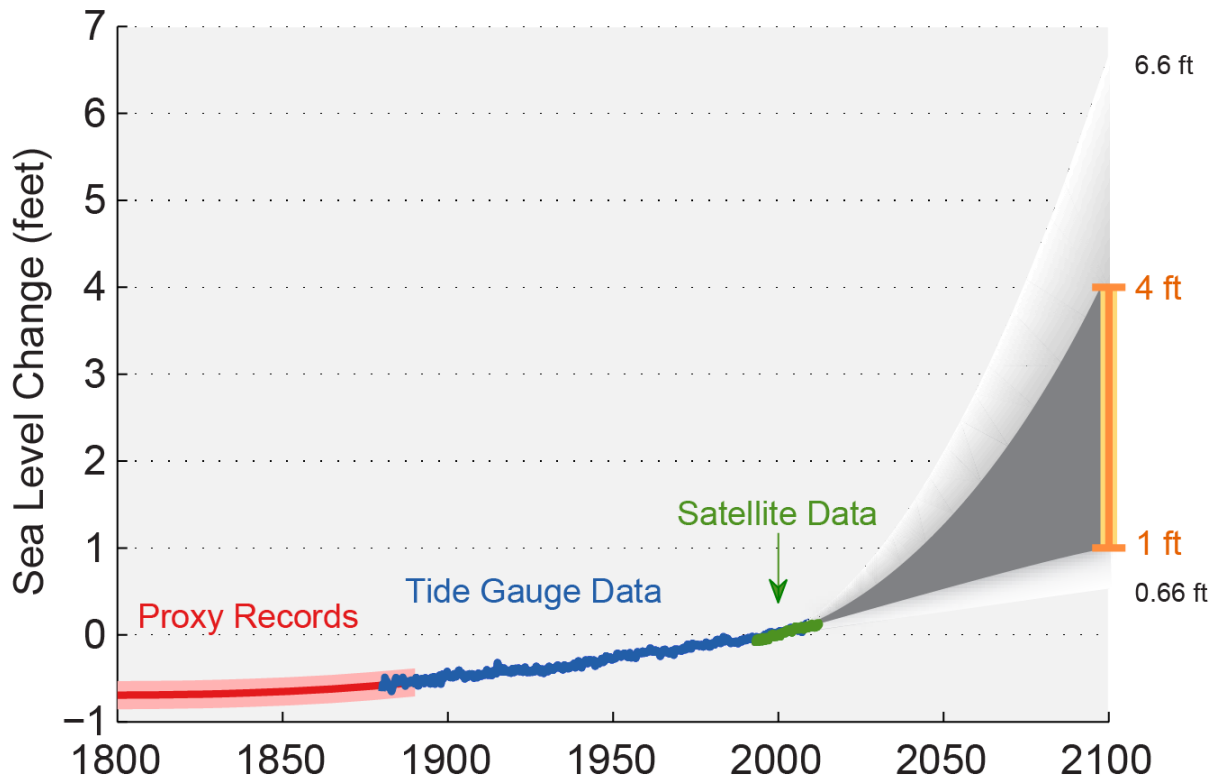


Figure 2. Past and projected changes in global sea level, 1800-2100.²

Changes in Average Temperature and Rainfall

Dr. Melillo presented evidence on [temperature trends](#) over the past 100 years showing regional variations in temperature change. [Heavy precipitation](#), too, has changed. Some U.S. regions—such as the Northeast—have seen heavy precipitation swell by more than 70 percent, and other regions—such as Hawaii—have seen heavy precipitation decline by 12 percent over recent decades (see Figures 3 and 4).

² Melillo, Jerry M., Teresa (T.C) Richmond, and Gary W. Yohn, Eds., 2014: *Climate Change Impacts in the United States: The Third National Climate Assessment*, U.S. Global Change Research Program.

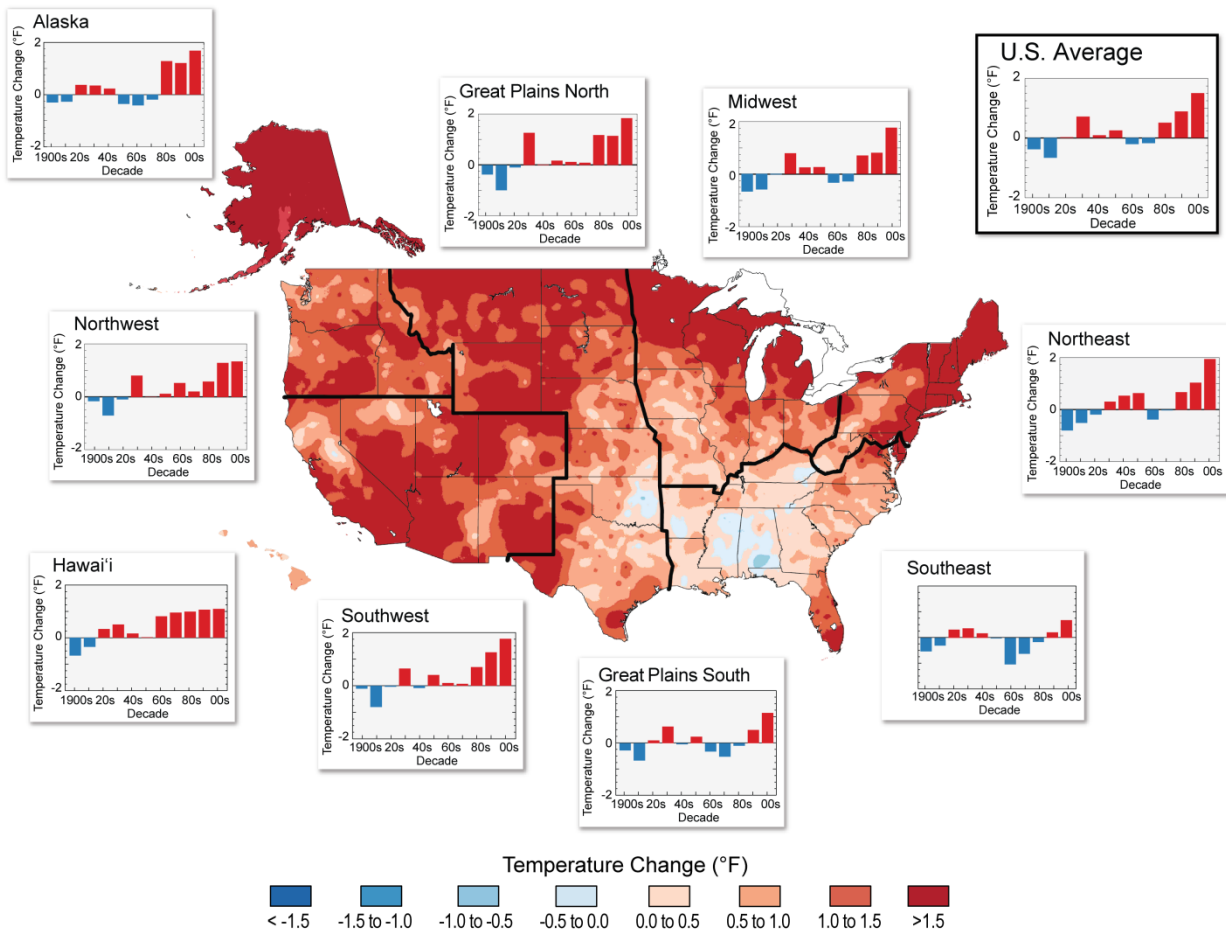


Figure 3. Observed U.S. Temperature Change, 1900s-2000s.³

³ Melillo, Jerry M., Teresa (T.C) Richmond, and Gary W. Yohn, Eds., 2014: *Climate Change Impacts in the United States: The Third National Climate Assessment*, U.S. Global Change Research Program.

Dr. Emanuel's data on climate trends from 1880 and 2000 showed that changes in carbon dioxide (CO_2) rose in tandem with changes in mean global surface temperatures. The trend data showed that CO_2 concentrations began to increase much more rapidly at the dawn of the industrial era, around 1900, and suggest that by 2020 the rates are on track to double or triple (see Figure 5).

"Any doubling of the percentage of carbon dioxide in the air would raise the temperature of the earth's surface by 4°C ; and if the carbon dioxide were increased fourfold, the temperature would rise by 8°C ."

The relationship between rising temperatures and CO_2 was recognized more than a century ago by the Swedish scientist Svante Arrhenius, who stated the above in his groundbreaking 1908 book, *Worlds in the Making*.

Source: Svante Arrhenius. *Worlds in the Making: The Evolution of the Universe*. Translated by Dr. H. Borns. New York and London: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1908.

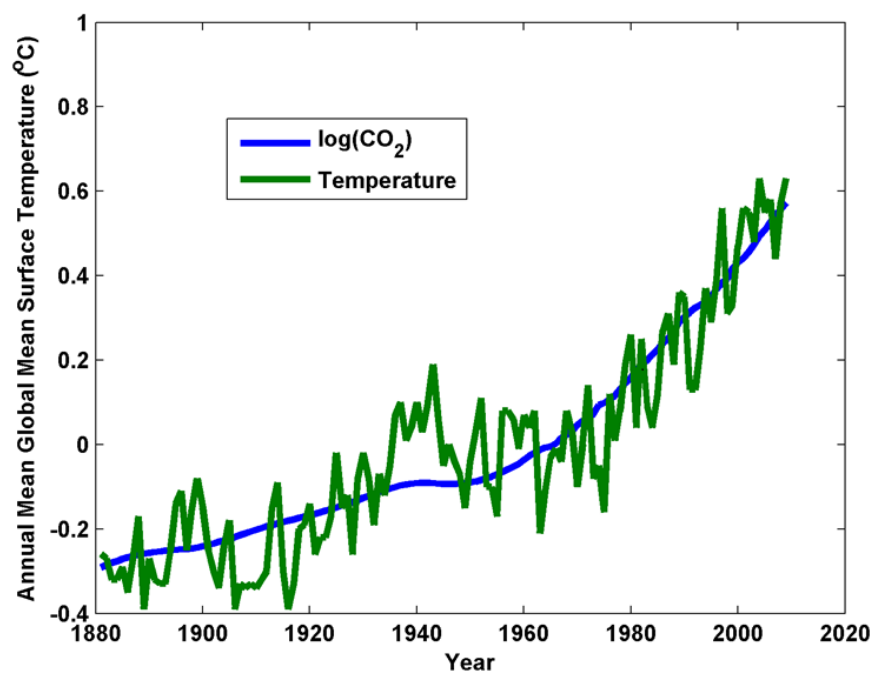


Figure 5. Relationship between mean surface temperature and CO_2 levels.⁵

⁵Emanuel, Kerry, "Extreme Weather and Climate" (lecture, Volpe, The National Transportation Systems Center, Cambridge, MA, February 25, 2014).

CO₂ emissions are likely to double over the coming decades, according to Dr. Emanuel, citing the latest estimate from the [Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change](#), which states that CO₂ concentrations by 2100 are likely to raise the global temperature from 1.5°C to 4.5°C. He pointed out that the majority of Earth's surface heat goes into the ocean, not into the atmosphere, and that the exchange of heat between the atmosphere and ocean is an important part of the internal variability of the climate system—this interplay, for instance, causes El Niño weather systems (see Figure 6).

As oceans heat up, they become less effective *heat sinks*. They do not absorb heat as well as they used to. The loss of oceans as heat sinks is a key cause of overall global warming. Dr. Emanuel stressed that, “higher temperatures are just the tip of the proverbial melting iceberg—extreme climate events are also becoming more common.” A 4.5°C increase in global temperatures would represent an increase of “existential” proportions, with “potentially devastating consequences,” Dr. Emanuel said.

According to Dr. Emanuel, the following scenarios are likely in the near future:

- 🌊 Heat waves will be more frequent and cold spells will be less frequent;
- 🌊 More floods and drought;
- 🌊 More intense, destructive hurricanes with increased flooding due to rising sea levels; and
- 🌊 More very strong storms and rainfall.

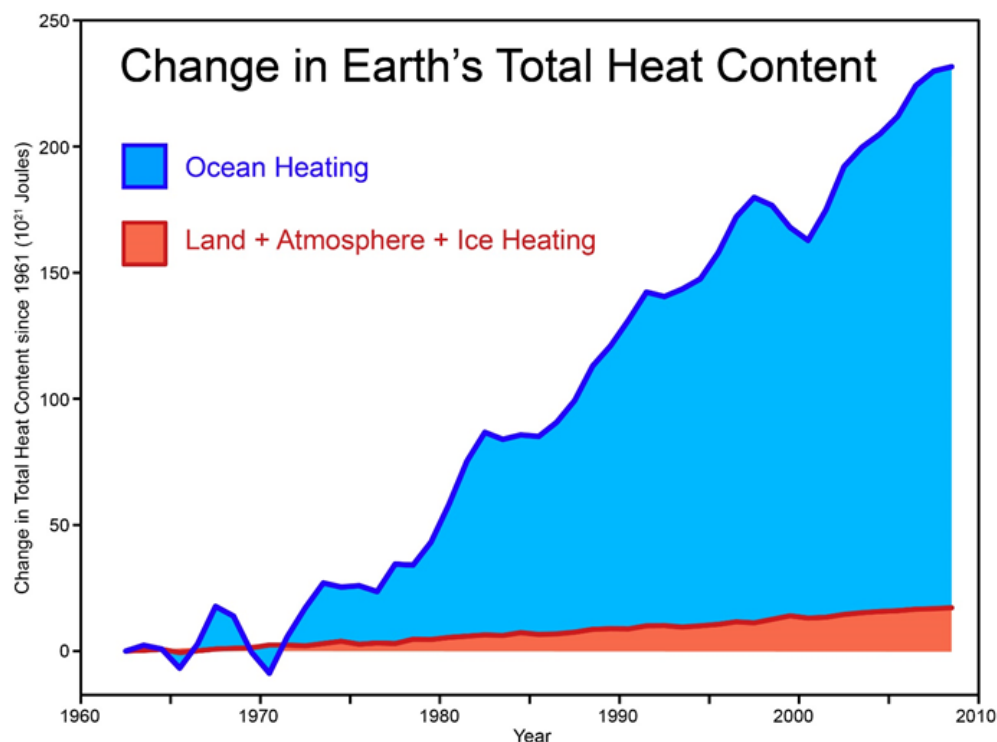


Figure 6. Rising land temperatures compared to rising ocean temperatures.⁶

⁶ Emanuel, Kerry, “Extreme Weather and Climate” (lecture, Volpe, The National Transportation Systems Center, Cambridge, MA, February 25, 2014).

But he also made clear that climate change is not just about global warming. Climate change means that dry areas become drier, wet areas become wetter, and hurricanes in the Atlantic get stronger—although there is no direct link yet between higher sea temperatures and more intense hurricanes.

Impacts of Climate Change on Transportation Infrastructure

Every facet of daily life is affected by our environment. A changing climate can change the types and quantity of food we eat, where we live, the types of available jobs, and, critically, how people and goods move. The following table summarizes five of the ten key indicators of climate change, with consequences for transportation infrastructure if each indicator continues unchecked.⁷

“You start seeing temperatures you never saw before. Hot temperatures occur much more frequently. Really cold temperatures occur far less frequently. Drought is one of the big issues we worry about when we think about the consequences of climate change. There will always be weather. There will always be El Niño, but it’s really important to distinguish the signal from the noise. You have to look at a large amount of data to see that signal.”

- Dr. Kerry Emanuel
Massachusetts Institute of Technology

⁷ Table adapted from “[Department of Defense 2012 Climate Change Adaptation Roadmap](#).”

Climate Change Indicator	Transportation System Impacts and Consequences
Rising Temperatures - More days with temperatures above 95° F - Melting permafrost and ice sheets - Changes in incidence or distribution of vector-borne diseases - More wildfires - Warmer soil	- Degrading transportation infrastructure and increased maintenance costs - Increased energy costs for transport facility operations - Creating infrastructures that can stand weather extremes - Stress on electrical grids - Opening of Arctic waters - Longer ice-free seasons - More seasonal Arctic commerce and transit
Changes in Precipitation Patterns - Seasonal increases and decreases in precipitation - More drought, and more severe drought - More extreme precipitation events	- Higher maintenance costs - Higher costs for flood control and erosion prevention - Stream bank erosion - Desertification—the creation of new deserts - Soil and water supply loss - Poorer quality groundwater - Spread of invasive species
Increasing Storm Frequency and Severity Changes in flood patterns, soil, and vegetation	- Increased coastal and inland flooding - Poorer water quality - Loss of soil and vegetation - Wind damage - Damage to coastal infrastructure - Increased costs of flood control and erosion prevention
Rising Sea Levels and Storm Surges - Loss of coastal land - Reduced capacity of protective barrier islands and coastal wetlands against storm surges	- Degradation of coastal infrastructure - Increased cost of retrofit structures - Supply chain impacts - Scarcity of available land for transportation services - Road and rail infrastructure damage - Equipment damage from salt water
Changes in Ocean Temperatures - Coral reef losses - Loss of ocean protection from storm surge and wave damage.	- Coastal stations and infrastructure more vulnerable to severe weather - Reduced commercial fishing

Source: Table adapted from “[Department of Defense 2012 Climate Change Adaptation Roadmap.](#)”

2. Climate Change Adaptation Strategies

There is no simple definition for the term *adaptation*. In the past decade or so, *adaptation* has come to be viewed as closely aligned with *infrastructure resilience*; in fact, many current definitions use the two terms interchangeably, with the definition of one embedded in the other.

Adaptation has come to denote a reactive posture to the onslaught of man-made and natural disasters that threaten our transportation infrastructure. Volpe developed a [framework for infrastructure resilience](#) that emphasizes the *proactive* function of adaptation as a risk-management strategy.

The IPCC defines adaptation as an “adjustment in natural or human systems in response to actual or expected climatic stimuli or their effects, which moderates harm or exploits beneficial opportunities.” That definition mirrors the concepts that guided Volpe’s infrastructure resilience framework (see Figure 7).

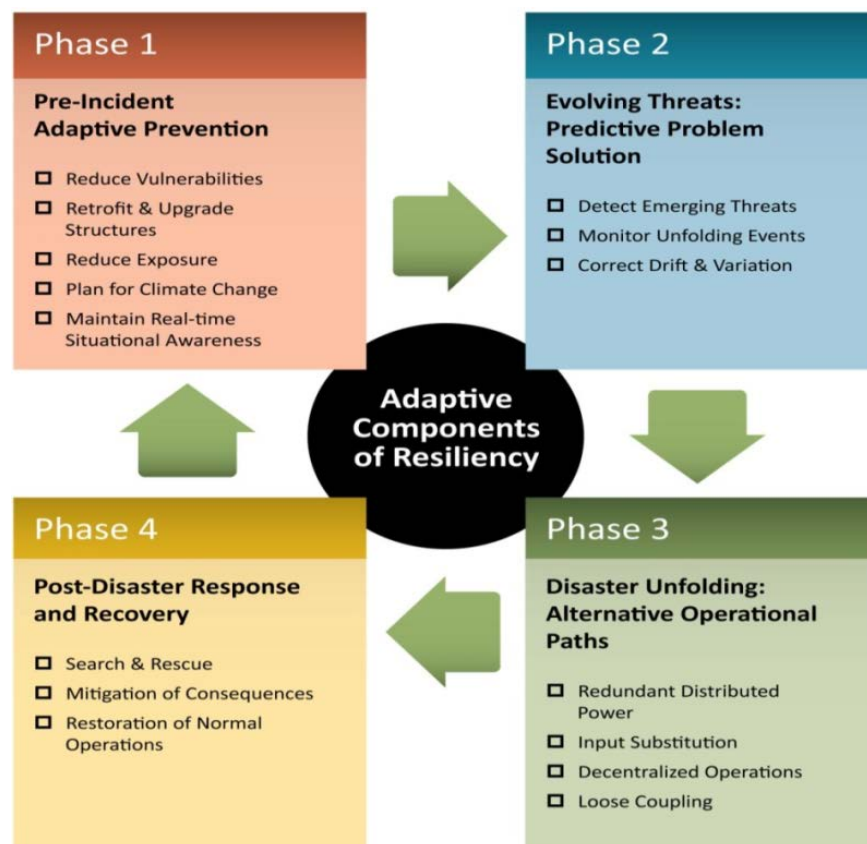


Figure 7. Lifecycle adaptive components of a resiliency framework.⁸

⁸ Volpe, The National Transportation Systems Center, "[Infrastructure Resiliency: A Risk-Based Framework](#)."

Speaking on transportation and climate adaptation, Steve Winkelman, director of Transportation and Adaptation Programs at the Center for Clean Air Policy, encouraged those involved in land use and infrastructure decisions to always “ask the climate question” to be clear how those decisions impact greenhouse gas emissions and resilience to climate change impacts. He noted, “We have a lot of challenges. We have a lot to learn on transportation and climate adaptation,” and offered that his talk would “help frame what kind of problems we’re facing, what solutions we know about, and some of our needs going forward.”

Winkelman argued that as a nation, we need to invest in ways to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and also invest in ways to help our systems adapt to climate change. “It used to be that working on adaptation was giving up,” he said, but “it is clear that there is enough warming built into the system that we are going to need to do both.”

NCADAC’s report, *Climate Change Impacts in the United States*, further describes adaptation as “not a stepwise or linear process,” but a concurrent improvement process (see Figure 8) in which, “various stages can be occurring simultaneously, in a different order, or be committed completely.”



Figure 8. The clockwise adaptation process.⁹

Dr. Melillo provided examples of two adaptation strategies—rezoning and ecosystem restoration—that are being implemented in several regions:

- *Adaptation through rezoning.* In Iowa, a new floodplain ordinance in Cedar Falls expanded zoning restrictions from the 100-year floodplain to the 500-year floodplain to better reflect the

⁹ Melillo, Jerry M. , Teresa (T.C) Richmond, and Gary W. Yohn, Eds., 2014: *Climate Change Impacts in the United States: The Third National Climate Assessment*, U.S. Global Change Research Program.

flood risks experienced by this and other Midwest cities during flooding in 2008. Cedar Rapids has also taken significant steps to reduce future flood damage by buying more than 1,000 properties and retrofitting numerous buildings with flood protection technology.

- *Adaptation through ecosystem restoration.* An ecosystem restoration project in New York City has integrated re-vegetation with bulkheads and built infrastructure. Coastal ecosystem conservation and restoration have protected waterfronts and infrastructure, while providing improved habitats for commercial and recreational fish, birds, and other animal and plant species.

Susanne DesRoches, assistant chief of Resilience and Sustainability at the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey (PANYNJ), indicated that, in the wake of increasing storm surge, elevation is now considered critical. She discussed how the PANYNJ is going to add up to 55 inches of height to certain assets, which is an example of one of the important, risk-based approaches being undertaken.

Adaptation Benefits, Co-Benefits, and Challenges

Climate change adaptation has many benefits, but also many challenges and unintended consequences. Dr. Melillo pointed out that the benefits from adaptation often generate additional benefits, or co-benefits—for example, sustainable development, disaster risk-reduction, and improvements in quality of life. Co-benefits make it easy to justify incorporating adaptation measures into decision making processes.¹⁰ However, Dr. Melillo noted challenges that come with adaptation. There are often *multiple stresses* at work that compound damages; key among them pollution and habitat fragmentation. Adjusting to these challenges requires that planners assess composite threats, as well as tradeoffs amongst costs, benefits, and risks of available options.

“There is a gap in our knowledge of how the adaptation measures we have undertaken affected the environment. Many of these adaptive actions have only recently been initiated and comprehensive evaluation metrics do not yet exist. Because of this gap, the effectiveness of climate change adaptation has seldom been evaluated.”

- Dr. Jerry Melillo
The Ecosystems Center
Marine Biological Laboratory,
Woods Hole, MA

Adaptation Success Metrics

Given the complexity of climate change causes and stressors, it can be difficult for researchers to develop indicators and consistent metrics for climate change adaptation. To improve the process of adaptation, Dr. Melillo proposed the following goals for climate assessment indicators:

- Provide meaningful, authoritative climate-relevant measures about the status, rates, and trends of key physical, ecological, and societal variables and values;
- Inform decisions on management, research, and education at regional and national scales;
- Identify climate-related conditions and impacts to help develop effective mitigation and adaptation measures; and
- Provide analytical tools for communities to develop their own indicators.

Dr. Melillo proposed that adaptation efforts that are successful would have the following characteristics:

- Widespread use by decisionmakers on an ongoing basis;

¹⁰ The concept of “multiple benefits” from a single climate-change adaptation action has been referred to in the international climate-change literature as a “co-benefit.” This concept is emphasized in the IPCC Technical Summary report of Working Group III, as referenced in Section 4 of this report.

- Advance knowledge or understanding on topics of scientific or societal interest;
- Improve coordination of federal activities, or added value from the interagency process;
- Engage stakeholders;
- Achieve objectives from NCADAC strategy documents;
- Increase awareness and accessibility of agency data;
- Produce credible and actionable climate-related information;
- Create high-quality U.S. Global Change Research Program-branded products;¹¹
- Have utility for communication documents, or potential for citation; and
- Have an adaptive management and learning process.

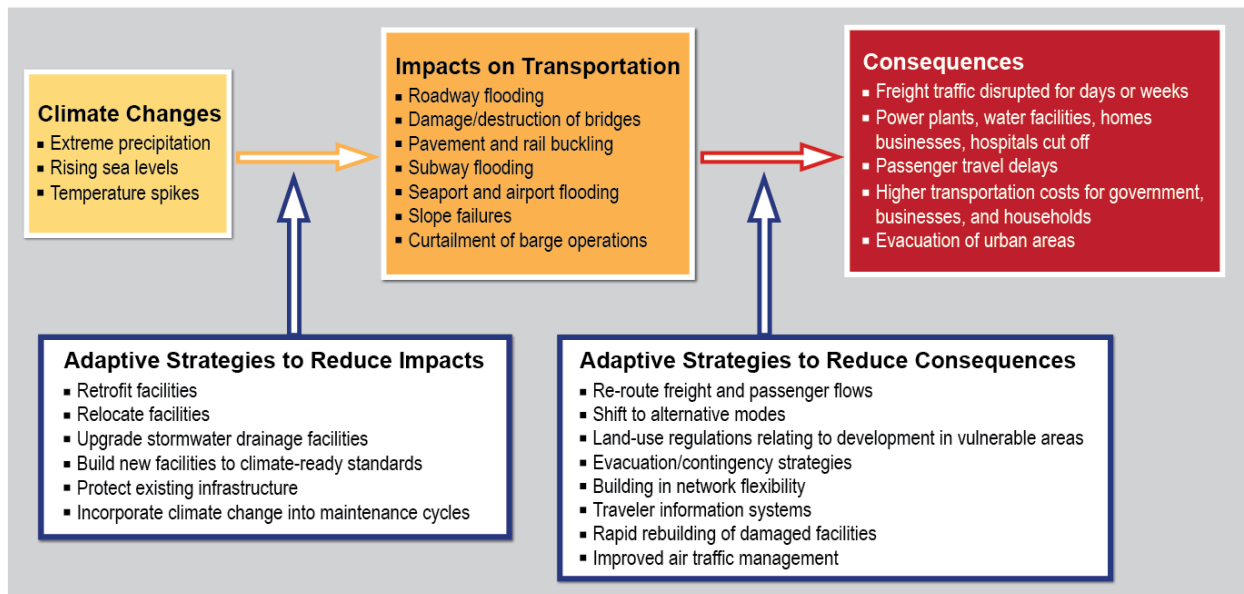


Figure 9. Adaptation impacts identified by NCADAC.¹²

Climate Change Adaptation in New York City

Professor Klaus Jacob described his service as a member of the *Climate Change Adaptation Task Force* of the [New York City Panel on Climate Change](#) (NPCC). NPCC was convened by former New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg as an independent advisory body composed of climate change scientists and experts in law, insurance, and risk management.

¹¹ The U.S. Global Change Research Program (USGCRP) coordinates and integrates federal research on changes in the global environment and their implications for society. USGCRP began as a presidential initiative in 1989 and was mandated by Congress in the Global Change Research Act of 1990, which [called for](#), “a comprehensive and integrated United States research program which will assist the Nation and the world to understand, assess, predict, and respond to human-induced and natural processes of global change.”

¹² Melillo, Jerry M., Teresa (T.C) Richmond, and Gary W. Yohn, Eds., 2014: *Climate Change Impacts in the United States: The Third National Climate Assessment*, U.S. Global Change Research Program.

Established in 2008, the NPCC Task Force produced a foundation report and tools to identify infrastructure adaptation strategies. The product was called [ClimAID](#), a computerized model of the pre-Sandy storm surge in New York City. The Task Force created ClimAID to model growing climate change risks to New York City from the following impacts:

- Accelerating temperatures and sea level rise by 2100 of more than 6 feet above year 2000 levels;
- Nor'easter winter storms;
- Hurricanes that severely flood coastal infrastructure;
- Increases in severe rain events causing street and subway floods; and
- Increases in heat waves, affecting power usage, operational costs, and creating health risks.

The NPCC Task Force recommended adaptation actions that ranged from incremental to large-scale strategies, with planning horizons that ranged from short-term projects of less than 5 years to long-term projects of over 15 years. Closely following the 5 facets of adaptation depicted in Figure 9, the NPCC recommended an 8-step adaptation process:

1. Identify current and future climate hazards;
2. Conduct risk assessment and develop an inventory of built assets to identify vulnerabilities;
3. Characterize risks of climate change on built areas;
4. Develop an initial list of adaptation strategies;
5. Prioritize strategies and identify opportunities for coordination;
6. Link strategies to development cycles and prepare adaptation plans;
7. Implement adaptation plans; and
8. Monitor progress and reassess strategies.

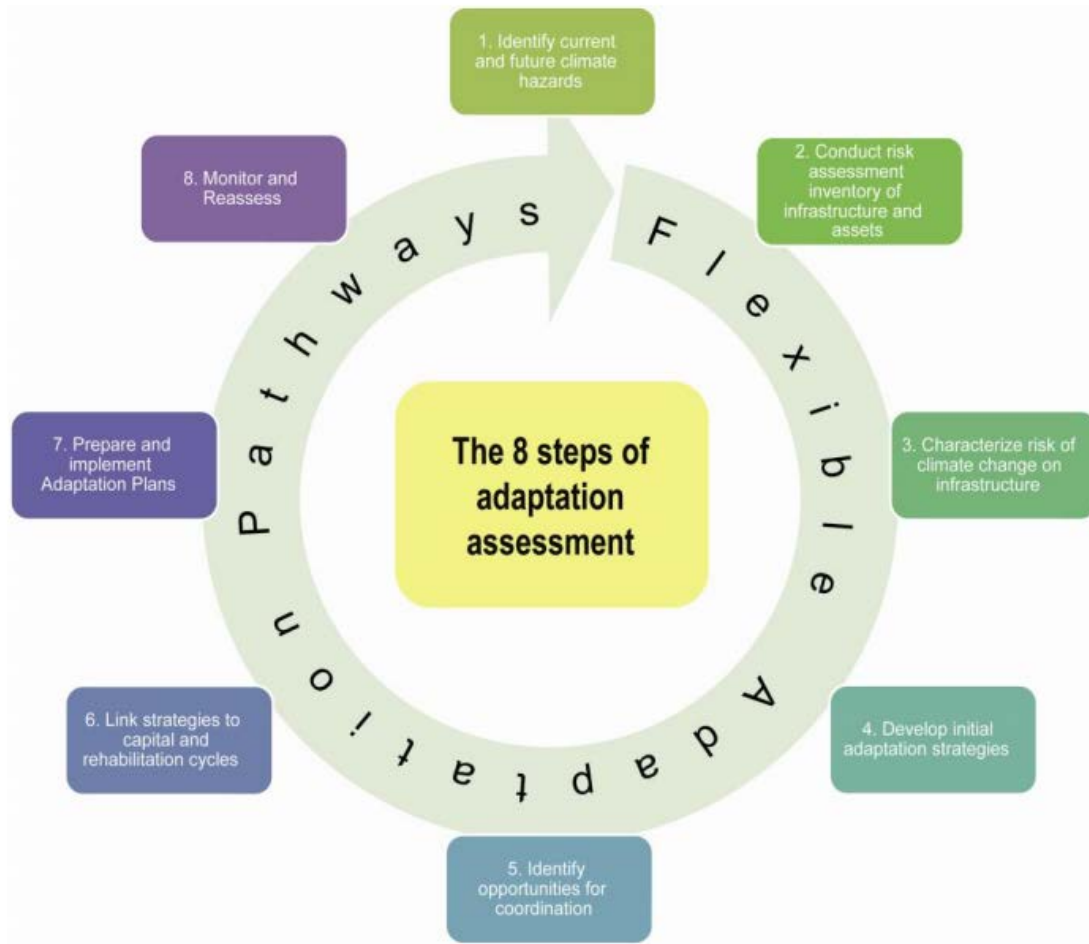


Figure 10. New York City NPCC Task Force adaptation impacts.¹³

¹³ New York City Panel on Climate Change, "[Adaptation Assessment Guidebook](#)."

Pre-Super Storm Sandy NYC Task Force Climate Risk Assessment

The ClimAID project identified three ways for New York City to adapt:

1. *Protection*—primarily for infrastructure
2. *Accommodation*—primarily for high-rise buildings
3. *Strategic retreat*—primarily for residential assets.

ClimAID produced the following adaptation solutions for New York City:

- Seal ventilation street grates for subway systems in flood zones, and replace passive open ventilation with forced closed vents;
- Install flood gates at vulnerable entrances;
- Build berms and levees;
- Update flood maps to show flood elevation for 100- and 500-year recurrences and add projections on sea level rise;
- Implement design and retrofit transportation infrastructures for adaptive resilience;
- Update emergency response plans.
- Develop alternative plans, including barriers to protect the entire New York harbor and estuary, similar to London's Thames barriers.

The ClimAID report estimated the following consequences if adaptive strategies are not implemented:

- \$10 billion in damage to transportation infrastructure from the 100-year flood projections;
- \$50 billion in potential economic losses from transportation and utility outages and extended restoration times, plus loss of building stock; and
- Approximately 3 weeks of restoration time at \$4 billion per day for various components of infrastructure to resume services.

Post-Sandy Damage Assessment and Lessons Learned

Susanne DesRoches shared the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey's experiences in the aftermath of Superstorm Sandy.

DesRoches described the effects of the storm on airports, seaports, train tunnels, train stations, and vehicle bridges and tunnels. She discussed how the port authority collected lessons learned from Sandy, set up a storm mitigation and resilience office, and began to implement protective measures.

"We had several weeks of just getting through the emergency part of Sandy, getting back up and running, making sure that everything was functional. Then we in the engineering department took a

hard look at what we would need to do cross-agency to increase our flood protection, our generation capacity, etc.,” said DesRoches.

DesRoches discussed how resiliency needs to be part of how the transportation community does business. After Sandy, the port authority put together a list of strategies that could potentially be implemented throughout the agency. DesRoches provided examples of some of those strategies including the installation of a variety of water intrusion protective systems.

Over the long term, the PANYNJ is looking at how to improve its design guidance. So, considering climate stressors such as sea level rise and increased frequency and severity of storms, officials are looking at how to factor this knowledge into improved design of infrastructure, such as airfields or pumping stations.

Dr. Jacob also outlined the losses and damages after Sandy, confirming the risks and impacts for roads, ferries, tunnels, rail airports, and ClimAID’s warnings of the gradual risks of increased yearly precipitation, higher average temperatures, storm surges, heavy downpours, heat waves, and high winds. Dr. Jacob said that the post-Sandy destruction, “eerily verified ClimAID impact forecasts—with two exceptions.” These exceptions, below, demonstrate the effectiveness of adaptive measures:

- Temporary barriers at the Harlem River Tunnel prevented flooding of subway lines between Manhattan and the Bronx;
- Removing sensitive signal and control systems from most tunnels expected to be flooded, and reinstalling them after the storm was highly effective in keeping signals free of damage from salt water, saving 1 to 2 weeks of recovery time and an estimated \$10 billion in damages.

Dr. Jacob wrapped up his talk with the following conclusions:

- Make risk-based benefit-cost assessments at the right time using updated flood maps and flood vulnerabilities as a function of sea level rise, while also accounting for changing physical and social asset configuration and vulnerabilities and optimal *resiliency pathway* is reached;

“All modes of transportation need to take into account a robust climate and sea level rise projection for all their capital spending projects...Not investing in these resilience measures will be more expensive by factors of four to ten in incurred, direct, and economic losses combined.”

-Dr. Klaus H. Jacob
Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory
School of International and Public Affairs,
Columbia University

- Develop sea-level rise adaptation policies with public-private stakeholders and create land-use plans that balance the merits of temporary protection and medium-term protection, accommodating for sea-level rise, with long-term, sustainable retreat to safer neighborhoods;
- Incorporate climate change data and risk estimates for various time horizons into all strategic planning and capital decisions;
- Use each climate change and sea-level rise challenge as an opportunity for improvement and renewal of urban infrastructure. The costs for the NYC metro region will be upward of \$100 billion—some \$30 billion of which for the transportation sector alone—but not investing in these resilience measures would be more expensive by factors of 4 to 10 in post-disaster costs;
- Ensure robust planning for interim operational emergency and business continuity of operations.

Perspective on Federal Response to Super Storm Sandy

Vinn White described the challenges the federal government faced after some \$68 billion in damages from Sandy and transportation-specific damages of more than \$12.4 billion, including the following:

- \$5.1 billion in damages to transit;
- \$2 billion of damaged pipelines, primarily natural gas;
- \$400 million in damages to highways;
- \$70 million in damages to Amtrak and freight rail; and
- \$40 million in damages to aviation.

White described the activities of the Sandy Rebuilding Task Force, consisting of 14 federal agencies and 9 White House offices. The Task Force was asked to inform the National Disaster Recovery Framework and to, “identify and work to remove obstacles to resilient rebuilding in a manner that addresses existing and future risks and vulnerabilities.” The Task Force’s activities included the following:

- Creating an Executive Order to revise floodplain elevation guidelines, floodplain maps, and raise Advisory Base Floodplain Elevation by 1 foot;
- Adding language to the [TIGER Discretionary Grants](#) program so that project plans consider State of Good Repair criteria for minimized life-cycle maintenance costs, and criteria for considering environmental sustainability improvements that enhance resilience of transportation assets;

“These are the principles that guide us: adopting integrated approaches, which I think you’ve actually seen done well in the Sandy context; prioritizing the most vulnerable of infrastructure; and then this third one here is probably the most referred to in the Sandy context, is the use of best-available science or data.”

-Vinn White
Senior Policy Advisor for
Transportation Policy
U.S. Department of Transportation

- Funding transportation agency rebuilding efforts:
 - Federal Aviation Administration rebuilding infrastructure to elevated standards;
 - Federal Railroad Administration providing redundancy for major rail projects;
 - Federal Highway Administration integrating climate change resilience consideration into programs and guidance that include climate adaptation activities eligible for funding, including vulnerability assessment and risk-based asset management;
 - Federal Transit Agency incorporating resilient buildings into notices of funding, issuing a \$3 billion notice of data availability for [Resilience Projects in Response to Hurricane Sandy](#), and promoting a benefit-cost estimation process with quantitative and qualitative metrics.

3. Mitigation of Climate Change Consequences

In climate change planning, mitigating impacts is about addressing the anticipated consequences of climate change by taking preventive measures that will reduce the probability or severity of an adverse climate-related consequence. The IPCC has defined mitigation as a form of “intervention to *reduce the sources* or enhance the sinks of greenhouse gases.”¹⁴ Mitigation is often part of a broader policy framework that includes adaptation and emission-pricing policies, such as carbon taxes and cap-and-trade policies to cut carbon pollution. Climate change mitigation can be viewed as a two-pronged process of reducing short-term impacts and taking longer-term actions to reduce future consequences.

- *Short-term actions* include updating flood maps, installing gates at subway entrances, and draining flooded subways;
- *Medium- and long-term actions* include carbon pricing as well as new zoning and building codes, floodplain buyouts, analyzing hazard-related data to determine where it is safe to build or locate temporary facilities, or developing technologies that could be used to support mitigation strategies.

“The International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) has endorsed ambitious emission reduction efforts...requesting that the Council make a recommendation for a global scheme for developing market-based measures applicable for international aviation. The ICAO assembly called for implementing technical measures for: monitoring, reporting and verifying emission levels, establishing acceptable levels of carbon credits, and agreeing on allocation of emission levels for international operators in order to close the CO₂ gap and provide a blueprint for other transportation sectors.”

- Gregg Fleming
U.S. Department of Transportation
Volpe Center

Beneficial Effects of CAFE Standards as a Mitigation Measure

Gregg Fleming characterized the first pillar of the White House’s 2013 [Climate Action Plan](#)—[cutting carbon pollution](#)—as a key mitigation measure for combating global climate change. He noted that this first pillar should be augmented by two other pillars of the Climate Action Plan—preparing for impacts and leading international efforts. Fleming described how these mitigation measures can be implemented in clean energy programs, building a 21st century transport system, cutting energy waste, and federal leadership. The Climate Action Plan will mitigate climate change by enforcing emission

¹⁴ Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. *Climate Change 2007: Working Group II: Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability*. Available: http://www.ipcc.ch/publications_and_data/ar4/wg2/en/ch18s18-1-2.html. 30 September, 2014.

standards for new and existing power plants, new fuel efficiency standards for heavy-duty vehicles, and new goals for doubling electricity generation from wind and solar power. Fleming pointed out that the U.S. passenger vehicle standard of 54.5 miles per gallon by 2015, and new heavy-duty standards for model year 2014-18 are positive steps on top of existing [Corporate Average Fuel Economy](#) (CAFE) standards. See Figure 11.

- CAFE standards have saved an estimated 1 trillion gallons of fuel and 14 billion tons of CO₂ emissions since the 1970s.
- By 2021 consumers may save \$660 to \$860 billion at the pump as a result of CAFE standards—through 2050, new CAFE standards could save 1.1 trillion gallons of fuel and 12 billion tons of CO₂ emissions.

Fleming also described how market-based measures (MBMs) can mitigate climate change. The aviation sector has committed to developing MBMs in international aviation to effectively provide incentives for low-cost CO₂ reduction strategies.

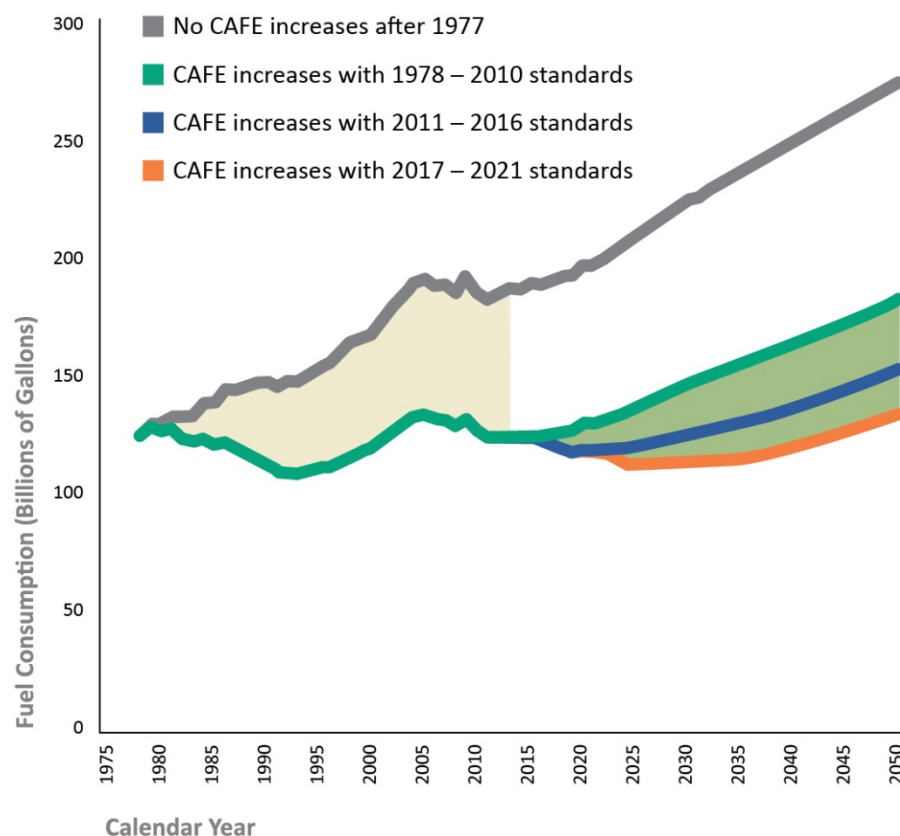


Figure 11. Mitigating the impacts of climate change by reducing fuel consumption.¹⁵

¹⁵ U.S. Department of Transportation, Volpe Center image.

Adverse Impacts of Fossil Fuels on Rates of CO₂ Concentration

The transportation sector's heavy use of fossil fuels exacerbates the impact of carbon sinks lost to deforestation and warming oceans. Between 1880 and 2010, deforestation and fossil fuel usage were the primary sources of the growth in CO₂ emissions trends that have coincided with the shrinking of the size of the carbon sinks. See Figure 12.

"In 2010, The U.S. transportation sector accounted for 27% of total U.S. GHG emissions, with cars and trucks accounting for 65% of that total. Petroleum accounts for 93% of the nation's transportation energy use."

- Climate Change Impacts in the United States, 2014

Dr. Melillo, in an effort to under-score the significance of combining adaptation and mitigation, observed that, "current implementation efforts are modest, but growing." He cautioned that it is, "critical to link mitigation and adaptation. With more mitigation there is less need for adaptation, because adaptation has its limits."

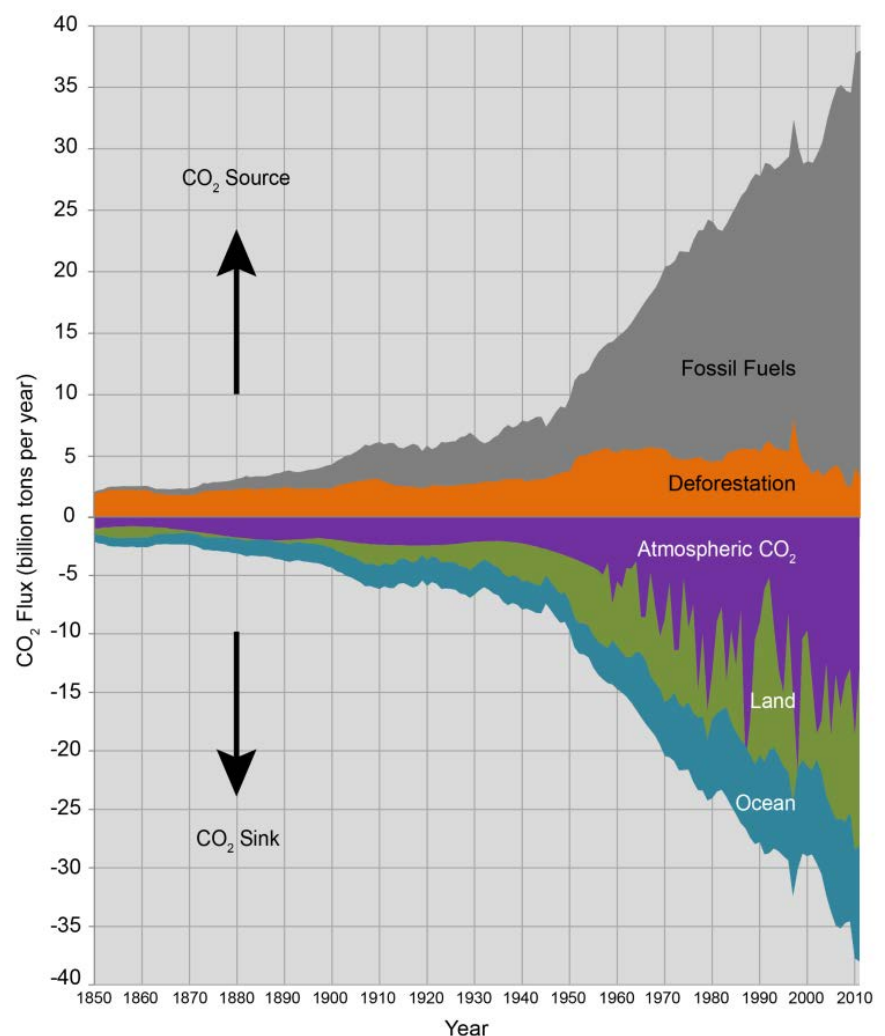


Figure 12. Influence of human activities on the accumulation of global carbon dioxide.¹⁶

¹⁶ Melillo, Jerry M., Teresa (T.C) Richmond, and Gary W. Yohn, Eds., 2014: *Climate Change Impacts in the United States: The Third National Climate Assessment*, U.S. Global Change Research Program.

4. Resilience in the Face of Climate Change Impacts and the Importance of Planning

Planning for climate change-resilient infrastructure requires a coordinated process of assessing risks, formulating adaptation and mitigation strategies, and coordinating implementation. As previously noted, the climate change literature has intertwined resilience and adaptation, often using the two terms interchangeably. However, resilience connotes more than adaptation. Planning for climate change resilience involves taking steps to prevent disruption, prepare to withstand damages, and rapidly recover from consequences. In this respect, resilience to climate change is a byproduct of a well-planned and efficiently executed process of risk assessment, damage prevention, adaptation to change, and effective mitigation measures to remedy damages and learn to better deal with the risks that threaten our complex infrastructure systems.

The Volpe framework for infrastructure resilience (see Figure 13) depicts resilience as an overarching concept linking infrastructure fault-tolerance and event-monitoring capabilities with elements of adaptation and mitigation of adverse consequences to ensure functional continuity.

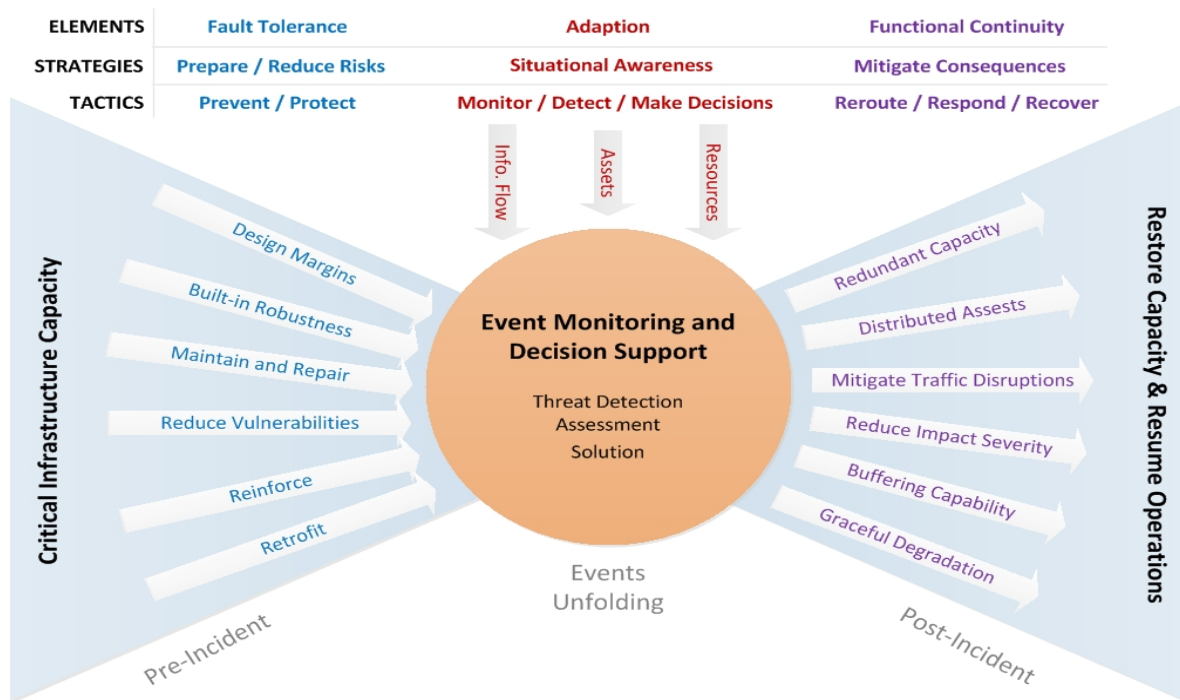


Figure 13. Key attributes of infrastructure resilience.¹⁷

¹⁷ Volpe, The National Transportation Systems Center

A climate change-resilient infrastructure has adaptive properties that derive not only from the system's ability to absorb damages and disruptions, but its abilities for constructive change and learning. Resilience does not mean automatically bouncing back, fully resuming life as it was before adverse impacts of climate change. Instead, a resilient system is one that *learns and adapts*, can correct past errors, self-organize, and forge new solutions that minimize climate change impacts.

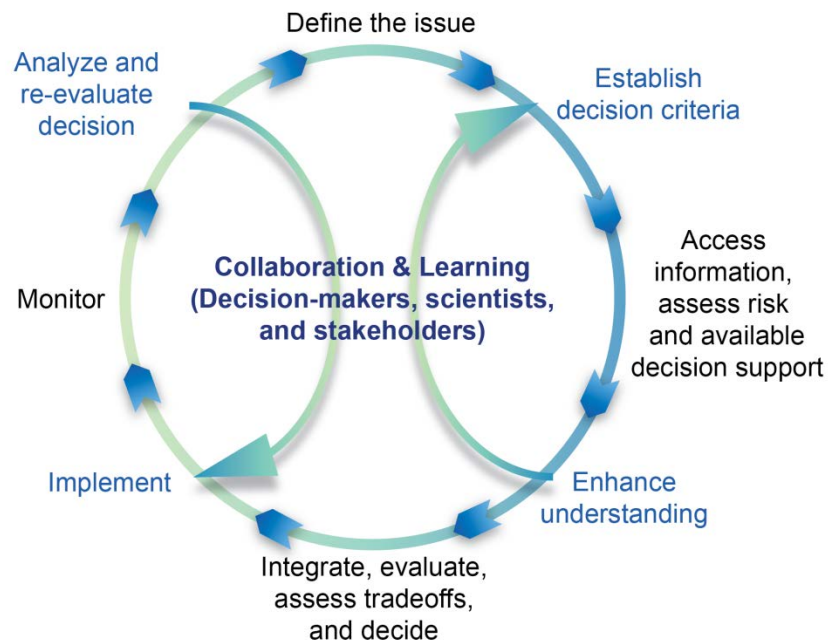


Figure 14. The climate change decision making process.¹⁸

Importance of Planning

Three of Volpe's climate change lectures emphasized that the process of planning for climate change is closely associated with resilience planning in general, and adapting to and mitigating adverse consequences of climate change.

¹⁸ Melillo, Jerry M., Teresa (T.C) Richmond, and Gary W. Yohn, Eds., 2014: *Climate Change Impacts in the United States: The Third National Climate Assessment*, U.S. Global Change Research Program.

- Steve Winkelman has been active in climate adaptation since 2006. He directed the Urban Leaders Adaptation Initiative, helping city governments consider climate issues when making infrastructure and land use decisions to improve their resilience to the effects of climate change. Partners included New York City, Chicago, Miami-Dade County, Los Angeles, San Francisco, King County, Phoenix,

Milwaukee and Toronto. Mr. Winkelman’s team provided technical and policy assistance to help these locations develop and implement climate adaptation plans and policies and produced a paper on green infrastructure and urban climate adaptation.

“What we build, where, and how, makes a big impact both on emissions, whether we’re talking about buildings or transportation, as well as resilience or vulnerability to climate change impacts. So ask the question when you’re making that kind of decision.”

-Steve Winkelman
Center for Clean Air Policy

Mr. Winkelman described CCAP efforts to mitigate climate change impacts and help regional stakeholders plan for resilience by promoting a Mitigation Action Implementation Network (MAIN) in the U.S., Latin America, and Asia. The MAIN initiative helps participants design and implement nationally appropriate mitigation actions. As part of this process, CCAP helps regional stakeholders develop strategies to identify best practices and regional and national resources to support implementation.

The long-term solution to transportation system resiliency is not just about cleaning up after events and repairing the infrastructure, but planning for and designing infrastructure with the current and future climate in mind. This will ensure that the nation’s transportation infrastructure can withstand more severe weather events. Winkelman provided some examples:

- Collecting information on local, non-climate factors like infrastructure state of repair is a proactive measure that can be part of the solution.
 - Updating flood maps to include climate scenarios can better prepare local, state, and federal agencies to deal with extreme weather.
 - Educating stakeholders and decision makers from a central location eases communication and allows for everyone to be on the same page.
- Susanne DesRoches served in the lead role for the Hurricane Sandy immediate recovery and future climate resiliency efforts within the PANYNJ’s engineering department. DesRoches manages the sustainable design program for the Port Authority’s capital projects, overseeing the

sustainability and climate resiliency of large-scale projects such as the LaGuardia Modernization Program and Newark Terminal A Redevelopment. She led the development and adoption of the PANYNJ's Sustainable Infrastructure Guidelines, a sustainability rating system for infrastructure projects.

In her lecture, Susanne described post-Sandy measures to improve resilience in the New York City area. Actions taken included short-term protective measures to reduce water intrusion, and assembling a series of high-level estimates of the costs of mitigation measures, such as emergency generators, flood control barriers, drainage improvements, and electrical

system protection. PANY/NJ established an internal mitigation team that works with the PANY/NJ Storm Mitigation and Resilience Office, the U.S. Office of Emergency Management, and representatives from municipal business, finance, and engineering departments.

"We did not have a deep bench of architectural and electrical engineers available right after the storm. We were able to find people, but that was a lesson learned that we'll have a much broader discipline base of inspectors in the future."

-Susanne DesRoches
Port Authority of New York and New Jersey

- William Lyons is a Principal Technical Advisor in transportation planning at the U.S. Department of Transportation's (USDOT) Volpe Center. His research interests include transportation planning and policy, sustainability and innovative ways to incorporate considerations of climate change mitigation and resilience in transportation decisions.

"Resilience is a much more open-ended topic. It does need to be distinguished. It's related to adaptation but to me it's not really the same thing. It's the focus on the system that's not only the multimodal transportation system but it's the broader community system."

-William Lyons
U.S. Department of Transportation
Volpe Center

Mr. Lyons stressed the difference between specific mitigation measures, such as reducing emissions, or adaptation strategies focused on infrastructures and IPCC recommendations, and how the transportation planning process can consider climate change resilience. Planning for resilience, he pointed out, must focus on system-level strategies that seek to enhance an entire network's capacity to withstand shocks, respond, and rebuild. Such a process requires a collaborative, multi-sector approach that offers multiple options that can be integrated into existing institutions and infrastructure investment plans. He pointed out that under federal law, Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) conduct long-range transportation planning in metropolitan areas over 50,000 population. With federal encouragement, MPOs are currently

developing performance-based planning processes, including for asset management. This consistent planning process provides a flexible foundation for considering climate adaptation and resilience, supporting sound technical analysis, community participation, and collaboration with other sectors. This is illustrated by the San Francisco Bay Area Metropolitan Transportation Commission planning process, [Adapting to Rising Tides](#). This process assesses the risk of sea-level rise for the BART transit, airport, port, Bay Bridge, and interstates by preparing for multi-modal options to respond to various SLR scenarios, with adaptation plans that include consideration of redundant resources and mitigation measures.

Appendix A: Video Library

Steve Winkelman

[Part I](#) [Part II](#)

[Part III](#) [Part IV](#)

Dr. Klaus H. Jacob

[Selected clips](#)

[Full presentation](#)

Susanne E. DesRoches

[Selected clips](#)

[Full presentation](#)

Gregg Fleming

[Selected clips](#)

[Full presentation](#)

Dr. Kerry Emanuel

[Selected clips](#)

[Full presentation](#)

William M. Lyons

[Selected clips](#)

[Full presentation](#)

Vinn White

[Selected clips](#)

[Full presentation](#)

Dr. Jerry Melillo

[Selected clips](#)

[Full presentation](#)

Appendix B: Stakeholder Engagement Statistics

More than **220** state, regional, and local transportation professionals attended or viewed the speaker series via the web.

Attendees from **40** states, and from cities including Atlanta, Boston, Houston, San Francisco, Seattle, and New York.

Representatives from more than **40** universities, including professors, research directors, and doctoral students from dozens of universities such as Clemson, Harvard University, MIT, Penn State, Stanford, UCLA, and the University of Southern Florida's National Center for Transit Research.

Nearly **200** large and small business executives, planners, project managers, consultants, scientists, and journalists from outlets such as Amtrak, Bloomberg News, Booz Allen Hamilton, CDM Smith, McClatchy, Raytheon, and Southwest Airlines.

Numerous **Non-profits** also joined the conversation, including the **Center for Clean Air Policy**, the **RAND Corporation**, the **American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials**, the **Rails to Trails Conservancy**, and the **Sierra Club**.

The world showed up at Volpe virtually, with government officials and researchers from the **Canada**, **China**, **England**, the **European Union**, **Fiji Islands**, the **Netherlands**, and **Senegal**.

More than **150** Volpe staff members took advantage of the opportunity to engage with thought leaders and learn how climate and system resiliency applies to their work supporting the U.S. Department of Transportation and other sponsors.

Nearly all U.S. DOT modes and several Secretarial offices linked in to the series including Federal Aviation Administration, Federal Highway Administration, Federal Transit Administration, Federal Railroad Administration, Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration, Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration and the Maritime Administration.

Because transportation is woven into nearly every facet of our national interests, this series also attracted widespread participation from over 60 Federal officials outside of DOT: Department of Defense, Department of Homeland Security, Environmental Protection Agency, Department of Energy—including Argonne and Idaho National Laboratories, the Department of Interior, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the Government Accountability Office, and Congressional staff.

Appendix C: Stakeholder Engagement



Fall 2013 – Spring 2014



U.S. Department of
Transportation

Volpe's Transportation System Resilience, Extreme Weather and Climate Change series informed hundreds of transportation practitioners nationwide and around the globe.

State, Regional and Local stakeholder engagement

State DOTs	Other state agencies, transit agencies and local government	MPOs
Arizona California Colorado Connecticut Delaware D.C. Florida Georgia Illinois Indiana Maryland Massachusetts Michigan Minnesota Montana Nevada NH New Jersey New York Ohio Oklahoma Oregon Rhode Island Tennessee Texas Vermont Virginia Washington Wyoming	Alameda-Contra Costa Transit District, CA Bay Area Rapid Transit, CA Charlotte Area Transit System (CATS), NC City of Cambridge, MA City of Newport, RI City of Seattle, WA Executive Office of Health and Human Services, MA Galveston Island Transit, TX Maine Emergency Management Agency Metro. Transportation Authority, NY New Jersey Transit New York City DEP Town of Mashpee, MA MBTA, MA Prairieland Transit System, Southwestern MN Port Authority of NY, NJ Authority, VA Port of Portland, WA	Adirondack/Glens Falls Transportation Council, NY Atlanta Regional Commission, GA Baltimore, Metropolitan Council, MD Boston Region MPO, MA Broward MPO, FL Capital Area Metropolitan Planning Organization, TX Central Mass Regional Planning Commission, MA Cobb County Regional DOT, GA Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission, DE Fresno Council of Governments, CA Genesee Transportation Council, NY Greater Buffalo Niagara Regional Transp. Council, NY Houston-Galveston Area Council, TX Ithaca-Tompkins County Transportation Council, NY Kern County MPO, CA Kings County Association of Governments, CA Metropolitan Area Planning Council, MA Mid-America Regional Council, KS Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission, OH Mobile County Commission, AL MD-National Capital Park and Planning Commission Mid Region Council of Governments of NM New Orleans Metro Region MPO, LA New Bern Area MPO, NC NJ Transportation Planning Authority, NJ New York Metropolitan Planning Council, NY North Slope Borough, Arctic Regions, Alaska Northeast Ohio Area-wide Coordinating Agency, OH Northern Shenandoah Valley Regional Commission, VA Oahu MPO, Hawaii Red Cliff Band of the Lake Superior Chippewa Indians, WI Regional Transportation District for Denver, CO Rockingham Planning Commission, NH Sacramento Area Council of Governments, CA Southwest Michigan Planning Commission, MI Southwestern Pennsylvania Planning Commission, PA Syracuse Metropolitan Transportation Council NY Ulster County Transportation Council, NY
Non-Profits AASHTO American Council for an Energy Efficient Economy ACI-NA APTA Association of Metropolitan Planning Organizations Center for Clean Air Policy Climate Protection Camp Coalition of NE Governors Policy Research Center Environmental and Energy Study Institute Enterprise Community Partners	RI Dept. of Envir. Mgt Seattle DOT, WA Triangle Transit, Durham, NC Utah Transit Authority VT Division of Emergency Management and Homeland Security VIA Metropolitan Transit, San Antonio, TX Williamsburg Area Transit Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority	ITS America, Minnesota Center for Environmental Advocacy, National Association of Regional Councils, National Transportation Research Center, Inc., Rails to Trails Conservancy, RAND Sierra Club

Appendix C: Stakeholder Engagement (continued)



Fall 2013 – Spring 2014



U.S. Department of
Transportation

Volpe's Transportation System Resilience, Extreme Weather and Climate Change series informed hundreds of transportation practitioners nationwide and around the globe.

Academia, Private Sector, and Global stakeholder engagement

Academia	Private sector	Private sector cont.
- Carleton College - Clemson University - Cleveland State University - Columbia University - George Mason University - Georgetown University - Harvard University - Jackson State University (MI) - Massachusetts Institute of Technology - Michigan Technological University - New York University - Northeastern University - Oregon State University - Penn State - Purdue University - San Jose State University - Stanford University - University of Colorado - University of Iowa - University of Maryland - University of Massachusetts – Amherst - University of Massachusetts - Boston - University of Minnesota - University of Michigan - University of Pittsburgh - University of Southern Florida - University of Rhode Island - University of Vermont - University of Wisconsin - Virginia Tech	- Abt Associates - AECOM - Atkins Global - Amtrak - Azymuth Telecon - Battelle - BEM Systems, Inc. - Bloomberg Media - Booz Allen Hamilton - Bosch - BTG Ventures LLC - Cadmus Group - Cadmus Sustainable Transportation Practice - Cambridge Systematics - CDM Smith - CDR Maguire - CEVA Logistics - Chevron - CINSA - Clary Corporation - Clean Tech Strategy Group - ClimateProgress (media) - Coleshill Associates - Collins Engineering - Coral Sales Company - CSC - ee Publishing's ClimateWire (Media) - Efecto Verde Engineering (Mexico) - ERG - Global Innovative Solutions	- Greenman-Perderson, Inc. - Gresham, Smith and Partners - Hatch, Mott McDonald - HDR Alaska, Inc. - HDR, Inc. - Hitachi Consulting - HNTB - iBiz - ICF International - Jacobs - JT Environmental Consulting - KAG Engineering, PLLC - Kleinfelder - Leverage Information Systems - LF Consulting - LTK - LWW - McClatchy Washington Bureau (Media) - Meadow Networks - Nakanishi Research & Consulting - Parsons Brinkerhoff - Raytheon - Research Systems Group - RSG - RTGR Consulting - SGT - Southwest Airlines - SRTA - Stahl Sheaffer Engineering - Stantec - Strategic Technology Assessment - STV Incorporated - Taminco US, Inc. - Toole Design Group - TPRG - TransCore - TREDIS Software - Truline - TY Lin International - Urban Engineers of NY, PC - URS Corporation - Venner Consulting - VHB - Vionics - WeatherStrategy LLC - Weir Environments
International		
- British Columbia Ministry of Trans. China - Canadian Trucking Alliance - China - City of Toronto, Canada - Civil Aviation Authority of Fiji - Government of the Northwest Territories - EU Delegation to the United States - Imperial College, London - Ministry of Transport, Public Works and Water Management, The Netherlands - Ministry of Transportation, Ontario, Canada	- Port Metro Vancouver - Railway Association of Canada - Royal Netherlands Embassy - TELCOM Bretagne, France - Transport Canada - University of Nottingham - Ville de Montreal - Ministry of Sustainable Development and the Environment, Canada	

For further information on this series and
Volpe's thought leadership activities, please contact:

Ellen E. Bell, Director of Strategic Initiatives
for Research and Innovation

U.S. Department of Transportation
John A. Volpe National Transportation Systems Center
55 Broadway
Cambridge, MA 02142-1093

(617) 494-2491

www.volpe.dot.gov



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