

## 2014-16 USDN Climate Preparedness Strategy

### Our Goals

By September 2016, the Urban Sustainability Directors Network will:

- 1) Help all interested USDN members better leverage peer experience to advance their work on climate preparedness.
- 2) Make the process of climate preparedness planning easier by working with partners to solve key common challenges prioritized by cities.
- 3) Share information about the learnings and needs of USDN members with wider audiences to support replication and collective action, share city perspectives with key stakeholders, and position USDN as a resource and partner in this field of practice.

### Summary of Priority Actions

#### Priority USDN Network Adjustments

- 1) Refresh the Climate Preparedness User Group.
  - Maintain cross-cutting group; additional discussions for coastal cities; launch ad hoc project groups
- 2) Help USDN members to learn about each others' climate preparedness work.
  - Gather and make more info available; create summaries/links to highlights of member work and external resources based on priority learning topics

#### Priority Needs from Partners

- 1) Design and launch a climate preparedness help line for cities.
- 2) Develop a green infrastructure playbook for cities and support more peer learning.
- 3) Participate where valuable on User Group calls on priority learning topics such as engaging community organizations, addressing equity issues, and reducing flood vulnerability.
- 4) Provide climate preparedness trainings and convenings for USDN members and internal department/external agency partners to deepen relationships and advance their work.
- 5) Provide more robust assistance to cities to obtain and use climate data in planning-relevant contexts

#### Priority Funding Needs

- 1) In-person convenings, including travel support
  - National Adaptation Forum
  - Climate leadership academies and trainings on priority learning topics (e.g., green infrastructure)
- 2) Pilot of climate preparedness planning help line for cities
- 3) Development of green infrastructure playbook
- 4) Maintain USDN staff resource to support USDN climate preparedness activities and partner engagement
- 5) Augment USDN.org to help USDN members more easily collaborate with and learn from each other

## Background on USDN Member Interests in Climate Preparedness

In fall 2013, the City of Seattle led a team from five USDN cities (Philadelphia, Salt Lake City, San Francisco, Seattle, Vancouver) in a research and planning project to identify opportunities to support the climate adaptation work of USDN members. The first phase of the project included interviews with 20 USDN members and a dozen key service provider organizations and agencies. The project produced: (1) a summary of input from interviewed cities on their processes, learnings and needs; (2) a map of key organizations working in the space relevant to cities; and (3) recommendations for strategic ways the field of practice can better support the climate adaptation work of cities.

That project provided a foundation for USDN’s 2014 focus on climate change preparedness and resilience, and the development of this Climate Preparedness Strategy.

In 2014, USDN has begun to enhance its capacity to support shared learning among USDN members, establish relationships with key organizations and agencies, and identify potential external partnerships to support the work of cities. USDN is now working to better align member collaborations (e.g., regional network projects, topical projects, group discussions), advancing specific priority external partnerships, and supporting USDN members in sharing their ‘voice of the cities’ in key strategic discussions with external partners (e.g., through the State, Local and Tribal Leaders Task Force on Climate Preparedness and Resilience).

USDN members are getting value from the network, and want to maintain a focus on climate preparedness. By summer 2014, USDN members had already reported significant impacts of this work. 68% of members reported that USDN has contributed to their climate change adaptation efforts, including 37% who said that contribution was significant. Most other members indicated that it was too soon to tell. Members voted to maintain a network focus on climate as their top strategic priority at the 2014 USDN Annual Meeting.

USDN members have identified several priority learning topics related to climate preparedness through multiple surveys, regional projects, and Adaptation User Group calls during the last year. The table below summarizes these topics and examples of recent USDN activities that have supported member learning.

<b>Priority Learning Topic</b>	<b>2014 USDN Activities</b>
Using climate impact projection and observation data to inform planning and operations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• City of Austin example at USDN Annual Meeting Plenary</li> <li>• Seattle RainWatch example on User Group call</li> <li>• Heartland Regional Network 2014 Project</li> </ul>
Engaging internal departments in climate preparedness planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cities of Austin, Baltimore and Portland examples at USDN Annual Meeting Plenary</li> </ul>
Integrating climate preparedness planning with existing plans and processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• City of Baltimore example at USDN Annual Meeting and Southeast Network PREP project call</li> <li>• Southeast Sustainability Directors Network PREP project</li> </ul>
Projecting and evaluating the costs and benefits of preparedness strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Green Infrastructure session at the USDN Annual Meeting</li> <li>• Peer exchange convening in Philadelphia</li> </ul>
Engaging community stakeholders on climate preparedness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Breakout Session on Engaging the Community on Climate at USDN Annual Meeting</li> <li>• Oakland examples on User Group calls</li> </ul>
Reducing vulnerability to flooding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Breakout Session on Flooding and Climate Resilience at USDN Annual Meeting (New York City, Seattle, Victoria)</li> </ul>
Securing resources for climate preparedness work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Part of the discussion at the Green Infrastructure and Urban Forestry breakout sessions at the USDN Annual Meeting</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provided feedback to foundation partners regarding opportunities to support cities</li> </ul>
Engaging other local governments and agencies in the metro region in climate preparedness work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encouraged members to attend an ISC workshop on metro-regional efforts in October 2014</li> </ul>
Integrating climate preparedness and GHG reduction efforts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focus of a June 2014 workshop in Copenhagen attended by 17 USDN members</li> </ul>
Opportunities to address equity goals through climate preparedness work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discussion topic at the June 2014 adaptation-mitigation workshop</li> </ul>
Measuring performance and progress on climate preparedness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discussion with STAR re: opportunities to further develop metrics in this area</li> </ul>

### Some Things We've Learned about Cities and Climate Preparedness

- USDN members' climate preparedness efforts range in experience, capacity, urgency, and support.
- Preparedness planning approaches vary between cities. Some have begun with a comprehensive review of climate impact projections and local vulnerability, while others have begun with a focus on certain issues often prompted by extreme weather events or process opportunities.
- Cities have several common opportunities to integrate climate preparedness strategies into existing government plans and processes, including: hazard mitigation plans, emergency preparedness plans and outreach programs, comprehensive and neighborhood land use plans, stormwater management plans, building codes, infrastructure plans, and water/wastewater utility plans.
- Existing guidance for cities on preparedness planning is of limited value beyond providing a basic orientation. Future iterations should be flexible and re-focused to reflect the wide range of city planning contexts.
- Cities desire examples of planning and action from their peers at a detailed level. Guidance is most valuable when framed around curated examples of peer action relevant to a city's own situation.
- Resources and information are abundant, even overwhelming, but it's difficult to know what is worth reading, and most cities don't have time to do a lot of searching. Cities aren't using online resource databases very much, in part for these reasons.
- Cities often need more detailed information than can readily be accessed. Case studies could be a useful vehicle for making detailed information accessible, but they often lack crucial 'behind-the-scenes' context on other options considered, how decisions were made, how champions gained internal support, full costs associated with planning and implementation, etc.
- Cities value having thought partners to turn to for process advice and ideas on resources and examples that may help them address specific challenges. Cities without trusted thought partners wish they had one.
- USDN cities rely on peers for guidance above all other resources, and desire more opportunities to learn from each other and strategize together in person.
- Financial resource limitations are a major barrier to planning and implementation of adaptation strategies. Competitive grants can be of limited value to small cities without capacity to pursue them.
- Many cities have enough climate impact data to move the planning conversation forward, but not all. More certainty is often needed to affect big decisions, but impact data research can yield diminishing returns. Cities need help to translate climate data in planning-relevant contexts.
- Many cities are now integrating their climate preparedness and GHG reduction efforts under one umbrella. Many in this field previously worried that attention on climate preparedness might distract

from GHG reduction priorities, but USDN members are generally embracing the need for both and view attention on each as mutually supportive.

- Some cities are eager to learn from peers about best practices in conducting vulnerability assessments.
- Cities desire examples and information on implemented climate preparedness strategies (e.g., costs, benefits, guidance on selecting strategies). For example, many cities want help to better value and make the case for appropriate use of green infrastructure.
- Some cities are interested in defining climate preparedness performance goals and ways of demonstrating benefits of preparedness investments.
- Cities want to discuss with peers how to engage internal departments, key stakeholders, the public, neighboring communities, and regional agencies.

### **Opportunities to Support Climate Preparedness Efforts of Cities**

The fall 2013 USDN project identified several strategic ways the field of practice could better support the climate preparedness work of cities. In addition to sharing experiences with each other, USDN members could engage external partners to explore these opportunities in 2014-5.

#### Primary Opportunities

Opportunities identified as having the greatest potential to advance local government adaptation planning.

1. Robust peer-to-peer, face-to-face opportunities to enable cities to share learnings directly and in greater depth
2. On-demand advisor/concierge to provide advice and steer cities to key resources, and to push out curated resources
3. Technical assistance: consultants to provide trainings and on-demand support to multiple cities
4. Financial resources for cities to advance learning
5. Better data on projected impacts and assistance in translating data into decision-relevant information

#### Supporting Opportunities

Opportunities identified as most useful when they are employed in support of the primary opportunities above. On their own, they can have limited utility given the way cities prefer to access information.

6. More flexible process guidance tailored to the ways cities approach their work on climate adaptation
7. Website(s) offering high-quality, core resources specifically for oriented to a local government audience, with a city-oriented user interface

#### Network Opportunities

Multiple member-based networks, organizations, and federal agencies support city climate resilience efforts. The impact of these actors could be strengthened if they more formally collaborated to advance shared goals.

8. Robust partnerships between field-leading organizations to share learnings between networks and create efficiencies/reduce duplication between efforts
9. Engagement with federal agencies to provide city perspectives on how they can best support local government climate resilience efforts

## 2014-2016 USDN Climate Preparedness Strategy

**Goal:** Help all interested USDN members better leverage peer experience to advance their work on climate preparedness

**Action 1a) Develop a dynamic catalog of USDN member action on climate preparedness.**

*The Challenge:* USDN members want to know more about each others’ past and current work on climate preparedness, and to be able to find this information more quickly and easily.

Drawing from past and future member surveys, interviews and additional desktop research, develop a catalog of information about the climate preparedness work of USDN members, including: (1) commitments; (2) actions taken; (3) challenges faced; and (4) plans and interests. Enable USDN members to access this information through USDN.org member profiles as well as custom summaries organized by the way members search for this information (e.g., example vulnerability studies, action plans, outreach materials). Develop new ways to present this information on USDN.org as appropriate. Train members to use the catalog of examples through the Climate Preparedness User Group. This will help members get more value out of information shared within the USDN network, and may help USDN provide ideas for other information portals serving wider audiences.

Next Steps:

- Assemble initial database from past research (November 2014)
- Incorporate questions to fill info gaps into next USDN survey (date?)
- Develop summary views of information for feedback (December 2014)

**Action 1b) Create peer learning opportunities around priority learning topics identified by members.**

*The Challenge:* There are a number of climate preparedness topics of interest to multiple USDN members. Network activities (e.g., user group calls, collaborative projects) should create opportunities for members to learn together on these issues.

Continue to support member learning on member-identified priority learning topics through User Group calls, in-person convenings, targeted projects, strategic partnerships, and connecting USDN members to external opportunities. Record member discussions and trainings on these topics where appropriate, make these recordings accessible, and guide other members to use them based on individual needs. Engage members to understand their preferred learning styles (e.g., live discussion calls, recorded trainings, in-person meetings) and deliver content on priority learning topics to match. Below is a draft plan re: how we will address these topics during 2015-16.

Priority Learning Topic	2014-2016 USDN Activities
Using climate impact projection and observation data to inform planning and operations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Heartland Regional Network Project will be completed. Share learnings with User Group.</li> <li>• Feature this topic through User Group calls, at NAF, and recorded trainings. Include discussion of lessons and gaps in existing vulnerability analyses, including how to use downscaled data to explore vulnerability in the context of operational thresholds.</li> </ul>
Engaging internal departments in	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Feature this topic through User Group calls, at NAF, and</li> </ul>

climate preparedness planning	recorded trainings. Invite representatives from key department types to share their perspectives on future User Group calls to help members consider ways to engage their own peers.
Integrating climate preparedness planning with existing plans and processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Southeast Network PREP project will be completed. Share learnings with User Group.</li> <li>• Feature this topic through User Group calls, at NAF, and recorded trainings.</li> </ul>
Projecting and evaluating the costs and benefits of preparedness strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engage partners to collect and develop better guidance on projecting the costs and benefits of green infrastructure.</li> <li>• Engage partners to develop better metrics for evaluating climate preparedness and the value of specific actions.</li> </ul>
Engaging community stakeholders on climate preparedness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Feature this topic through User Group calls, at NAF, and recorded trainings.</li> <li>• Propose to convene a workshop at the NAF for USDN members and representatives of community organizations to discuss opportunities to improve collaboration for climate preparedness in local communities.</li> <li>• Continue a dialogue about messaging and engaging community building on ecoAmerica's work.</li> </ul>
Reducing vulnerability to flooding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engage experts to share information on the state of the possible and the practical regarding predicting and reducing vulnerability to overland flooding. Toronto has identified interesting examples.</li> </ul>
Securing resources for climate preparedness work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engage the User Group in a discussion about the potential role and resource needs of local governments to address climate preparedness and making the internal case for these resources.</li> <li>• Engage philanthropic partners to secure resources for the implementation of actions included in this strategy.</li> <li>• Seek resources for USDN members to participate in the National Adaptation Forum.</li> </ul>
Engaging other local governments and agencies in the metro region in climate preparedness work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage interested USDN members to review a summary of learnings that ISC is producing from the October 2014 workshop it held on this topic.</li> <li>• Consider featuring a presentation on this topic on an upcoming User Group call.</li> <li>• Encourage ISC to provide more peer-learning opportunities for participants of that workshop and other interested cities.</li> </ul>
Integrating climate preparedness and GHG reduction efforts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engage attendees of the June 2014 workshop in Copenhagen to produce a quick summary of best practices in integrating these efforts</li> </ul>
Opportunities to address equity goals through climate preparedness work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Feature this topic through User Group calls, at NAF, and recorded trainings. Include as an element of potential workshop on collaboration with community organizations. Invite cross-group discussion with Equity</li> </ul>

	User Group on how lessons learned through recent USDN Equity Scan might apply to climate preparedness issues.
Measuring performance and progress on climate preparedness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support cities engaged in an Innovation Fund proposal to review and build on metrics for measuring performance and progress</li> </ul>

Next Steps:

- Gather feedback on priority learning topics from members volunteering to co-chair or participate in the Climate Preparedness User Group (November 2014)
- Add links to existing recorded User Group calls and known key external resources on these topics (December 2014)

**Action 1c) Evolve User Group structure to maximize value to participants.**

Maintain and evolve the USDN Climate Preparedness User Group as a forum for learning from peers and external experts on cross-cutting issues (e.g., engaging internal departments and community, using climate data, integrating adaptation into existing plans and processes). Focus discussions on deep dives into issues of common interest, and leverage external experts where valuable. Create opportunities for subsets of members to dive deeper into areas of targeted mutual interest on a regular ongoing basis (e.g., coastal cities), and as ad hoc project groups (e.g., group to develop common messaging examples).

Potential Call Topics for the Climate Preparedness User Group:

- Communicating on climate in our communities ✓
- Measuring performance and progress on climate preparedness
- Lessons and gaps in vulnerability analysis (examples, tools, sectors approach)
- Integrating climate preparedness into land use plans
- Predicting and reducing vulnerability from overland flooding
- Lessons of value of metro-regional collaboratives on climate preparedness
- Creating partnerships with community-based organizations
- Best practices in consideration of green infrastructure opportunities
- Integrating climate preparedness into hazard mitigation plans
- Opportunities to engage with Federal agencies on climate preparedness
- Opportunities to address equity goals through climate preparedness work
- Integrating climate preparedness strategies with GHG reduction efforts

Potential Call Topics for Coastal Cities Working Group:

- NYC coastal protection strategies
- Examples of economic valuation of coastal vulnerability from Boston and PNW

Next Steps:

- Engage co-chair volunteers to finalize user group structure for 2015 and develop potential call topic ideas to program agendas for the next few calls (November 2014)

**Action 1d) Leverage the National Adaptation Forum to enable in-person peer learning.**

Support USDN member participation in the largest national climate adaptation-themed conference to date by encouraging the inclusion of content valuable to USDN members, speaking roles by USDN members to share their learnings and challenges, and funding to support USDN member participation. Maintain a role on the steering and program committees for the NAF. Reach out to USDN members directly to encourage them to submit proposals to host sessions at

the NAF. Engage potential funders to help support travel and registration costs of 30-50 USDN members to participate in the NAF.

Next Steps:

- Send out the NAF call for proposals to USDN members and follow up with direct encouragement to individual members to submit proposals. Submit a proposal to the NAF to host a workshop on collaboration between local governments and community organizations. (October 2014) ✓
- Submit proposal to Kresge Foundation to provide support city teams to attend the NAF. Propose that Kresge fund teams consisting of the climate preparedness lead within local government and a key champion from a local community organization. These teams would participate in a workshop on city-community org partnerships the day before the NAF, in addition to the rest of the NAF. (November 2014)
- Discuss interest with the Summit Foundation to provide support for leads of the four current regional network climate adaptation projects to attend and present at the NAF to spread learnings from their projects. (November 2014)
- Identify opportunities to continue to support partnerships between USDN members and community organizations (and other stakeholders) based on discussions at the NAF. (summer 2015)

**Goal:** Make the process of climate preparedness planning easier by working with partners to solve key common challenges prioritized by cities

**Action 2a) Make it easy for USDN members to find good situation-based ideas and examples of integrating climate preparedness into their work.**

*The Challenge:* How can cities best integrate climate preparedness issues into their existing priorities and processes?

Drawing from stories shared to date by USDN members, develop a brief list of highlighted examples of how cities have integrated climate preparedness into common processes such as:

- Stand-alone climate preparedness plans
- Hazard mitigation plans
- Emergency preparedness plans and outreach programs
- Comprehensive and neighborhood land use plans
- Building codes
- Stormwater management plans
- Green infrastructure plans
- Urban forestry plans
- Transportation infrastructure plans
- Community outreach and engagement programs
- Extreme heat plans
- Other infrastructure plans
- Water/wastewater utility plans

Categorize these examples by attributes such as key climate impacts addressed, coastal/non-coastal, geographic region. Maintain and evolve this as a curated list of useful examples for cities. Include links to external resources worth highlighting on these topics where recommended by

members (do not create a new clearinghouse, but rather keep track of member-recommended resources to help existing clearinghouses highlight these resources). Present the matrix to the Climate Preparedness User Group to help orient members, and make available on USDN.org. Consider opportunities to push this curated list out to wider audiences through USDN.org and external partner websites (e.g., CAKE, Georgetown Climate Center). Continue to feature stories of leading city efforts to integrate climate preparedness into their work in USDN news and convenings.

Next Steps:

- Develop initial draft matrix from existing USDN staff knowledge. Share with a subset of members for input. Pending member approval, share draft with key external partners (e.g., ISC) for further input. (December 2014)
- Consider opportunities to share more widely with other partners. (January 2015)
- Discuss opportunities with Georgetown Climate Center to improve the way it makes this kind of information accessible through its Clearinghouse site. (November 2014)

**Action 2b) Develop an on-demand help line for cities engaged in climate preparedness planning.**

*The Challenge:* As USDN members struggle to lead climate preparedness work in their own cities, they often encounter difficult situations in which external examples or trusted advice could help them move forward.

Pilot test a climate preparedness planning helpline for city governments. This will be an on-demand resource offering light-touch process advice and steering cities to peer examples and other resources suited to their needs. Promote this resource to USDN cities and potentially through other networks. Track usage and document questions and assistance provided to help USDN and organizations serving cities to proactively provide this guidance. The helpline provider should also review new information and resources produced by the field of practice and act as a curator to push out select resources to local governments. Use resources remaining from the 2013 commissioned climate adaptation planning project to develop the business plan and seek funds to launch the pilot phase.

Next Steps:

- Engage Steve Adams at ISC to develop a business plan for the helpline pilot phase (November 2014)
- Launch the helpline pilot in 2015.
- Consider opportunities to enlist partners to help cities solve more in-depth challenges where raised through the helpline resource and other USDN discussions.

**Action 2c) Develop a green infrastructure playbook for cities.**

*The Challenge:* USDN members know that green infrastructure has the potential to support a number of local sustainability goals. We need help to identify and act on opportunities to use green infrastructure. We need tools for evaluating costs and benefits and support to make it easier for internal departments and community stakeholders to understand, evaluate, and implement green infrastructure strategies.

Build on the work of leading USDN members and external partners to help all members better understand and employ green infrastructure (GI) strategies to address stormwater management, urban heat, public health, and quality of life issues. Engage partners to gather existing resources, deliver training, and develop new methodologies and resources to help cities:

- 1) Identify opportunities to use GI strategies in public space and redevelopment projects;
- 2) Encourage appropriate use of GI strategies by private sector land owners;
- 3) Project and evaluate the costs and benefits of GI;
- 4) Institutionalize consideration of GI strategies by key decision making processes and parties;
- 5) Navigate contrast and integration with gray infrastructure;
- 6) Identify sustainable methods of paying for initial and ongoing costs of GI; and
- 7) Educate and build support for GI among key stakeholders and the public.

Georgetown Climate Center (GCC) has capacity and intention to develop something like this over the next 12 months, and has invited USDN members to serve on a project advisory committee. Other organizations (e.g., C40, NRDC, GSA, ASLA) may also have capacity to share resources or otherwise collaborate with USDN members on this topic.

**Next Steps:**

- Develop a summary of USDN member work in this area to date, including internal and external resources used by USDN members and key challenges expressed at the 2014 USDN Annual Meeting. (November 2014)
- Share a summary of USDN member needs with Georgetown Climate Center to aid in their project planning. Encourage two more USDN cities to participate in their project advisory committee (November 2014)
- Reach out to other potential partners (in partnership with GCC) who may have value to contribute to that project or resources to share with USDN members. (November 2014)
- Create a Green Infrastructure working group within USDN to provide a space for continued member collaboration. Invite co-chair volunteers to develop recommendations for the goal, function, and composition of the group in 2015.

**Action 2d) Support USDN member in-person peer learning on green infrastructure.**

*The Challenge:* USDN members are interested in more opportunities to engage in in-person peer learning on green infrastructure. While creating peer learning opportunities, we may also have the opportunity to help partner organizations develop more capacity to better advise cities on GI in the future, reducing the advising burden on leading cities and helping to accelerate the field.

**Next Steps:**

- Explore options for facilitating city-to-city peer exchange on this topic, including the involvement of additional staff beyond sustainability directors (e.g., stormwater engineers). Lots of USDN members are interested in peer exchange on this topic. Consider options for city-to-city peer exchange in small and large group convenings/trainings leveraging the work of leading cities (e.g., Milwaukee, Philadelphia, Portland). Build on ideas shared by participants of the recent peer learning exchange hosted by the City of Philadelphia. (December 2014)

**Action 2e) Identify and build on best-in-class methods for analyzing and presenting local vulnerability to climate change.**

*The Challenge:* How can cities best analyze and present information about local vulnerability to climate change?

Many USDN members are interested in analyzing and presenting information about local vulnerability to change as an early step in their climate preparedness planning, or by diving deeper into understanding the vulnerability of specific aspects of the people, infrastructure, and

functions within their communities. Some cities have begun to look in depth at transportation infrastructure, flooding issues, economic vulnerability, community social vulnerability, and other issues. Help USDN members to share and develop new best practices in analyzing and communicating about vulnerability with the assistance of external partners.

Next Steps:

- Create a summary of links to existing vulnerability studies by USDN members. Draw from initial research of member work on climate preparedness. Share with the Adaptation User Group and invite interested members to consider interest in convening an ad hoc group conversation about potential collaborative work in this area. Consider opportunities to collectively engage external partners to help advance this work. (December 2014)

**Action 2f) Help USDN members to develop community partnerships and communicate about climate preparedness locally.**

*The Challenge:* What are the best ways to frame and message about climate change and the need and opportunity to increase climate preparedness, and what are the best ways to engage various stakeholders and the public locally?

Create an ad hoc working group for members to share information and collaborate to develop messaging and strategies for use in their own communities. Support members in engaging external resources and organizations where they can bring value to this work (e.g., Climate Access, ecoAmerica). Work with external organizations to offer targeted training for USDN members. Create peer learning opportunities on this subject at the National Adaptation Forum in 2015. Gather and share examples based on USDN member research.

Next Steps:

- Invite further discussion of this topic on the October Adaptation User Group call (October 2014) ✓
- Create a summary of existing work on these issues by USDN members drawing from initial research of member work, and provide to a potential member working group to start the conversation about potential collaborative work in this area. (December 2014)
- Identify key climate communication resources and offer brief overview of these on upcoming User Group calls.

**Action 2g) Support USDN members in fostering deeper dives into climate preparedness planning by other departments in their own cities.**

*The Challenge:* How can USDN members encourage other departments in their cities to dive more deeply into climate preparedness issues?

Help USDN members to engage other departments more deeply in this work. Engage ISC to build on past climate leadership academies to offer new 101-level climate preparedness training to inter-departmental teams from additional cities now engaged in this work. Consider opportunities to create ongoing engagement with these teams, rather than one-time workshop events. Working with these cities, others who attended previous climate leadership academies, and other USDN members, create new opportunities for deeper dives with USDN members and staff from particular departments on focused issues. Topics may include: stormwater infrastructure planning; integration with hazard mitigation plans and emergency preparedness plans; community engagement with neighborhood associations; etc. American Public Works Association, American Planning Association, and similar organizations may be willing to help feature key stories and trainings for their audiences. Consider recording trainings with these partners to make available through various channels.

Next Steps:

- Consider using User Group calls for discussions about engaging particular internal or external departments/agencies (e.g., building code officials, public works stormwater engineers). Invite representatives of those departments to participate in the discussion. Consider deeper dives where appropriate. Discuss in User Group planning process. (November 2014)

**Action 2h) Help USDN members identify opportunities to advance climate preparedness and GHG reduction strategies in an integrated way.**

*The Challenge:* How can USDN members best integrate their work on climate preparedness and GHG reduction issues?

Identify and build on existing summaries of opportunities to address both climate adaptation and mitigation goals (e.g., 2014 report from CCAP, discussions in 2014 USDN workshop in Copenhagen). How can we take advantage of synergies (e.g., value co-benefits in traditionally silo-driven decision-making) and avoid working at cross-purposes?

Next Steps:

- Engage attendees of the June 2014 workshop in Copenhagen to produce a quick summary of best practices in integrating these efforts. (December 2014)
- Encourage long-term (e.g., 2050) GHG reduction planning being undertaken by some USDN members to anticipate and inform adaptation strategies. (2015)

**Action 2i) Help USDN members identify opportunities to better address equity issues in their climate preparedness work.**

*The Challenge:* USDN members are interested in improving equity in their communities broadly and often face particular equity challenges. In many communities, traditionally disadvantaged communities are projected to feel the impacts of climate change first and worst. How can we address existing inequity in our communities through our work on climate preparedness?

Help USDN members to develop their capacity to engage in these issues and to explore specific opportunities to address equity issues through the lens of climate preparedness, and vice versa.

Next Steps:

- Discuss best practices in understanding equity issues and engaging with disadvantaged communities and equity advocates to increase the capacity of USDN members to engage with these issues.
- Discuss best practices in considering equity issues in climate vulnerability analyses and planning efforts (e.g., understanding vulnerability from the perspective of people, not just infrastructure).
- Engage the Equity User Group in a cross-group discussion re: how lessons from the recent USDN Equity Scan can inform climate preparedness planning.

**Action 2j) Help USDN members identify and use best practices in predicting and reducing vulnerability to overland flooding.**

*The Challenge:* More USDN members are concerned about overland precipitation-driven flooding than any other type of climate impact. Yet managing flood risk is not work that typically falls directly under the responsibilities of most USDN members.

Help USDN members to develop knowledge about flood models, risk, insurance issues, and opportunities to reduce flooding vulnerability, as well as their own capacity to engage relevant departments.

Next Steps:

- Share best practices in a future User Group call. Consider opportunities to invite experts in flood risk modeling and mitigation strategies to contribute perspective to the conversation.

Goal: Share information about the learnings and needs of USDN members with wider audiences to support replication and collective action, share city perspectives with key stakeholders, and position USDN as a resource and partner in this field of practice

**Action 3a) Develop a regular report for external audiences on the learnings and needs of USDN members related to climate preparedness.**

*The Challenge:* Many external stakeholders have the potential to help USDN members advance their climate preparedness work (e.g., government agencies, funders, NGOs, academics, consultants). These stakeholders could better tailor their work to meet the needs of cities if they had more information about the learnings and needs of cities.

Drawing from the individual work of USDN members and their collaborative discussions and projects, develop a report for external audiences summarizing the story of what USDN cities are working on, struggling with, trying out, finding useful, etc. Connecting partners to this type of information will create opportunities for them to tell us where they might offer a resource or service aligned with needs cities are expressing. It could help them to make more timely partnership offers to the network, and might aid their own strategic planning. For example, these reports could include:

- Examples of recent actions by individual USDN members (w/ links to their own publicly accessible new climate plan or adopted urban food policy)
- Hot discussion topics (examples of statements/questions that have been posed, including any issues where we can summarize consensus of members; no attribution to individual members/cities)
- Employment opportunities posted by cities
- Partner spotlight (e.g., 2 paragraphs each month highlighting one particular partner that USDN members are working with on a whatever specific project, in part to show work of the network, and in part to show the kinds of tangible partnerships that are valuable to us)
- Periodic section providing some aggregated data story on rotating topics (e.g., how many cities have adopted 80x50 goals; what percentage of members identify flooding as a major climate impact concern)

Next Steps:

- Consider opportunities to integrate this information with the Urban Sustainability Innovation Report newsletter launching in fall 2014. Gather feedback from User Group co-chairs on information to gather and share with external audiences. (December 2014)

**Action 3b) Help USDN members to engage with Federal agencies to support the work of cities.**

*The Challenge:* USDN members participating in the 2014 President's State, Local, and Tribal Leaders Task Force on Climate Preparedness and Resilience identified a number of opportunities through which Federal agencies could better support the climate preparedness work of cities. Continued attention to these issues by cities may help to motivate/enable progress.

Help USDN members to follow up on Task Force recommendations through dialogue with individual Agencies (e.g., FEMA, HUD, DOT, EPA).

Next Steps:

- Convene USDN members who participated in the Task Force to identify key opportunities. (early 2015)

**Action 3c) Actively coordinate with other partners in the field to share learnings, activities and needs.**

*The Challenge:* Several organizations exist to support local governments on climate preparedness issues across specific topics or geographies. The staff of these organizations and staff of USDN could bring more value to their networks by sharing information of potential interest across networks.

Continue bi-monthly staff-staff calls among organizations and networks serving local governments on climate preparedness work (e.g., USDN, C40, ICLEI, ISC, ASAP, LGC, NLC). Help these organizations to improve the way they present information for cities to help USDN members and other local government practitioners more quickly find valuable resources without having to recreate a clearinghouse within USDN.org. Offer to share resources and opportunities with USDN members, and to invite USDN members to provide feedback where appropriate. Be responsive to requests and opportunities from external organizations. Highlight the value of work by organizations that aligns with USDN member needs, and offer to lend support to work aligned with USDN member priorities. Offer to serve as a thought partner to funders interested hearing more city perspectives to inform their own strategic plans. Share learnings that emerge in USDN discussions and through USDN collaborative projects (e.g., through Innovation Fund, regional projects) with other field-leading organizations to share with their networks, increasing the value of USDN member experience and decreasing the need for duplicative projects. Consider opportunities to share city-specific information across networks to reduce reporting burdens on cities (with member review of any proposals).

Next Steps:

- Continue bi-monthly inter-network staff coordination calls. (ongoing)

**Action 3d) Spread the stories of USDN members in their own words.**

*The Challenge:* USDN members are engaged in a wide array of innovative work. Just as they prefer to learn directly from each other, so too will external audiences prefer to hear their stories directly.

Help USDN members to share their stories in their own words where they are interested in doing so and opportunities exist for their stories to help advance the field of practice. Provide video teams to conduct interviews with ~10 members to capture key stories. Feature these on USDN.org in video clip or longer training formats. Consider providing these to external orgs as well where appropriate for their presentation of guidance to other cities (e.g., CAKE, Georgetown Climate Center Adaptation Clearinghouse). Consider opportunities to partner with other

organizations in this work (e.g., ISC has begun to record interviews with some participants of climate leadership academies).

Also help members to identify and engage in speaking opportunities to share their stories (e.g., at the National Adaptation Forum, conferences of American Planning Association). Frame content in a way that helps other practitioners understand common steps that cities take in enhancing climate preparedness.

Next Steps:

- Explore member interest in this opportunity through the User Group. (early 2015)