



GEORGETOWN CLIMATE CENTER

Managed Retreat Toolkit

*Launch Webinar
July 15, 2020*

Welcome! The webinar will begin shortly.

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Managed Retreat Toolkit

Welcome, and thank you for joining us!

- **The webinar will be recorded.** A captioned recording and presentation slides will be available after the event.
- **Questions can be submitted through the “Question” feature on the right-hand side of your screen.** All microphones will be muted throughout today’s call. We will answer as many questions as time allows at the end of today’s presentation.
- **Technical issues?** Email climate@georgetown.edu for assistance.

Why managed retreat?



Vicki Arroyo
Executive Director, Georgetown Climate Center

Today's speakers:



Pete Rafle
Georgetown Climate Center



Sacha Spector
Doris Duke Charitable
Foundation



Vicki Arroyo
Georgetown Climate Center



Katie Spidalieri
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Fawn McGee
Blue Acres Program, NJ DEP



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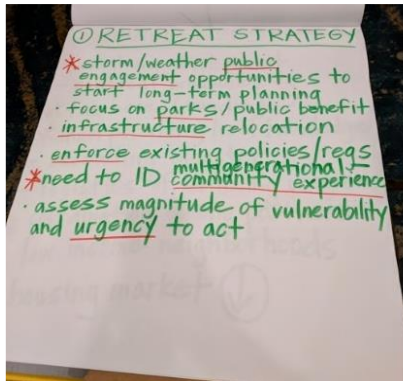


Sacha Spector
Doris Duke Charitable
Foundation

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Developing the Managed Retreat Toolkit

- Since 2018, GCC has engaged more than 1,000 people at more than 20 events across the country
- States and communities expressed a need for a comprehensive resource on managed retreat
- GCC worked with state, local, and federal policymakers; people from affected communities; academic experts, and other leaders in climate adaptation to build the toolkit.



Key Themes:

Managed retreat takes time and planning.

Managed retreat is interdisciplinary and proactive.

Managed retreat must be community-driven and inclusive.

What's in the Managed Retreat Toolkit?



Katie Spidalieri
Senior Associate, Georgetown Climate Center

What's in the Managed Retreat Toolkit?

- About managed retreat
- Legal and policy tools
- Cross-cutting legal and policy considerations
- Case studies

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Managed Retreat Toolkit



Managed retreat, or the voluntary movement and transition of people and ecosystems away from vulnerable coastal areas, is increasingly becoming part of the conversation as coastal states and communities face difficult questions on how best to protect people, development, infrastructure, and coastal ecosystems from sea-level rise, flooding, and land loss. Georgetown Climate Center's new Managed Retreat Toolkit combines legal and policy tools, best and emerging practices, and case studies to support peer learning and decisionmaking around managed retreat and climate adaptation.

Introduction

The impacts of climate change are becoming more apparent and severe, as sea levels rise and the frequency and intensity of extreme weather events increase. Climate change impacts are forcing state and local policymakers to address the risks facing many coastal communities. In addition to undertaking measures aimed at protection (building flood risk reduction structures e.g., levees, hard shoreline armoring devices) and accommodation (building structures to better withstand future flood risk e.g., elevating or flood-proofing structures), coastal governments and communities are increasingly evaluating managed retreat as a potential component of their comprehensive adaptation strategies.

The aim of managed retreat is to proactively move people, structures, and infrastructure out of harm's way before disasters or other threats occur to avoid damage, maximize benefits, and minimize costs for communities and ecosystems. For example, policymakers may reduce risks of flooding by conserving wetlands and protecting habitat migration corridors and minimize the social, psychological, and economic costs of relocation by making investments in safer, affordable housing within existing communities.



How and When to Talk About Managed Retreat

There is no "one size fits all" approach to determining when and how communities should first discuss managed retreat as a potential climate adaptation strategy. This section briefly presents overarching communications considerations for state and local policymakers and communities as they begin discussions about managed retreat.

[Learn more](#)

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Legal and Policy Tools



Infrastructure



Acquisition



Market-Based



Planning



Regulatory



Regulatory Tools

Living Shorelines

Setbacks and Buffers

Development Permit Conditions

Zoning and Overlay Zones



Regulatory Tools

Zoning and Overlay Zones

- Definition of the tool
- How it can be used in a coastal managed retreat context
- Legal and policy considerations and trade-offs
- Best practices and case studies

Managed Retreat Toolkit

Zoning and Overlay Zones

Introduction to Zoning and Overlay Zones

Local governments have the primary authority to regulate land uses in their communities through zoning and floodplain ordinances. In particular, zoning ordinances provide the legal framework that governs the use and development of land in a municipality according to different districts based on the uses that are permitted (e.g., residential, commercial, industrial).¹ Overlay zones or districts can impose additional regulations on an existing zone based on special characteristics in that zone, such as for natural, historical, or cultural resources protection.² One advantage of overlay zones is that they enable local governments to address area-specific needs or requirements without disrupting underlying zoning classifications. To establish an overlay zone, local governments must: (1) establish the purpose for creating the district; (2) map the district; and (3) establish regulations to achieve the purposes for creating the district.³ Before implementing any zoning or land-use changes, however, local governments must ensure that they have the authority to utilize a tool under state law.



Policy Tradeoffs of Zoning and Overlay Zones

Zoning decisions and overlay zones can vary in terms of purpose and scope, among other factors; therefore, it is difficult to assess the policy tradeoffs of these tools generally. There are, however, some overarching policy considerations for local governments.

Administrative

- Zoning processes necessitate staff and funding resources, particularly to support community engagement processes around complex and politically sensitive discussions around retreat. Depending on the ordinance, zoning changes can also require administrative support to enforce restrictions. Smaller or rural communities may face more resource constraints and have less funding available to support specialized zoning staff for these purposes.
- Zoning restrictions may be more politically controversial than other non-regulatory tools because they will limit or regulate private property uses.

Economic

- Zoning decisions for retreat may have an impact — positive, negative, or neutral — on local tax bases. Where existing and future development is reduced or phased out in the face of sea-level rise, flooding, and land loss, governments will

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Acquisition Tool: Buyouts



- Looking for sustainable, non-disaster funding
- Moving beyond property transfers and structural demolitions
- Converting bought-out properties into community assets
- Engaging communities

Cross-cutting Policy Considerations: Receiving Communities



- Identifying receiving areas
- Planning for affordable housing, supporting infrastructure, and critical services (such as schools)
- Facilitating transitions
- Funding sources

Case Studies

- Over 70 case studies from across the US
- Coastal and riverine communities
- Explore case studies in GCC's Adaptation Clearinghouse
- 17 in-depth case studies in Managing the Retreat from Rising Seas report

Managing the Retreat from Rising Seas

Lessons and Tools from 17 Case Studies



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Social/Equity: Receiving Communities

Overview

Working with communities to facilitate voluntary transitions is only one side of the managed retreat coin. "Receiving communities" — or "receiving areas" — is the broad term used to refer to locations where people may be relocating in response to coastal hazards and climate impacts. Receiving areas can be located within the same municipality as a "sending" area or in a different municipal, county, state, or national jurisdiction. While the geographic characteristics and land-use patterns of individual receiving communities will vary, they will ideally be located at a higher elevation and/or further inland away from coastal sending areas experiencing sea-level rise, flooding, and/or erosion. This will better ensure that people are safer and better off, at least from a reduced risk standpoint. Receiving communities can apply in both a pre- and post-disaster context where people seek refuge in response to either episodic (e.g., hurricanes) or chronic (e.g., high tide flooding) threats. People may choose to stay there temporarily or indefinitely. Given the focus on proactive managed retreat strategies, this toolkit section primarily discusses and proposes legal and policy recommendations for receiving communities where people permanently choose to relocate in a non-disaster-related context.



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 - Social/Equity: Receiving Communities

Printer-Friendly Toolkit



Related Resources

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Adaptations for Future Environments (LA SAFE)

Louisiana Strategic Adaptations for Future Environments (LA SAFE) is a community-based planning and capital investment process that will help the state fund and implement several projects, including in higher ground, low flood risk receiving areas. LA SAFE was primarily funded by a \$40-million federal grant to support the design and implementation of resilience projects to address climate impacts in six coastal parishes that were affected by Hurricane Isaac in 2012. LA SAFE adopts a regional approach to addressing coastal flood risk over a 50-year time horizon; projects are designed to address risk and resilience across multiple sectors (e.g., housing, transportation, infrastructure, economic development) and to advance adaptation projects to achieve different risk-based goals (e.g., reshape development in low risk areas that will receive populations migrating from coastal areas, retrofit development in moderate risk areas to accommodate increasing flood risk, and resettle people in high flood risk areas losing land and population). Based on physical risk, demographic, and economic data, the state identified the three aforementioned levels of flood risk that correspond with different development principles to adapt to that flood risk. Low risk areas have relatively favorable future flood risk projections for 0–3 feet in a 100-year or one-percent-chance flood event in 2067. Low risk areas present new development opportunities and have the capacity to receive populations and businesses supporting economic activities that are relocating away from moderate and high risk areas.

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Managing the Retreat from Rising Seas – State of Louisiana: Louisiana Strategic Adaptations for Future Environments (LA SAFE)

Louisiana Strategic Adaptations for Future Environments (LA SAFE) is a community-based planning and capital investment process that will help the state fund and implement several projects, including for managed retreat, to make its coasts more resilient. In 2016, Louisiana's Office for Community Development-Disaster Recovery Unit received a nearly \$40 million grant from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development through the National Disaster Resilience Competition and additional state and nongovernmental funds to implement LA SAFE. The grant will support the design and implementation of resilience projects to address impacts in six coastal parishes that were affected by Hurricane Isaac in 2012 (Jefferson, Lafourche, Plaquemines, St. John the Baptist, St. Tammany, and Terrebonne). The state partnered with the nonprofit Foundation for Louisiana to administer LA SAFE and facilitate an extensive, year-long community engagement process that will result in implementation of ten funded projects across the six parishes. LA SAFE adopts a regional approach to addressing coastal flood risk; projects are designed to address risk and resilience across multiple sectors (e.g., housing, transportation, infrastructure, economic development), and to advance adaptation projects to achieve different risk-based goals (e.g., reshape development in low risk areas that will receive populations migrating from coastal areas, retrofit development in moderate risk areas to accommodate increasing flood risk, and resettle people in high flood risk areas losing land and population). By contemplating a regional, rather than a parish-specific, approach to addressing coastal risk, LA SAFE provides a model that other states and local governments may consider when making long-term adaptation and resilience investments, including for managed retreat.

This case study is one of 17 case studies featured in a report written by the Georgetown Climate Center, *Managing the Retreat from Rising Seas: Lessons and Tools from 17 Case Studies*. Each case study tells a different story about how states, local governments, and communities across the country are approaching questions about managed retreat. Together, the case studies highlight how different types of legal and policy tools are being considered and implemented across a range of jurisdictions — from urban, suburban, and rural to riverine and coastal — to help support new and ongoing discussions on the subject. These case studies are intended to provide transferable lessons and potential management practices for coastal state and local policymakers evaluating managed retreat as one part of a strategy to adapt to climate change on the coast.

For additional case studies and more information about managed retreat, also see Georgetown Climate Center's *Managed Retreat Toolkit*.

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Related Resources:

- Louisiana Strategic Adaptations for Future Environments (LA SAFE) Adaptation Strategies
- Managing the Retreat from Rising Seas: Lessons and Tools from 17 Case Studies
- HUD National Disaster Resilience Competition

Managing the Retreat from Rising Seas

State of Louisiana: Louisiana Strategic Adaptations for Future Environments (LA SAFE)



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Case Study: New Jersey Blue Acres Program



Fawn McGee
Blue Acres Program
NJ Department of
Environmental Protection



Road to Resilience: Rebuild, Raise or Rescue?

- Rebuild: Saves the ratable
- Elevation: Saves the house
- Buyouts: Saves the family
- Local communities break the cycle of reacting to floods by improving flood storage
- Decreases risk (and cost) for first-responders
- Improves CRS and makes the greater community more resilient
- Open space increases property values for overall community



Case Study: LA SAFE

Louisiana's Strategic Adaptations for Future Environments



Liz Williams Russell
Foundation for Louisiana



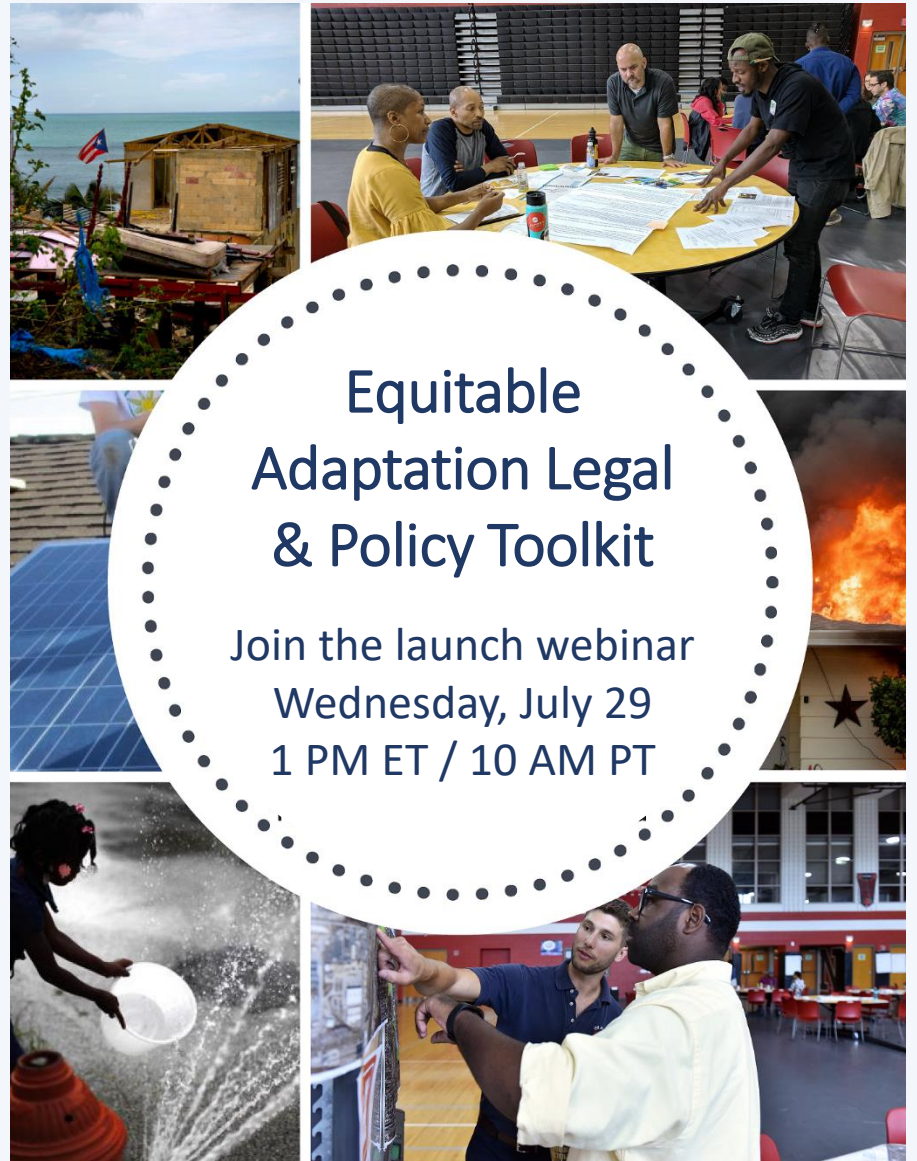
Questions and Discussion

Upcoming opportunities to connect with GCC

- Join us for the Equitable Adaptation Toolkit launch on 7/29
- Let us know what you think of the Managed Retreat Toolkit!
- Collaborate with us on place-based projects



Lisa Anne Hamilton
Georgetown Climate Center



Equitable Adaptation Legal & Policy Toolkit

Join the launch webinar
Wednesday, July 29
1 PM ET / 10 AM PT

Thank you!

Explore the Managed Retreat Toolkit online:

georgetownclimate.org

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#GCCMRT

Contact us:

climate@georgetown.edu



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