



The Formation of Regional Climate Collaboratives in the US

A Terminal Project Report in Partial Fulfillment of the
Masters of Community and Regional Planning Degree
Program

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Participating Organizations (Not featured: Capital Area Sustainability Compact, Tallahassee):



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Chapter 1 - Introduction

Climate change is disrupting urban regions throughout the United States and has resulted in the loss of life and property. While the long-term impacts are still unknown, regions have experienced the short-term impacts through hurricanes, droughts, wildfires, floods, air pollution, etc. In Florida, sea level rise has presented a threat to erode their beaches, intrude their water aquifers, flood coastal developments, and decimating their tourism industry. In California, residents have experienced the worst wildfires in their history, which has contributed to public health concerns with increasing air pollution. In Kansas, their blue stem wheat, a cash crop in their community, has physically shrunk to 65% because of drought and climate impacts. In all of the United States, climate change has had environmental, economic, and public health impacts that extend to people in all walks of life and are disproportionate to the most vulnerable populations. Climate change is projected to increase in intensity and cause irreversible consequences.

Climate change has been regarded as a local issue (Preston et al., 2013) because global impacts are generally felt locally. The immediate and long-term threats have compelled local governments to act, especially given the lack of state and federal support in the United States. Cities have taken charge to identify their own vulnerabilities, adopt climate change informed planning documents, implementing those new plans, and evaluating them (Shi, 2017). However, there are limitations to local adaptation and mitigation efforts.

To address these limits, local jurisdictions have formed regional collaboratives to take on efforts of adaptation and mitigation. Localities understand that their efforts benefit when the efforts of the neighbors are aligned. Additionally, smaller cities who do not have the resources rely on collaborating to obtain the data and technical assistance for climate action. Most municipalities lack the resources for planning and efforts are improved with economies of scale (Moser & Ekstrom, 2010). Regional efforts are important because they allow resources to come together and it improves networks and connectivity between regional partners.

Advocates for climate change planning have pushed for regional approaches (Adams et. al, 2014; Chapin, 2012), and it is important to understand the different frameworks to support the localities (Adams, et. al, 2016). Regional coordination is difficult because of diverse stakeholders that have different levels of power and frame their issues in different forms. Even though there are complexities, collaborations have formed voluntarily within several regions in the US. In order to encourage future regional efforts, it is important to understand the motivation that brought the stakeholders together as well as the motivation that keeps the groups involved.

Climate change is a local issue, and there has been a lack of state and federal support.

Local adaptation and mitigation efforts improve when neighbors align.

Collaboration is inherently difficult, so its important to study the motivations.

Within this study, I reviewed eight (8) regional climate collaboratives (RCCs) in the United States that are working on adaptation and/or mitigation efforts. I finalized my selection of RCCs based on criteria of being located in the same state but varied based on whether they are adaptation or mitigation focused, and whether or not their projects were focused on connection, alignment, or joint production. Further consideration was given to collaboratives that were emerging or had been established. I held interviews with key stakeholders at each of the RCC. Interviewees revealed the steps that took place prior to the formation, as well as the events that happened following the formal launch event.

The specific purpose of this research is to understand and describe how regional climate collaboratives convened, and what motivated the key players to join the effort, as well as how they side stepped early barriers.

I hypothesize that some regions in the United States are hesitant to begin an RCC because of perceived political, financial, or other barriers. This research is part of a larger project to assess these and other barriers by researching the different pathways that RCCs are launched. RCCs form based on the needs of their region, and these case studies show the different options that a region can take in order to form a collaborative that suits their region.

Chapter 2 - Literature Review

While there is literature that covers collaboration efforts and their variety of issues, challenges and approaches (Healey, 1997; Innes & Booher, 2009; Koppenjan, 2008; Margerum, 2011), there is limited research on how collaboratives form and the origin story that shares the “behind the scenes” information that led up to the inception. In this chapter, I reviewed the current literature that described how some researchers have studied the convening of collaborative efforts. My research hopes to fill a gap in the current literature by providing a more robust review of the origins of RCCs with a more detailed framework. Innes (2010) found that collaborative efforts form to fill governance gaps and that “in conditions of great complexity, controversy, and uncertainty, harnessing the power of networks to connect people, ideas, and knowledge in changing combinations across organizations and problems may be necessary” (pg. 62). Michell, O’Leary, and Gerard (2015) concluded that a “full court press” is required to take on public issues that span across organizational boundaries.

Geographical Concerns

Literature has shown that RCCs can form in the response to the geographical concerns of the region. Vella (2016) described how Florida is in a precarious climate change situation because of their beach erosion, salt-water intrusion, and flooding. RCCs outside of the US have also formed in response to natural events. Anguelovski and Carmin (2011) identified that climate change has made weather events more extreme in Quito, Ecuador. They also found that Surat, India, people formed a climate adaptation effort because of their region’s vulnerability to the Tapi River. Because of the Surat’s relationship with floods and water-borne diseases, they incorporated public health into their climate adaptation efforts (Anguelovski and Carmin, 2011).

Shi’s (2017) research demonstrated that storms like Hurricane Katrina, Sandy and Andrew were three of the costliest disasters in the US history, and states are increasingly exposed to sea level rise. When determining the scale of the RCC, Shi (2017) suggested that it can be helpful to pick a scale where localities are still dealing with the same climate issues. Coastal regions unite in the Bay Area, Boston, and Southeast Florida because they are facing sea level rise concerns.

[Lack of] State and Federal Guidance

Bennett and Grannis (2017) concluded that actions at the state level can be an impetus for an RCC. They studied the RCCs in California, the state that has long been considered a leader in climate change. Because California generally supports climate change efforts, RCCs formed as a reaction to have a unified voice in state policy. Bennett and Grannis (2017) also identify that the Southeast Florida RCC formed because of Governor Grist’s Energy and Climate Action Plan in 2008, which both Vella (2016) and Shi (2017) acknowledged that it was an important step leading to the formation. In Surat, India, the climate adaptation efforts have also been led by the National Action Plan on Climate Change, which spurred the efforts of many local and regional governments (Anguelovski and Carmin, 2011).

Conversely, Vella (2016) and Shi (2017) showed that the lack of guidance and support from the state and federal levels has left it to the local jurisdictions to perform the work. In a survey, 59% of local governments responded that they engage in at least some adaptation planning, and that most of the efforts have had to occur at the local and regional levels (Bierbaum et. al, 2013). In Florida, during the mid-2000s, the state stopped supporting sea level rise, which meant that local governments had to fill the gap, so the Southeast RCC formed (Vella, 2016). Similarly, Shi (2017) said that the county commissioners in Florida recognized their urgency and could not wait on the state’s acknowledgement.

For the other RCCs in Shi's (2017) study, she found the theme that state mandates only played a limited role in the formation of RCCs. She found that it was routinely the opposite, that the RCCs led to the initiation of state mandates. In Quito, Ecuador, there are not dedicated national or state funding schemes, and local cities had to lead their approach to climate adaptation. In Quito, Climate adaptation members are led by former Mayor Paco Moncayo and the efforts are extensions of current plans in the municipality (Anguelovski and Carmin, 2011), which is similar to efforts in the US.

Local Champions

Shi (2007) found that early champions emerged as motivated leaders in their region. Typically, they have a strong scientific background and might be staff or elected officials in public agencies. "They held strong personal and moral connection to environmental issues and progressive attitudes towards planning and climate change, and occupied professional roles that emphasize coordination, collaboration, and camaraderie" (Shi, 2017 pg. 73). In addition to motivated staff members, Adams (2016) observed that local champions are helpful in the initial stages of the collaborative and that it is beneficial to give elected officials some ownership of the RCC for political buy-in. In Durban, South Africa, local champions have risen also because of the lack of federal support. For example, the leader of the Environmental Planning and Climate Protection Department of the city has led the efforts to create a document called "The Climatic Future for Durban" (Anguelovski and Carmin, 2011). When there is the enthusiasm of a local champion, it creates momentum for climate adaptation.

Regional Collaborative Formation in other Sectors

In other studies, researchers considered the factors that lead up to collaboratives to address regional challenges, not limited to climate change. In his work, Bryson et. al (2006) described three categories that will cause organizations to collaborate: environmental factors, sector failure and direct antecedents. The first, environmental factors are when the environmental conditions are so complex that a single organization joins others to reduce resource dependencies. The second is sector failure, which is results when an individual sector tries to solve a problem but cannot without the assistance of other sectors. Thirdly, direct antecedents, or previous region condition, influence the "linking mechanisms" which affect collaboration formation. In other research, Mitchell, O'Leary, and Gerard (2015) found that the catalyst for collaboration could be attributed to five key themes in this order: "(1) people and their relationships, (2) the need to achieve results, (3) a sense of urgency, (4) directives from the top, and (5) organizational supports" (pg. 694). The top three outcome for collaboration were economic benefit, better public service, and relationship building. Additionally, the top three negative concerns were time consumption, conflict and stress (Mitchell, O'Leary, and Gerard, 2015).

Defining Adaptation and Mitigation

Literature generally depicts adaptation and mitigation as two separate types of efforts for climate change. Adaptation is more reactive, and those efforts are concentrated on how to prepare for the effects of climate issues. Mitigation is more preventative and focuses on greenhouse gas reduction or capturing carbon (Watkiss, 2015). Watkiss (2015) explores where mitigation and adaptation might counteract each other, but that they are mostly complimentary efforts. His research described that adaptation is the short-term solution, mitigation is long-term, but that there is a nexus of efforts that can exist within.

Figure I. Mitigation and Adaptation Definitions and Examples.

| | Definition | Examples |
|------------|--|---|
| Adaptation | Anything that addresses the immediate impacts of climate change. | Building sea walls, recycling water, investing in drought tolerant crops, using prescribed fires. |
| Mitigation | Anything that addresses the short and long-term causes of climate change. | Switching to clean energy, preserving forests and planting trees. |

Defining Connectivity, Alignment & Joint Production

There are three types of networks within collaboratives: connectivity, alignment, and joint production (Plastrik and Taylor, 2006). Collaboratives bring people together through various means, and Plastrik and Taylor (2004) originally created the typologies based on the outcomes of the collaborative. Adams (2019) further used these typologies to characterize the key task of the network (see Figure 2).

Figure II. Regional Climate Collaboratives as Networks (Adams, 2019).

| | Connectivity Network | Alignment Network | Production Network |
|-----------------------------|---|--|---|
| Definition | Connects people to allow easy flow of, and access to, information and transactions. | Aligns people to develop and spread an identity and collective value proposition. | Fosters joint action for specialized outcomes by aligned people. |
| Key Task of Network Builder | Weaving – help people meet each other, increase ease of sharing and searching for information | Facilitation – helping people to explore potential shared identity and value propositions. | Coordinating – helping people plan and implement collaborative actions. |

Chapter 3 - Methods

In order to understand the motivations and origins behind the collaborations, I used a case study approach with two distinct phases. Phase 1 consisted of a content analysis to characterize the cases and help determine the case study selection. Phase 2 involved interviews of key personnel within each of the selected case studies. This research is part of a collective effort to study regional efforts across the United States.

Research Questions

The goal of my professional project was to understand the role of the convener for regional climate collaboratives. In order to reach this goal, I designed my methods to answer the following questions:

**What motivated agencies to address climate issues?
What motivated agencies to take a collaborative approach?**

Phase 1 Content Analysis

I performed a content analysis of each case studies' websites, plan documents, newsletters, meeting minutes, third party news articles and any other relevant information, when available. To categorize the collaboratives, I developed criteria to differentiate between focuses of 1) adaptation or mitigation and 2) connectivity, alignment and joint production. Then, I grouped the collaboratives based on location, and identified how long the collaboratives have been established. The content analysis was qualitative, focusing on the key differences.

Adaptation vs. Mitigation

I reviewed the focus of the action items and goals, and I categorized them as adaptation, mitigation, or both. Operationally, I compared the quantity of adaptation and mitigation strategies that the collaborative identified, and then further analyzed the documents to see if any of those strategies had an added emphasis. When goals or actions were not clear in the website, I used the information based on their recent projects or showcased events.

Connectivity, Alignment, and Joint Production

I also reviewed the strategy for action items and goals and identified whether they were closer to connecting resources together, an alignment of efforts, or a joint effort to produce a product. Similar to Adams (2019) I created a scoring rubric of all different collaborative action items and goals and put them into three levels: Level 1-connectivity, Level 2-alignment, and Level 3-joint production. All of the actions are scored relative to one another. For the complete rubric with examples, see Appendix B.

Final Case Study Selection

Based on the content analysis, I sorted the original 27 collaboratives according to two factors: whether they focused on adaptation or mitigation; and whether they focused on connectivity, alignment or joint action. After that, I identified which cases were in similar geographies to put them into subgroups. As a final category, I picked two or three cases from each region and ensured that one of the case studies was more established and one had a more recent launch date. I selected eight (8) collaborations across the United States for final analysis.

Phase 2 – Interviews of Selected Case Studies

After selecting the case studies to investigate, I reached out to collaboration members for interviews. The interview covered summaries about the region’s history, recent events, the collaboration’s origin story, motivational changes, structural formalization, as well as retrospective lessons.

Interview Guide

I interviewed fourteen (14) people from eight (8) collaboratives. The interviewees were members of local government, NGOs, or staff members of the collaboratives. Each interview was semi-structured to incorporate new themes that emerged during the interview process. I structured the interviews around three sections: process, deliberation, and other aspects. For the full interview script, please see Appendix B.

The Process

- The goal of the process section was to understand the region’s history of collaboration as well as the important steps that led up to the formal launch.

The Deliberation

- The second section inquired about the different motivations for the members and whether or not the collaborative changed over time.

Other Aspects

- This section was also an opportunity to address any issues that I had not covered in the interview and to offer additional contacts

Consent and Ethics

I sent each interviewee participant an email with the consent protocol. Additionally, when I held the interview, I read a consent protocol that each participant agreed upon.

The University of Oregon Internal Review Board (IRB) for research with Human Subjects approved these scripts. The entire interview was recorded with the approval of the participant, as we assured that the participation was voluntary, and that their responses would remain anonymous.

Recording Practices

For each interview, I took handwritten notes, and typed them up in my personal computer, which was password protected. Additionally, I uploaded the transcripts to a protected service called Otter. All of the transcriptions were saved on my personal computer or through Otter’s secure network.

Limitations

The case study selection depended on the results of the content analysis. The collaboratives had varying degrees of information and resources available to the public. The language on documentation, I found,

did not always directly link with the actions that the collaborative prioritized, according to the interviews. The newer collaboratives, generally, had less information on their websites which made them difficult to screen.

Some of the collaboratives are more represented within the interviews than the others. For example, I was able to capture three interviews with Climate Action Kansas City, but only one out of the Los Angeles Regional Collaborative. Additionally, some of the collaboratives that I would have liked to interview with, like those in Washington, did not respond to or declined the interview request. Most of our interviews are located on the coastal communities, Florida and California, and it would have been helpful to interview more regions that are not directly impacted by sea level rise.

Content Analysis Findings

I placed the RCCs into a matrix (see Figure III) based on how they defined their actions and strategies, and later modified their placement (if necessary) based on information from the interview. When most of collaboratives actions, strategies, goals and/or projects were adaptation based, I placed them on the adaption side of the spectrum, and the same was true for the mitigation category. In order to place the collaborative on the range of connectivity, alignment or joint production, I reviewed the same actions and used a rubric (see Appendix A) to place them on that scale.

Figure III. Content Analysis Placement Matrix

| | Adaptation | | Both | | Mitigation |
|------------------|----------------------------|------------|-------------|--|------------------------------|
| Connectivity | Bay Area+ Puget Sound+* | | | | |
| | | Sacramento | San Diego | | |
| Alignment | Jacksonville | | | | Tallahassee+ |
| | | | | | |
| Joint Production | | SE Florida | Los Angeles | | Kansas City+ King County* |

+ The collaborative is emerging (under three years old).

*Members at this collaborative did not participate in the study at the time of this report.

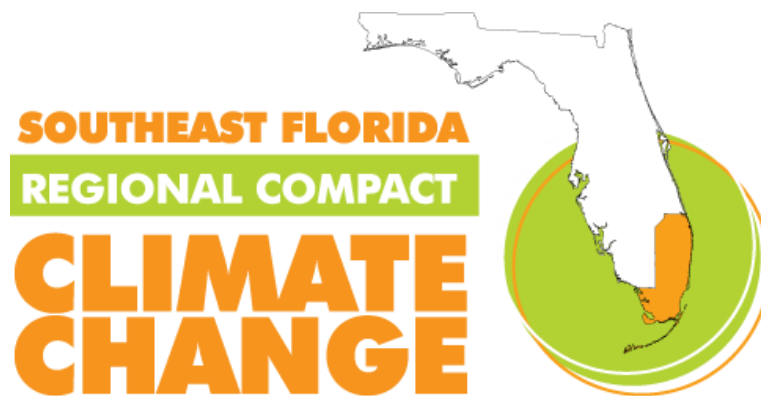
| |
|---------------|
| Florida |
| N. California |
| S. California |
| Washington |
| Other |

Chapter 4 - Case Study Summaries

The following sections describe each of the eight collaboratives and discuss their players, regional context, and origin story that led to the collaboration formation. Each case study varies in terms of size, focus, strategy, etc. and evolved on different timelines (see Figure IV). Three are in Florida, two in Southern California, two in Northern California and one in the mid-west. While there is not a geographical comparison, I elected to choose Climate Action KC in this study because it is not impacted by sea level rise.

Figure IV. Case Study Summary Matrix

| | Geographic Region | Population (MM) | Focus | Strategy | Year Founded | Trigger Climate Event | Trigger Political Event |
|---|---|-----------------|------------|--------------|--------------|---|---|
| SE Florida Regional Climate Change Compact | Broward, Miami-Dade, Monroe and Palm-Beach Counties | 6.1 | Adaptation | Joint Effort | 2010 | King tides and hurricanes in 2009 | Failure of counties to independently influence federal policy in 2009 |
| Public/Private Regional Resiliency | Seven counties in NE Florida around Jacksonville | 2.2 | Adaptation | Alignment | 2015 | Hurricanes Matthew and Irma | Lack of federal safety net related to flooding |
| Climate Area Sustainability Compact | City of Tallahassee and Leon County | 0.3 | Mitigation | Connectivity | 2019 | Energy and Public Health Concerns | Citizens meeting to create clean energy plan |
| Los Angeles Regional Collaborative | Los Angeles County | 10.0 | Both | Alignment | 2009 | Wildfires | CA passage of AB 32 |
| San Diego Regional Climate Collaborative | City of San Diego and San Diego County | 3.3 | Both | Connectivity | 2012 | Wildfires | CA passage of AB 32 |
| Bay Area Climate Adaptation Network | Nine counties surrounding the San Francisco Bay | 7.7 | Adaptation | Connectivity | 2018 | Fires in 2017 and 2018 | Desire to join Alliance of Regional Collaboratives for Climate Adaptation |
| Capital Region Climate Readiness Collaborative | Six counties (Sacramento, El Dorado, Placer, Yuba, Sutter and Yolo) | 2.5 | Adaptation | Connectivity | 2014 | Growing awareness of climate change impacts | Formation of RCCs in LA and San Diego |
| Climate Action Kansas City | Kansas City Metro (joint city/county model) | 2.1 | Mitigation | Alignment | 2019 | Ogallala Aquifer depletion, crop shortages | IPCC Report |



Southeast Florida Climate Compact (SEFCC)

SEFCC emerged in January 2010 when Broward, Miami-Dade, Monroe, and Palm Beach Counties “united to form the Southeast Florida Regional Climate Change Compact as a way to coordinate mitigation and adaptation activities across county lines” (Southeast Florida Climate Compact, n.d.). These efforts are guided by a Regional Climate Action Plan (RCAP), which is updated every five years. Some of the major projects undertaken by the Compact include united sea level projections, a policy platform with a coordinated advocacy guide, a regional greenhouse gas inventory, and climate indicators & implementation resources.

For all adaptation and mitigation efforts, interviewees noted that regional leaders believed that their voice would be more influential in State and Federal affairs if they were united as one region, rather than as four counties separately. They established the narrative to the state that the four-county region of SE Florida is more heavily impacted by sea level rise and climate change, advocating for state investment as the “canary in the coal mine,” which helped receive funding.

Players

The official members of the Compact include the four original counties: Broward, Miami-Dade, Monroe, and Palm Beach Counties. While the elected officials led the initial charge, they soon relegated the work to the Staff Steering Committee (Shi, 2017). Compact leaders have considered allowing municipalities to join the Compact, but leaders have been wary to expand it due to the time and expense of supporting the effort. The Compact has grown very rapidly, making it hard to manage. The annual summit, while a key event, is also a challenging undertaking requiring substantial staff time.

More recently there has been increased participation by the business community. In particular, property managers and developers were increasingly concerned by the risks from sea level rise. This led to business-led efforts about these risks, which resulted in Miami Herald feature on the “invading seas.” The result of the business sector involvement has been a stronger emphasis on the economic impacts and support for tax funding to implement actions that will reduce risk.

Regional Context

While the Southeast Florida Regional Planning Council was responsible for regional planning, there had been little attention paid to climate change. As a result, county actions for climate change were siloed and there was limited coordination. The counties tended to be more competitive than collaborative, with being more interested in who had done projects first.

In 2009, SE Florida was hit by king tides and hurricanes that highlighted the vulnerability of the region to elected officials. SE Florida was one of the most vulnerable areas in the world to sea level rise, due to its vulnerable aquifers, population density, flat topography (Shi, 2017), and the counties all rely on the attraction of their ocean-front tourism for revenue. As climate related conversations became more mainstream, staff from four counties had sporadic climate change conversations on the topics of greenhouse gas emissions. Because of this interest, three of the four counties: Broward, Miami-Dade, and Monroe sent a delegation of staff and elected officials to Washington DC to advocate for the American Clean Energy and Security Bill.

The Origin Story

During lobbying discussions in DC, the delegation found that they were working with maps with different sea level projections. This led to a conversation about the need to develop better and consistent data across the region. When the delegation returned to Florida, they had the idea to convene a regional meeting. Kristin Jacobs, the mayor of Broward County, an energetic and influential leader, led the efforts to hold a Regional Summit to launch the Compact.

County elected officials and staff worked with Steve Adams from the Institute of Sustainable Communities, to develop the charter language for the Regional Summit. The Kresge Foundation supported the launch with a grant of \$975,000 to ISC so that they could work as the Compact's Secretariat (Shi, 2017). The Compact, while not a legal authority, would align local climate change efforts and act as a voice to promote policy within their local governments as well as at a state and sometimes a federal level. By the end result of the Summit, the members identified independent actions where that each jurisdiction was underdelivering that would benefit from working collaboratively.



Public/Private Regional Resiliency (P2R2) – Jacksonville

P2R2 officially launched when the collaborative released an Op-ed for the Florida Times Union on May 3, 2015. The focus of the collaboration was to build economic resiliency against sea level rise by engaging business members in the community with the emphasis that resiliency was “good for business.” The collaborative works on actions like educating communities, drafting comprehensive plan policies, creating evacuation plans, sharing flood dot maps, etc. (NEFRC, 2020). P2R2 serves as an information hub for members and as an environment for people to build connections.

P2R2 has worked on a variety of sea level rise projects. The projects and actions that P2R2 performed were based on what they could do in Florida, what they could pay for, and what was legal. For example, members vote on with mechanisms like community development districts, tax increment financing or special districts. People were more willing to cooperate with P2R2 because they were generally all businesses trying to make themselves more economically resilient.

Players

A core part of P2R2 was its representation from the business community. The original action item said “P2R2 should consist of representatives of the following sectors/organizations: Homebuilding, Risk Management, Natural Resources, Mortgage Banking, Law, Engineering, Urban Land Institute North Florida, JaxUSA Partnership, Realtor, Economist, NEFRC, RCI, County Government, Municipal Government, and Planning” (RCI & NEFRC, 2013).

Regional Context

NE Florida is an unlikely place for regional collaboration, because there is no history and weak interdependencies. It is culturally and politically conservative and people are skeptical of climate change (Shi, 2017). However, the region had been hit by hurricanes like Matthew and Irma, which got people together and changed the perception of resiliency.

Northeast Florida Regional Council (NEFRC) housed a group called the Leadership Academy. When people graduate from the Leadership Academy, they can become a member of the think tank, the Regional Community Institute (RCI). In 2011, RCI created a vision for NE Florida, called the First Coast Vision, with the assistance of over 1,000 public participants. At the end of the vision, there was a list of action items for the committee. People pushed to do projects to combat sea level rise, so RCI formed a committee to work on doable actions that pertained sea level rise.

The Origin Story

In 2013, RCI and NEFRC published a regional action plan, and one of those doable actions was to create a public-private regional resiliency committee, or P2R2 (RCI & NEFRC, 2013). P2R2 released the Op-ed and then held a “Regions Resiliency Night” at the Museum of Contemporary Art on July 16, 2015. The public event had presentations about sea level rise and people got to pick and choose what projects they wanted to work on with the business community members.

In the first meeting, there were conversations that the National Flood Insurance Program was not sustainable, so that they needed to be protected through other measures, which was a key assumption on how the group operated. There was not a federal safety net. Additionally, there was a “we are not South Florida” theme, which was a reaction to the SE Florida Compact. For that reason, the local government was less involved in the early stages and it was kept to the business community. Recently, local governments have shown more interest and there is speculation that business and government might be ready to collaborate.

Capital Area Sustainability Compact (CASC) – Tallahassee

The Compact was created in January 2019 to be a partnership between eight organizations in Leon County. In comparison to the other collaboratives in Florida, Tallahassee does not have issues with sea level. Instead CASC have emphasized mitigation issues by having three working groups that work on energy reduction, transportation and waste management. Those groups meet together every six weeks to share the goals as well as lessons that they have learned along the way about their process. Their members tie sustainability concerns with public health as well as local economics. The Compact represents itself as a platform where its eight members can share problems and solutions.

Players

Sustainable Tallahassee (ST) is the administer of the Compact, and their duties are funded solely through Leon County. ST was chosen because they have the staff time, resources and sustainability know-how to help run a climate change effort. Within the members, there are Leon County, the City of Tallahassee, hospitals, and the local universities.

Regional Context

In 2017, there was an active citizen group in Tallahassee that took an interest in mitigation issues. The citizen group approached the city and the Leon County to create a clean energy plan. Leon County responded to the citizen group and led the charge to form a collaborative with government, staff, hospitals, universities and utility companies.

While a focus on energy was the main goal, the county received initial support from both the utilities, the City of Tallahassee Utilities and Talquin Electric Co-op Inc. The coordinator at Leon County organized to have the largest companies, universities, hospitals, etc. to be a part of the efforts because they had the largest building and used up the most energy and ended up with nine members. Prior to Leon County reaching out, conversations about sustainability between these members were not happening. Introducing people to the conversation of sustainability was an important step to the formation. Relatively quickly, Talquin decided to move away from the group, which impacted the early goals of the collaborative. It was not feasible to approach energy as the main focus if one of the key utility providers was not on board with the mission. The collaborative revised their mission to address transportation and waste as well as energy.

The Origin Story

The Compact agreement was created in January 2019 between eight organizations in Leon County. Originally, members were concerned that the Compact would be a governing body that would tell organizations what do to, which would result in additional requirements. Jim Davis, one of the co-founders, was a key leader to building trust by being an approachable person. He described the efforts of the Compact to be big picture problems instead of simply saying to be 100% renewable. For example, Davis encouraged participation by highlighting goals around public health rather than sustainability. The Compact was designed around the idea that all of these organizations had similar problems, similar goals, and it would be beneficial to share some of those lessons, expertise and experience.

The original citizen group wanted to stay involved, but the Compact did not make political decisions nor were elected officials in the conversations, so there was not a requirement to include members of the public. However, Sustainable Tallahassee (ST) kept the citizen group involved by providing updates, which ultimately satisfied them and kept the RCC on track.



The Los Angeles Regional Collaborative (LARC)

LARC adopted its first official charter in May of 2009. Within LA county, there was not a lot of opposition to climate action. The public had experienced the threats to the region and the attitude formed into “we better figure this out.” The collaborative, with help from UCLA and USC, successfully created five major projects, 1) a landscape analysis, 2) a sea level rise study, 3) a heat impacts study, 4) a GHG inventory, and 5) the Framework. The Framework is a specialized tool for practitioners to make climate related decisions based on the available resources and state policies. Because of LA County’s extreme geography, LARC’s first order of business was to produce data that was granular enough to be pragmatic and the collaborative took advantage of have academic institutions as key partners.

Players

LARC is a mix of governments, academia, non-profits, advocates, utilities, business, and regional agencies. Notably, the Transportation Agency Metro and Southern California Association of Governments were essential to provide funding and facilities. To further support the beginning efforts, leaders received funding from the American Resiliency and Recovery Act. In response to the major powers in LA County, UCLA was chosen as a neutral administrator and facilitator.

Regional Context

Los Angeles is an extremely difficult place for collaboration because of its geographic diversity, variety of climate impacts and demographic segregation make, especially because of weak regional governance (Shi, 2017). The region was experiencing more instances of extreme heat, snowmelt, sea level rise, as well as wildfire risk. The wide range of climate also presented challenges when trying to collaborate with a unified front (Bennett & Grannis, 2017).

Outside of Los Angeles County, California had turned to become a statewide leader of promoting climate change. The state had successfully passed climate change related senate bills, for example AB 32, which required the reduction of GHG by 15% before 2020, otherwise known as the California Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006. More bills passed and the Cap and Trade program resulted in a new stream of climate change funding for California, which motivated groups to collaborate. The smaller jurisdictions in LA County realized that they would not be able to comply with the senate bills alone, and this created the demand to collaborate. When funding became available to the local governments and their climate initiatives, they realized they needed help to understand and capitalize on their funding opportunities.

The Origin Story

In 2007, two years before the formation, the Silicon Valley Collaborative Renewable Energy Procurement Project was created in Santa Clara County with the involvement of 50 cities and town plus other agencies. The collaborative purchased, in bulk, photovoltaic solar panels. Noel Perry, a member of a think tank group called Next 10, believed that a similar type of collaborative work could be done in Los Angeles. Next 10 provided funding for Perry to facilitate a meeting in Los Angeles and bring together key players. The meeting had representatives from the LA Green Coalition, members of the State, the County the City of Los Angeles, UCLA, the LA department of Water and Power, and eventually a few other cities and key institutions joined.

Ultimately, the new members had come to an agreement that improved coordination and constancy would benefit climate change efforts given the varying actors and authority levels (Bennett & Grannis, 2017). It provided a unique situation that allowed for LARC to take form. Because of all of these powers entering the same room, Stephanie Pizzella at UCLA stepped up and agreed to convene the RCC with UCLA. UCLA has effectively worked as the facilitator and the translator of the science (Bennett & Grannis, 2017). To get the collaborative off the ground, LARC received early funding grants for research and data analysis.



San Diego Regional Climate Collaborative (SDRCC)

In 2012, The San Diego Foundation (TDSF) and San Diego Gas & Electric (SDG&E) co-founded the San Diego Regional Climate Collaborative (Bennis & Grannis, 2017). On their website, the SDRCC says that their main purpose is to advance efforts to reduce GHG emissions and prepare for climate change impacts. Additionally, they connect different organizations together to provide networking, training as well as communicate with other state and federal leaders (SDRCC, n.d.).

The three main programs focus on mitigation and adaptation as well. One is called the San Diego Regional Partnership, which is an effort to improve the efficiency of buildings and business operations, which is a mitigation effort. Additionally, the other programs are called Climate-Smart Water and Coastal Resilience, which are adaptation efforts to improve stormwater and coastal resilience (SDRCC, n.d.).

Players

The co-founders of the collaborative are TDSF and SDG&E, and the University of San Diego administers SDRCC. However, most of the current membership consists of the county and city governments within San Diego County. Initially, TDSF reached out to all the City Managers in the County and asked to be introduced to a staff level person who had the decision-making power as well as the scientific background. The “right person” might have been a public works staff or sustainability position, and it varied by municipality. City managers were not the right decision makers, but they provided an introduction to the correct person.

As the collaboration has been echoed as a government that is run by city governments for city governments, it has been critical to keep public support. Non-profits, with connections to TDSF, can consist of advocacy groups that are trying to create a social justice initiative, like helping a highly polluted neighborhood. It was critical that TDSF align advocacy efforts with the cities’ climate efforts so that projects are not jettisoned.

Regional Context

TDSF had been making efforts to help conservation and improve social justice efforts around the community. However, in 2003 and 2007, the San Diego region was hit with two of the largest wildfires in California’s history. Unfortunately, TDSF realized that recovery to the wildfires were so expensive, that it undermined their efforts. For example, TDSF successfully conserved miles of natural land, that was only destroyed by the fire. Additionally, the grants dedicated to climate recovery simply overwhelmed the

grants for equity and social justice. In order for TSDF to be successful, they had to lessen the damages caused by the wildfires through adaptation and mitigation.

In 2006, California passed AB 32, which was the most ambitious effort in the country to reduce climate impacts. TSDF realized that the state would take on climate change efforts, however the local districts are on the front line. Before, climate change in San Diego was perceived as global issues, but the wildfires changed people's opinions as it was obvious that the impacts were felt locally. After all, emissions are emitted locally. This was the basis for the Climate Initiative led by TSDF. Initially, the board of directors at the foundation was skeptical to make a Climate Initiative, but leaders at the foundations showed that grant funders were looking to foundations to start these types of efforts.

The Origin Story

As TSDF looked for other examples around the country, they realized that climate change efforts were not typically administered by foundations. They needed the involvement of groups outside of non-profit institutions, specifically local governments and the utility company. In 2012, TSDF and San Diego Gas & Electric co-founded the San Diego Regional Climate Collaborative.

Emily Young, from TSDF and Linda Pratt, a staff member from the City of San Diego, traveled to Seattle to see Ron Sims talk about climate change. He talked about how King County engaged local municipalities to act together. King County was a leader in this regard. TSDF brought Sims down to San Diego and he gave a talk at the Natural History Museum with over 500 people in attendance; clearly there was an appetite for climate action.

Part of the draw to connect these cities together was the lack of usable data. They had received state-level data that was not granular enough for the local municipalities to use it effectively. The Scripps Institution of Oceanography at USD (Scripps) was pivotal in providing localized data for the municipalities and this allowed legislative officials to move forward with projects. Scripps provided two keys sets of data, one which measured the impacts of climate change and the other which showed the regional greenhouse gas inventory. It galvanized the efforts of the cities and local officials felt proud to be part of the innovative region of San Diego.



Bay Area Climate Adaptation Network (BayCAN)

BayCAN formally kicked off in July of 2018, because people in the Bay Area wanted to create a forum to share lessons on adaptation projects. According to their website, “BayCAN focuses on adaptation challenges in water supply, sea level rise, wastewater and stormwater management, wildfires, ecosystems, and public health. We collaborate with current initiatives in these sectors to maximize impact and build on existing knowledge (Bay Area Climate Adaptation Network, n.d).”

BayCAN connects their members to find solutions for their adaptation goals. BayCAN acts as the generalist that can connect you to the expert. For example, if Marin County needs help on a type of project, BayCAN can introduce them to the right person. In order to further facilitate this process, BayCAN leaders are producing a report of projects that the 42 members are showcasing. This report will give staff members ideas about what different projects they can work on.

Players

The collaborative is mostly a coalition of local government, that was for the local governments. It included the usual suspects of San Francisco, Oakland or Berkeley, and they also had success bring on board some of the smaller localities like Cupertino or San Rafael. When one city joined the collaborative, it encouraged other cities to join because of the competitive nature. They all wanted to know what each other was doing. BayCAN also had the membership of eight counties. In addition to the cities, the Nature Conservancy joined, the San Francisco Estuary Institute, and special districts like the utilities. Also, BayCAN had support of regional agencies and state agencies. Because BayCAN realized the value of the regional and state groups, they do not charge them for membership.

Regional Context

Before the formation of BayCAN, there was a predecessor group that was called Bay Area Climate and Energy Research (BayCERP). The group started in 2012 and it was a joint policy committee with nine counties with efforts to improve the region’s resiliency efforts. However, while the group was successful in helping the region as a whole, the benefits were not directly felt by its members. Eventually members left BayCERP because their investment was not worth it. Even though the collaborative failed, it unintentionally built the network that was required for the eventual launch of BayCAN.

After the fall of BayCERP, the Alliance of Regional Collaboratives for Climate Adaptation (ARCCA) formed, which was a space for California’s collaboratives to learn from each other. Climate change collaboratives existed in different areas of California and people in the Bay Area wanted a collaborative of

their own to be a part of ARCCA. ARCCA was a helpful tool for sharing information about policy changes and best practices between the collaboratives.

The Origin Story

People in the Bay Area realized there was not a forum for practitioners to share experiences and learn from each other, which created demand for an RCC. Furthermore, the Bay Area experienced wildfires and smoke events in 2017 and 2018, which brought people on the same page. There was no longer a need to spell out adaptation; people knew what you were talking about. As a reaction to ARCCA and the wildfires, BayCAN launched and is now one of the seven ARCCA RCCs.

Prior to the formal launch of BayCAN, leaders had meetings about what the collaborative would be for its members. Some of the members from the original BayCERP were excluded from joining the new rendition of the collaborative for political reasons. One of the issues that brought people together were money. While the collaborative has not exactly been successful at connecting cities to funding, it was still an important motivation for joining. The jurisdictions were frustrated with the grants that were available, because it was difficult to keep up with the available options and make the time to apply. The San Francisco Bay Conservation & Development group advanced the cities sea level rise data, which was a helpful way to receive attention for the collaborative as well as create some funding opportunities.



CAPITAL REGION CLIMATE READINESS COLLABORATIVE

Capital Region Climate Readiness Collaborative (CRC) - Sacramento

“In August 2014, the CRC formally adopted an organizational document that details objectives for the CRC, membership terms, decision-making, and financial and administrative provisions” (Bennett & Grannis, 2017). The collaborative focuses on items like water shortages, heat island effects, air pollution, invasive species, and sea level rise in the delta. Adaptation became the conversation piece to convince members to join the collaborative and be a part of the effort. The six-county region is a diverse region with democrats, republicans, rural and urban, which creates all of the elements that make it difficult to collaborate. However, California was already heavily affected by climate change, and adaptation efforts were viewed as crucial to prevent future wildfires and other types of events in order to protect the cities.

Players

CRC is made up of public, private, and non-profit entities, business and regional agencies that makes up the six-county region including Sacramento, El Dorado, Placer, Yuba, Sutter, and Yolo Counties. Early on, they made the decision to use staff-level positions as the collaborative group. This was a mindset that the RCC formed early on, with the assumption that elected officials would not be able to dedicate enough time. It made more sense for CRC to work with senior level staff members who had buy in from their respective elective officials. Larry Greene led the early stages of the collaborative while simultaneously acting as the director of the regional air district.

Regional Context

The region’s collaboration has grown out of several pathways. The air districts had an informal collaborative between the Sacramento Air Districts, Yolo County, El Dorado County, Placer County, along with the Sacramento Area Council of Governments which made up a six-county region to discuss related projects. Simultaneously, the regional transit agencies already knew each other and worked well together. Between these two industries, they all shared board members between each other and knew each other quite well.

Additionally, there was an annual trip DC that was organized through the Sacramento metropolitan Chamber of Commerce. It was a joint lobbying opportunity for members, and it lasted between five to six days. At times the trip consists of 400 people but usually has 250 to 325 people, which created this collegial type of collaboration. All of these people had to spend time together, attend meetings, talk to elected officials, and it sets the stage for relationships to build and create networks where people can easily just pick up the phone and talk to each other.

Before the initial launch, there was staff level working group that had been in place since 2009 when Sacramento County started to do a greenhouse gas inventory. Eventually that effort ended but there was a continued organization between the staff people. They created the Sacramento Area Climate Partnership. This existing group of people with a solid foundation helped create the regional collaborative.

The Origin Story

Leading up to CRC, there was pushback for climate change initiatives in Northern California. Industry and the conservative movement disparaged climate related messages. On the opposite side, the scientific community and politicians began to push back around 2013 to establish rules like the EPA's Clean Air Act. The whole back and forth created a very political conversation around climate change, which is still true in the Sacramento region today. In order to bind some of the groups together, it was crucial to frame the messages around climate adaptation in order to successfully collaborate.

In the fall of 2012, a group of regional leaders in California came together and discussed the importance of having a collaborative in the capital region, similar to what was in Los Angeles and San Diego. The original formation of the group, which was first called Resilient Sacramento, was facilitated by the connections with the air district and transportation networks. When Larry Greene approached his board with a climate action plan, he knew how to frame it in a way that was unanimous. Because of the established connections, leaders of the CRC knew how to frame issues in order to fund and support the collaborative, and that individual their boards would approve. Eventually, in 2014 the collaborative decided to change its name to the Capital Region Climate Readiness Collaborative (Bennett & Grannis, 2017).



Climate Action Kansas City (CAKC)

CAKC launched at its first summit on September 14, 2019 (Mid-American Regional Council, n.d.) at the Johnson Community College. While they are relatively new as a collaborative, they have begun their early projects with a mitigation focus by linking the effects of climate change to financial and public health benefit. The end goal of the RCC is to create a Regional Climate Action plan, which includes a GHG inventory and a vulnerability assessment. To gain early momentum, the CAKC provided its contingents with actions that you can perform under current legislation. However, the collaborative has broader goals to impact policy at a state level.

Players

Climate Action KC represents over 100 local and state elected officials (Mid-American Regional Council, n.d.) which spans between Missouri and Kansas City. They also have representatives from universities, corporate, and non-profit entities. The leaders have tried to achieve representation and participation from all of the communities, extending to those that are the most vulnerable. They have had early success in including the vulnerable communities by finding the member in their communities that is interested in climate change. Mike Kelly and Lindsey Constance have emerged as the leaders in early stages of the work and also act as administrators. They also have state level support from Laura Kelly, the governor of Kansas.

Regional Context

In contrast to the other case studies, the KC region is not a coastal state, and is therefore not impacted by sea level rise. They had flooding in 2019, but they did not have the extreme local storms that some of the regions in this study have experiences. However, there was a report released by the Kansas State University that said that the Kansas bluestem, a signature wheat, was growing at 65% its normal size, and that these projections will continue from climate change. Additionally, the Ogallala Aquifer has been drying up and that has raised awareness as well.

Kelly, one of the co-founders, started talking with Sly James, a former mayor of KC and they had conversations about their passion projects, including climate change. Around the same time, Constance received the IPCC (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change) report, which created urgency because it shared the impacts of a 1.5 degree increase in temperatures. When Kelly and Constance were introduced, they talked about climate change work that they can do together, and they landed on the regional approach after reviewing the Southeast Florida Compact.

The Origin Story

There was a group of ten to twelve people, led by Kelly and Constance, that worked within their own networks to unite interest around climate change. Each person made cold calls, took meetings in order to expand their reach which led up to a kickoff presentation. As more and more people agreed to attend the kickoff, they had to change venues three times and ended up at a Church in December 2018. About 135 people showed up and about half of those were elected officials. In January, the next month, some of the elected officials met at Constance's house and decided to start the RCC.

Meanwhile the Global Covenant of Mayors had released a pilot program, and KC applied to be included. They were accepted that February with Denver, Chicago, and DC. Since then, leaders at Climate Action KC met with the leaders from Denver, Chicago, and DC on a weekly basis in order to discuss what actions they had done well as well as the potholes that they uncovered. For example, best practices on acquiring data and engaging vulnerable population. Under the timeline of the Global Covenant, Climate Action KC formalized in September with organizational structure.

On September 14, 2019 when they launched their Climate Summit, held at Community college, and had over 700 people in attendance. They tried to include everyone in the "tent" before narrowing it down. Kelly and Constance believed that they should let the collaborative grow as much as it could. The collaborative is still formalizing, and leaders are having discussions around requiring membership fees, hiring staff, but that is still to be determined.

Practices from the Current RCCS

I identified seven different structural components between each of the case studies. While some of the components are more consistent between the RCCs, some show more variation. Figure V shows that there is not a “set path” for the formations but that collaboratives may evolve and form in response to their region’s issues and motivated participants.

Figure V. Case Study Current Practice Matrix

| | Membership | Network Creation | Common Problem | Administer | Funding | Peer to Peer Learning Ex. |
|--|--|---|--|---|---|------------------------------|
| SE Florida Regional Climate Change Compact | Four counties | Began with elected officials but led by staff | Sea level rise projections | Broward County | Began with a grant, shifting towards dues | Regional events with ISC |
| Public/Private Regional Resiliency | Business members | Started with public outreach event | Economics of sea level rise | NE Florida Regional Council | Volunteer based | N/A |
| Climate Area Sustainability Compact | Govt, utilities, hospitals, university | Leon County reached out to groups. | Public health and economics | Sustainable Tallahassee | Funded solely by Leon Count, might shift towards dues | Cambridge Compact |
| Los Angeles Regional Collaborative | Mix - Govt, utilities, universities, businesses etc. | Initial meeting with Next 10 | Granular data | UCLA | Grant funding and regional agencies | Silicon Valley Collaborative |
| San Diego Regional Climate Collaborative | Mix - Govt, utilities, universities, non-profits, etc. | Contacting City managers | Granular data and wildfires | USD | Funded with TDSF, SDG&E and membership dues | King County |
| Bay Area Climate Adaptation Network | Primarily city govts., some non-profits | Reform of BayCERP | Wildfires | Self-administered | Membership Fees | N/A |
| Capital Region Climate Readiness Collaborative | Mix – city govts, regional agencies, non-profits | Air District Connections | Wildfires, air pollution, drought, flood | Self-administered | Grants and membership fees | N/A |
| Climate Action Kansas City | Primarily governments, regional agencies, non-profits | Cold calling | Economics, public health | Kelly, Constance, Mid-American Regional Council | Volunteers | SE Florida Compact |

Chapter 5 - Lessons and Best Practices for Future RCCs

The following sections outline the cross-collaborative themes and how to incorporate those themes into the development of a new collaborative. The goal of this section is to provide guidance to a region who is interested into launching a collaborative effort. The best practices reviewed in this section are based on an assessment of eight unique collaboratives with each having different regional histories, financial situations, political limitations, to name a few. The results from this case study-informed research do not intend to undermine the complexities that exist within each regional system, but instead to prove to other regions that there are options to decide between. As such, a new regional collaborative should consider these “best practices” as a starting point to think about what options to consider as it determines its form and structure (See Figure VI). Where possible, each “best practice” has been linked to the specific features in the collaborative that resulted in the best practice to emerge.

Figure VI: Summary of Best Practices for RCCs

| Concern | Best Practice |
|--|--|
| What types of organizations should be members of the collaborative? | Utilize existing regional networks and invite as many interested parties as possible, then put up barriers and formalize the group. |
| How do you create the network necessary for the collaborative? | Build on the current regional networks that exist rather than recreating the wheel and identify a staff lead from the members. |
| How do you frame the issue, so everyone has common problem ? | Decide on whether you focus on adaptation or mitigation based on member interest. Ensuring that members have the same data is a common starting point. |
| Who do you pick do administer and house the collaborative? | Pick a neutral third party to administer the collaborative, especially when the members are influential and powerful. |
| How do you fund staff, events, etc. for the collaborative? | A variety of funding streams is the most helpful. Once you can clearly add value to your members, a membership fee can help secure funding. |
| Can I learn from other regional efforts ? | Absolutely. While all efforts are inherently unique, interviewees shared that they successfully learned lessons and were galvanized by other efforts. |

What types of organizations should be members of the collaborative?

Identifying Potential Members

When there is demand for a regional effort, the first step is deciding who you want to introduce the collaborative. Some collaboratives kept it as government only, one was only business members, but most collaboratives were a blend of public, private, non-profit, and academic institutions. From the interviews, it appeared to be more important to figure out the network first, and then decide on what types of projects to work on. As collaborations begin, it helps to have

an informal type of structure to create an environment that is a “coalition of the willing.” Several collaboratives quickly made the decisions that it would not take the form of a regional governance, because that was a lightning rod issue in many of the regions. Making that point clear was important for attracting members. The local governments are the most important members for many collaboratives. They provide the backbone because they are responsible for many related activities such as land use planning, transportation and infrastructure. Local governments also have access to state funding. Adding other types of members can provide benefits, but the larger the collaborative becomes, the more difficult it can be to find a common direction. While this is a simplified list, I identified five types of members within the collaborations in this study.

Figure VII: Summary of different RCC member types.

| Type of Member | Reason to include: |
|------------------|--|
| Government | Local governments are crucial in order to affect policy changes. |
| Private Entities | Businesses have resources to the media to gain public interest. |
| Utilities | It is important to include utilities for collaboratives interested in GHG. |
| Academia | Institutions are a resource to provide data to collaboratives. |
| Non-profit | Non-profits groups can help secure funding and improve equity efforts. |

Government

Seven out of the eight collaboratives include their local governments as the key player. Governments are important in a climate collaborative because they can affect policy changes within their region and potentially at a state level. Additionally, it has fallen into the hands of local government to fight climate related issues, and generally there is at least one person in a municipality who acts as the sustainability point person. It can be challenging to include governments due to political “lightning rod” issues, which can be alleviated by communicating how climate issues are bipartisan.

Private Entities

Generally, the regional collaboratives were not as successful at engaging the business community. It might be important to involve private entities, like hospitals, because they own the largest buildings, which consume the most energy. In SE Florida, the business community brought along the attention of the media, the Miami Herald. However, one interviewee revealed that it was difficult to show the connection between climate change efforts and the private sector. Collaboratives were more successful in engaging private entities when they connected climate change efforts with some of the efforts that the private entities currently practice. P2R2 was the sole example of explicitly engaging private entities.

Utilities

Many of the collaboratives engaged their utilities, private and public, to be a part of their regional effort. If a main goal of the collaborative is to focus on energy or water conservation, it makes sense to have the utilities involved. In San Diego, utility involvement was deemed so important that the utility company was a co-founder of the collaborative. In Tallahassee, one of their utility companies opted out of participation, which resulted in refocusing their priorities from energy to waste reduction and transportation. Interviewees said that utilities are important players in climate related conversations.

Academic Institutions

The collaboratives varied in how much they relied on their local academic institutions. Academic institutions can provide technical know-how and sustainability research to a climate collaborative. However, it is important to understand the institutions specialties, limitations and self-interest. Within this research, it revealed that institutions were positive contributors when the “ask” of the institutions aligned with their strengths. For example, some universities are better at engaging new members, whereas other are better at providing data. In Kansas City, their local community college helped by providing facilities to hold events. Universities are in every major metropolitan area in the US and RCCs can use them to connect with motivated people who want to work on climate issues.

Non-profits

Non-profits and advocacy groups that fight for equity and climate change are present in every region. The experience of the eight collaboratives was mixed with relation to how successful they were in working with non-profits. In the successful occasions, like BayCAN, they have welcomed the work of the equity groups and aligned them with their goals. Whereas at other collaboratives, the advocacy groups have to fought against the government powers to change the system. In order to successfully engage non-profits, the interviewees said that it is important that the efforts are aligned. They can be helpful resources to tap into networks and reach different funding streams.

How do you create the network necessary for the collaborative?

Creating a Network

It provided to be valuable to take advantage of the current connections and networks that already exist within the region, rather than recreating the wheel. Some of the regions already had a history of collaboration in place before the introduction of a climate collaborative. For example, in Sacramento, Larry Greene worked for the air district and there was a regional network of air district professionals. In San Diego, many of the municipalities were

already aware of people’s efforts in the region and formalizing the collaborative for these scenarios was somewhat straight-forward when the collaborative formed. When regions have these pre-existing networks, it is a significant advantage when beginning to collaborate. There is a sense of trust and familiarity that takes time to establish. In the Bay Area, the new collaborative was a new formation of a previous attempt, with some adjustment of who should be allowed in the new collaborative. In Kansas City, interviewees said that they retrospectively wished they could have engaged with Mid America Regional Council’s network, rather than cold calling and starting from scratch.

Identify Staff Lead

It is important for the network to clearly identify lead staff for each of the participating organizations. In Sacramento, they made that decision early on to try to identify the staff lead who would have the decision-making power and also the science expertise. It is not always easy to identify these individuals. In SE Florida, there was one person who had contacts within multiple jurisdictions. While the elected officials had already given their support, it was important to connect the sustainability lead staff members. Because of the informal network, it allowed the elected officials from the four counties to implement their collaboration idea. In San Diego, they started by reaching out to all of the City Managers, and then the City manager pointed them to the correct person. This may have been the City Manager themselves, or a sustainability director, public works official, etc.

Show value

A key part of a successful network is demonstrated value to its members. By aggressively helping different organizations, members will see the individual and regional values of joining a collaborative, and that can encourage the elected official to support the staff members time dedication. Additionally, it has helped to earn quick wins with low hanging fruit. For example, in Kansas City, they first worked on eliminating food waste because it was a bipartisan issue that everyone agreed on. In P2R2, they focused only on actions that they could accomplish. P2R2 was actually the only collaborative without a government focus, but now that they have had 10 years of growth, the local government has taken an interest. Within the first meeting at BayCAN, the leaders asked what types of projects that people wanted to work on.

Networking Over Food

While it seems trivial, sharing and providing food and social time during collaborative events was critical to building trust and familiarity between collaboration members. Research revealed the importance of building trust and familiarity between collaboration members, which often occurred over food and informal networking time. In many metropolitan areas, participants must travel to monthly or semi-annual meetings, so conveners organized meals and social time to build rapport among participants. An interview with BayCAN said that food was a great way to get people to stay at meetings longer. In P2R2, participants came to the meeting and enjoyed Margo's frittatas. Each month, Margo put something different in the Frittata, and it has helped build comradery. P2R2's membership consisted of a diverse group of businesses, and the frittata helped them have something in common. Additionally, at the launch event at P2R2, they had food and wine which helped make it an engaging event. Food and time for social interaction are important investments for a collaborative, especially because most of these staff members do not spend a lot of time with each other. For a successful collaborative, its members need to know who to call when they can an issue.

How do you frame the issue, so everyone has common problem?

The Common Problem

Successful collaboratives have a grounded understanding and agreement among member groups of their common problem, despite the diversity of stakeholders.

Collaboratives use a variety of strategies to define the common problem. For example, one strategy used in P2R2 was to begin meetings by asking all the members about their current projects. While this took time, it allowed participants

to share ideas, connect on similar projects and highlight where goals were interconnected. Interviewees said that it was important to demonstrate to their members that their projects had connections to adaptation and mitigation, even if that was not their original intention. It shows members that they are already working towards the same goals and that they are not starting on square one.

In Kansas City and Tallahassee, their regional efforts focused on mitigation goals with members that do not typically prioritize climate change. In order to attract participation and members from these parties, leaders at the collaborative identified the actions that they were taking already that are aligned with the goals of the collaborative. In Kansas City, many of the business were making strides toward solar panel usage in order to save money. In Tallahassee, the hospitals were already taking proactive steps to safely dispose of hazardous waste. In both collaborations, the leaders were successful at show how climate change can intersect with financial and public health decisions, in order to create the common problem.

The adaptation style collaboratives tended to rally around natural events. Within SE Florida and NE Florida, hurricanes Matthew and Irma played a role in increasing public concern. Businesses, developers, and people lived along the coast in Florida, and every year the floods were worse. In SE Florida, they have an aquifer that is extremely vulnerable to sea level rise. Basically, the concern for climate change was so urgent that the counties were forced to collaborate. On the other side of the country California, they had experienced sea level rise, heat waves, wildfires, smoke and have dealt with spans of drought. The wildfires in 2017 and 2018 was helpful to get political buy-in to a collaborative in the Bay Area. These natural events, while devastating, have shown “climate deniers” that climate adaptation is an important and real issue.

How the common problem is described is also important. It is tempting to use apocalypse and global terms to describe the common problem. Collaborative leaders frame can issues in a way that is more approachable. In SE Florida, politicians were advised to not use the phrase “climate change” because it was too controversial (Vella, 2016). In Sacramento, the collaborative leaders spoke only about the issues that the members could see in front of them, like air pollution. In San Diego, the wildfires showed the members that the global climate change is actually a local issue, which spurred adaptation and mitigation efforts. In Kansas City, they stopped using the word sustainability and focused on using resilience as a way to encourage more members to join. All in all, the strategies vary by region, but this research uncovered the importance of a united front.

Working with the same data

Collaboratives also had higher success when the members each utilized the same data underlying the common problem. In SE Florida, the main topic of early conversations was how their sea level rise data varied between the four counties. Developing consistent data and projections across participating organizations can be a valuable starting point for new collaboratives. For LARC, San Diego, and the Bay Area, one of their first priorities was to acquire data that was granular enough to make action. For the California cases, the universities were able to step in and fill that gap.

Who do you pick do administer and house the collaborative?

Pick the Administrator

As the regional collaboratives formalize, many of our interviewees expressed the benefit of have a third party as the administrative facilitator in the collaborative. Because there are powerful government entities involved, it improves the optics of the collaborative when it is housed under an unaffiliated party. Some organizations may be reluctant to join a regional effort if a local jurisdiction appears to be dominating leadership. In Tallahassee, a non-profit, Sustainable Tallahassee acts as their administrator and provides CASC with resources.

In Los Angeles and San Diego, both collaboratives choose a local university to be the administrator. In Los Angeles, UCLA acts as the administrator of the collaborative as a way to balance the large powers in their county as well as a way to provide data. It worked well to have a more neutral third party because of rivalries among the cities and counties in the region. However, while having academic institution as base, it was great for developing research but not for strategic direction (Shi, 2017). The San Diego collaborative is also administered by a University. In contrast to the more science-oriented UCLA leadership, the SDRCC was led by more process-oriented staff from a nonprofit institute within the University of San Diego.

In SE Florida, Broward County acts as the administrator for the collaborative, but generally a government administrator is not politically feasible. SE Florida is unique in the sense that their membership consists of four counties.

How do you fund staff, events, etc. for the collaborative?

Organizational Funding

While the budgets of the collaborative vary, it is important to consider the pros and cons of grant funded work and membership dues. One common challenge for all of the regions was maintaining enough funding to hold events, hire staff, build resources, pay for travel, etc. Funding has become even more difficult because of COVID-19 and the fact that most jurisdictions are not able to bring in the same amount of tax revenue.

As collaboratives evolve, the general trend seems to be to start with volunteer work, then seek grants to launch the collaborative, and finally require membership dues that vary based on the size of the organization. Because climate change is an important issue, people are willing to volunteer on certain projects, but that is not sustainable, especially because of the work required for a regional effort. Interviewees told us that foundations were more willing to hand out grants for launching efforts, but less willing to provide grants for a continuation of efforts. In SE Florida and Los Angeles, both regions are running dry on their original grant money and the interviewees said that there was not an exact strategy in place to move forward.

In the Bay Area, Capital Region, and San Diego, all of their local jurisdictions pay membership fees. Interviewees said that it was important to add value to their members, which can keep the focus of the collaborative. This can motivate active participation because there is “skin in the game.” Membership

fees ranged from \$250 to \$20,000 depending on what worked for that region. In the Bay Area, BAYCAN waived their membership fees to support community and equity group participation.

In some cases, a collaborative does not always have to financially survive. A collaborative can emerge from a grant, serve a purpose for a period of time, and then evolve or be superseded by another regional effort.

Can I learn from other regional efforts?

[Learn from other Case Studies](#)

As new regional efforts begin and grow, it is important to continue to use other regional efforts around the country as opportunities to learn. Within the interviews, the leaders repeatedly expressed how helpful it was to be either learn from regional efforts across the country or attend meetings that help galvanize efforts. These regional meetings helped galvanize and inspire the Compact through peer to peer learning and shared experiences. While it might be difficult

to model a new collaborative identical to a pre-existing one, there are still lessons to be learned from the other regional efforts.

In SE Florida, an interviewee commented that meetings convened by the Institute for Sustainable Cities (ISC) gave them inspiration. ISC held regional collaborative meetings and it was helpful for Compact members to see what other communities are doing as well as meet the local leaders. At San Diego, the interviewee benefited from being exposed to King County's initiative. King County was a leader in engaging local municipalities, and when a representative from King County came to San Diego, it was met with enthusiasm. The interviewee at San Diego said that there are always opportunities to learn from the regional efforts across the country. While the regions are unique, all of the collaboratives are trying to align organizations that all have different agendas when dealing with mitigation and adaptation.

Chapter 6 - Conclusion

RCCs have emerged in the United States as the leader to tackle adaptation and mitigation projects. Eventually states or the federal government might take charge, but in the meantime, the regional efforts are the most promising. However, cross-sectoral collaboration is very difficult to convene as well as to maintain productivity over time. Regional climate collaboratives are important because they combat cross-jurisdictional issues and can impact policy to have lasting impacts.

Within this research, I reviewed 27 collaboratives and focused on eight in order to understand how each of the collaboratives convened in their respective regions. Each collaborative was inherently unique, and each region is appropriately complex, and this resulted in each collaborative taking different pathways. However, I uncovered that the pathways had commonalities, that demonstrated a list of options for future RCCs. If a region wants to create a collaborative, there is a customized version that could work.

For a region that considering starting a collaborative, the RCC will have to support the needs of the region, rather than simply duplicating another RCC. First, potential organizations or members should be identified, then invited to create the network in order to see what cards are in your hand. Then, the members have to find the common ground. Climate change is still a politically invoking issue, and it can derail RCC initiatives. Identifying common ground is a critical juncture for an emerging RCC. As the collaborative is formalizing, the leaders should pick an administrator and funding strategy that reflect the goals of the RCC.

While the states and federal governments lag behind in terms of climate change, RCCs will continue to emerge in the United States. I see a future where every major metropolitan city has a regional effort, and eventually those regional efforts can be intertwined. It is unclear from this research if RCCs are enough to combat adaptation and mitigation efforts in the United States, but from this research, I conclude that RCCs are the most optimistic chance to empower local jurisdictions and bring about the projects and policies to protect against the risk from climate change.

RCCs have emerged as the leader against climate change.

All RCCs are unique but have common steps to formation.

RCCs must be designed within regional context.

RCCs are the most optimistic chance to fight climate change.

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Appendices

Appendix A – Content Analysis Scorecard

| Action Type | Connectivity | Alignment | Joint Production |
|-----------------------------------|--|--|---|
| Lobbying and Policy Participation | Sierra CAMP - Convene Sierra stakeholders to discuss and vet policy issues | Central Coast (CA) - Provide a voice to communicate a consistent message about the importance of resilient, low-carbon communities. Provide a voice at the state and federal level for issues specific to the Central Coast. | King County - K4C supports state policy changes and investments that will help us to reduce energy use in existing buildings 25% below 2012 levels by 2030, achieve net-zero GHG emissions in new buildings by 2030, and reduce fossil fuel use in buildings by 20% by 2030. Miami - The Compact is committed to joint development of policy positions and coordinated advocacy to guide and influence all levels of government to adapt to climate impacts, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and build community and economic resilience. |
| Communication and Public Outreach | Phoenix - Identify communication experts. Identify a list of key stakeholders. Evaluate existing list serves and other communication tools | Puget Sound - Communicate and improve the accessibility of reliable information on climate impacts and risks to residents across Puget Sound | New Hampshire - The Climate in the Classroom Program was piloted in 2016 by UNH Extension, NH Sea Grant, and Strafford Regional Planning Commission, in partnership with two 5th-grade teachers at Oyster River Middle School. Mystic River (Boston) - Discover attributes of your watershed through interactive educational programming focused on water, local organisms and the intersection of people and nature. |

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| <p>Training and Technical Support</p> | <p>Boston - The Metropolitan Mayors Coalition is a group of cities and towns in the urban core of Metro Boston whose leaders gather to exchange information and create solutions for common problems. Puget Sound - Empower regional practitioners through peer-to-peer climate preparedness programming, such as workshops, events, and webinars</p> | <p>Sacramento - CRC hosted a quarterly meeting where participants heard of climate adaptation and mitigation projects and programs taking place in the Capital Region.</p> | <p>Delaware - Utilizing RASCL partner resources and expertise to provide technical assistance to communities on issues and projects related to resilience</p> |
| <p>Research and Information</p> | <p>New Hampshire - In order to help NH coastal communities avoid information overload, we have gathered a few resources that CAW partners find most useful.</p> | <p>Puget Sound - Identify opportunities for joint research projects and coordinated assessment efforts</p> | <p>Miami - The Southeast Florida Regional Climate Change Compact first produced a Regionally Unified Sea Level Rise Projection for Southeast Florida in 2011. Twin Cities - With the aim of enhancing the lifespan of Council assets through a strategic and proactive planning approach, the Sustainability and Equity outcomes (PDF) within Thrive MSP 2040 (PDF), as well as the Building in Resilience land use policy (PDF), direct staff to produce a regional Climate Vulnerability Assessment.</p> |
| <p>Sea level rise</p> | <p>Tampa Bay - The RSAS will work on recommendations, guidelines, and standards in a collaborative effort to provide adaptive strategies for shoreline protection and improvement for all the local jurisdictions that have signed on to the TBRRC.</p> | <p>San Diego - convening the Regional Sea Level Rise Working Group, supporting regional leadership and application of research, and conducting a Regional Adaptation Needs Assessment</p> | <p>Mystic River (Boston) - We are a voluntary partnership among 18 watershed communities working on projects of regional significance to decrease the collective risk of harm from flooding, drought, heat, storms, sea level rise and other climate-intensified risks.</p> |

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| Greenhouse gases | | <p>San Diego - Hosting interdisciplinary climate and water meetings, Participating in the San Diego Integrated Water Management Regional Advisory Committee, and providing technical support for climate and water-focused planning efforts</p> <p>San Diego - Developing regional capacity for addressing EE, providing network meeting and training opportunities throughout the region, and increasing the visibility of and supporting regional leadership to advance EE</p> | <p>King County - In 2014, King County and all 39 cities formally adopted a shared target to reduce countywide sources of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions at the county scale 25% by 2020, 50% by 2030, and 80% by 2050 (compared to a 2007 baseline).</p> |
| Ecosystem management | | | <p>North Coast (CA) - North Coast Resource Partnership has invested over \$67 million of local, state and federal funding in a variety of projects that benefit the communities and landscapes of the North Coast region and the rest of California</p> <p>Mystic River (Boston) - MyRWA has been monitoring trends in water quality with the help of a dedicated corps of volunteers.</p> |
| Infrastructure improvements | | <p>King County - Partner to develop and coordinate Living Building Challenge policies that support superefficient building strategies</p> | <p>Jacksonville - We will look at how a property owner might finance such work and what alternatives exist for communities that want to support these efforts</p> |

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|-------------------------------------|---|--|---|
| General climate change / adaptation | <p>Phoenix - Maricopa County hosted several “Bridging Climate Change and Public Health” meetings which convened representatives from a diverse array of local community organizations, private businesses, government agencies, and academic institutions. Facilitated discussion helped identify local activities in the fields of climate and health, as well as stakeholders’ perceived needs of the community and barriers to successful collaboration</p> <p>Delaware - Organizing quarterly RASCL Coffee Hours in each county to address hot topics and encourage dialogue between communities and resilience practitioners</p> | <p>New Hampshire - CAW members have helped communities develop adaptation chapters for their Hazard Mitigation Plans, Master Plans, and capital improvement planning efforts. Municipal planning starts with communities.</p> | <p>Miami - The Regional Climate Action Plan (RCAP) is the Compact’s guiding tool for coordinated climate action in Southeast Florida to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and build climate resilience.</p> |
| Economic resilience | <p>Tallahassee - Promote economic development through education and collaboration</p> | | |
| Equity | <p>Puget Sound - Ensure that efforts to address regional climate impacts improve social and racial equity, and do not entrench existing inequities</p> | <p>Bay Area - coordinates a bimonthly Equity Working Group</p> <p>Miami - This poster was created for the Southeast Florida Regional Climate Change Compact’s 11th Annual Climate Leadership Summit poster session. it examines vulnerabilities to climate change from an equity lens.</p> | |

Appendix B – Interview Guide

Process

1. What would you consider to be the formal or public launch of this effort?
2. What was the history of collaboration among the participants prior to this effort?
3. What were the important steps leading up to this formal launch?
4. Did this process happen easily or were there difficulties along the way?

Convening Deliberation

5. What were the key talking points that brought together key players?
6. Were there important issues related to the local context that helped convene the effort? (political leadership, public pressure, recent disasters, other events?)
7. What happened to solidify participants to formally launch the effort?
8. Did there continue to be deliberation about the main purpose of the collaborative after it launched?

Other aspects

9. Would you have done things differently in the beginning knowing what you know now?
10. Has your collaborative changed how it operates since its inception?
11. What assumptions about your collaborative members have been proven wrong? Which have proven correct?
12. Are there key aspects that we have not asked about?
13. Are there people we should speak with?