

## Climate Migration: Planning for Just and Welcoming Communities

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Climate change will bring significant movement of populations away from increasingly hazardous areas. By 2100, more than 13 million people in the US could be displaced due to sea level rise (Hauer, 2017)—a figure dwarfed by global estimates (Rigaud et al., 2018)—and extreme heat and droughts could force even more to move. The impacts on land use in receiving and sending areas will be substantial, but can also be an opportunity for positive transformative change. We ask two key research questions: What factors will most influence a community's level of in or out-migration in response to climate change? What policies should likely receiving and sending communities enact to ensure positive, equitable transformation under these stresses? We report here a synthesis of three separate but related research projects. One focused on demographic modeling in the US Northeast to understand the level of population mobility and underlying factors influencing that (Renski et al., 2024); a second used focus groups with real estate brokers in the Northeast to understand how their clients are viewing climate as part of mobility choices (Kuru et al., 2024); and a third gathered lived-experience experts, academics and policy officials in a 1.5 day workshop for discussion of the topic (Infield et al., 2024). Our results indicate that areas at high likelihood of becoming receiving areas include those that are inland and often more rural; located near to hazardous areas as people tend to stay in the same metro region; have lower climate hazards or have built resilience; have available housing and jobs; and have past socio-cultural connections to a disaster-affected area, among other factors. Sending community characteristics include experiencing one major or several moderate disasters; loose/weak social and place-attachment; medium and high levels of wealth; existing housing shortages; and remote workers, among other factors.

### References

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## Authors Biographies

**Elisabeth Infield** is a professor of Regional Planning and graduate program director for the PhD in Regional Planning at the Department of Landscape Architecture and Regional Planning at the University of Massachusetts. Her primary research and teaching are in climate change adaptation and public participation. Her current research focuses on planning for climate migration and adaptive retreat to increase community resilience, as well as pedagogy for climate change. She co-edited *Planning for Climate Change* (Routledge, 2018), co-chaired the first ACSP Presidential Task Force on Climate Action, and lead the publication of *Insights for Receiving Communities in Planning Equitable and Positive Outcomes Under Climate Migration: Expert Convening Results* (2024), available through Lincoln Institute of Land Policy. She previously published as Elisabeth Hamin.

### **Henry C. Renski**

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Henry Renski is a Professor and Chair of the Department of Landscape Architecture and Regional Planning at the University of Massachusetts Amherst. He teaches courses in applied quantitative methods, Geographic Information Systems (GIS), regional economic and spatial analysis, and state and local economic development policy.

Dr. Renski's research focuses on understanding the forces driving regional economic competitiveness and transformation, and building upon this knowledge to improve the effectiveness of economic development policy. His specific interests include understanding the influence of technological change on spatial development patterns, regional migration, changing knowledge and skill requirement in the labor force, applied analytical methods, and the application of regional development theory to guide state and local economic development policy.

**Omur Damla Kuru** is a postdoctoral fellow in City and Metropolitan Planning (CMP) Department at University of Utah. Her research interests relate to environmental planning, local-level climate change adaptation, climate-related migration, and disaster planning. Her current research is concerned with how climate change transform communities and how planning can help adapt to these changes. In the CMP department, she is teaching two courses per year and working on the National Science Foundation (NSF)-funded research project—Stakeholder Decisions on Post-Disaster Community Relocation Under High Certainty. She is writing research articles exploring the factors (e.g., social networks) that affect household-level recovery perceptions, based on quantitative data (n=301 surveys) collected in Puerto Rico after Hurricane Maria. Before joining CMP, she worked as a postdoctoral researcher in the LARP Department at UMass, Amherst on the NSF—funded research project—Preparing Receiving Regions for a Just and Sustainable Climate Migration: Systems and Scenarios for New England.