



# Arctic and northern community governance: The need for local planning and design as resilience strategy

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# Northern Communities

A faded background image of a small town in a snowy, mountainous region. The town consists of several colorful houses (orange, blue, red) and buildings, situated at the base of a large, snow-covered mountain. The overall scene is hazy and overcast.

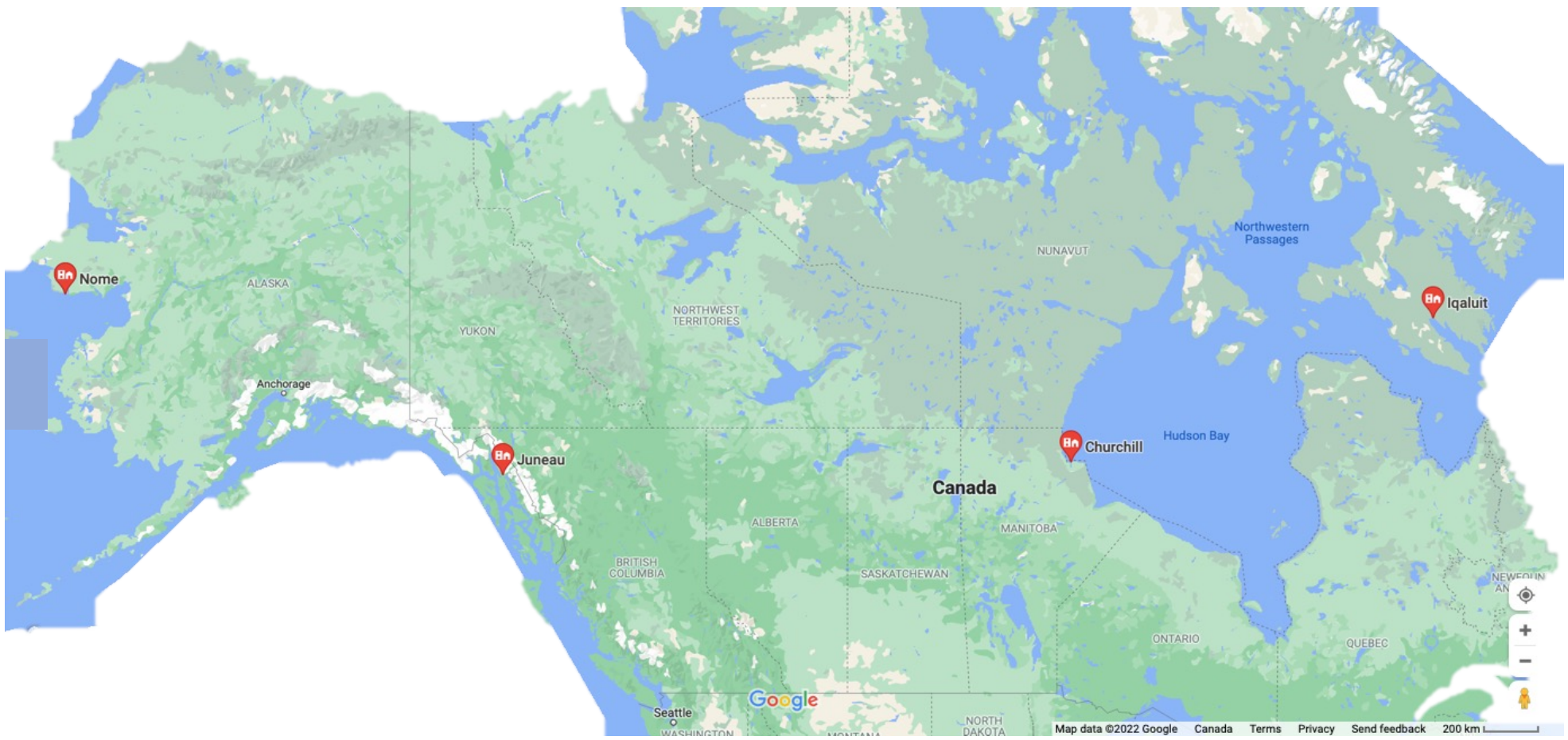
Often remain unobserved by the centers of power, money and expertise

Have the need for *local* strategies for resilience

Those strategies need to embrace spatial planning and need to be closely associated with environmental design



# Vignettes



# Churchill, Manitoba

- railroad linking Churchill and the Hudson Bay to Winnipeg and Chicago still exists but port infrastructure is crumbling -tourism cannot compensate for the loss of the port and the military base
- late recognition as fully empowered local government
- decades of exclusion (Dene and Inuit people), made it difficult for anyone to significantly influence development strategy
- weak local governance aggravated a host of social and ecological problems







Roblin City, Manitoba

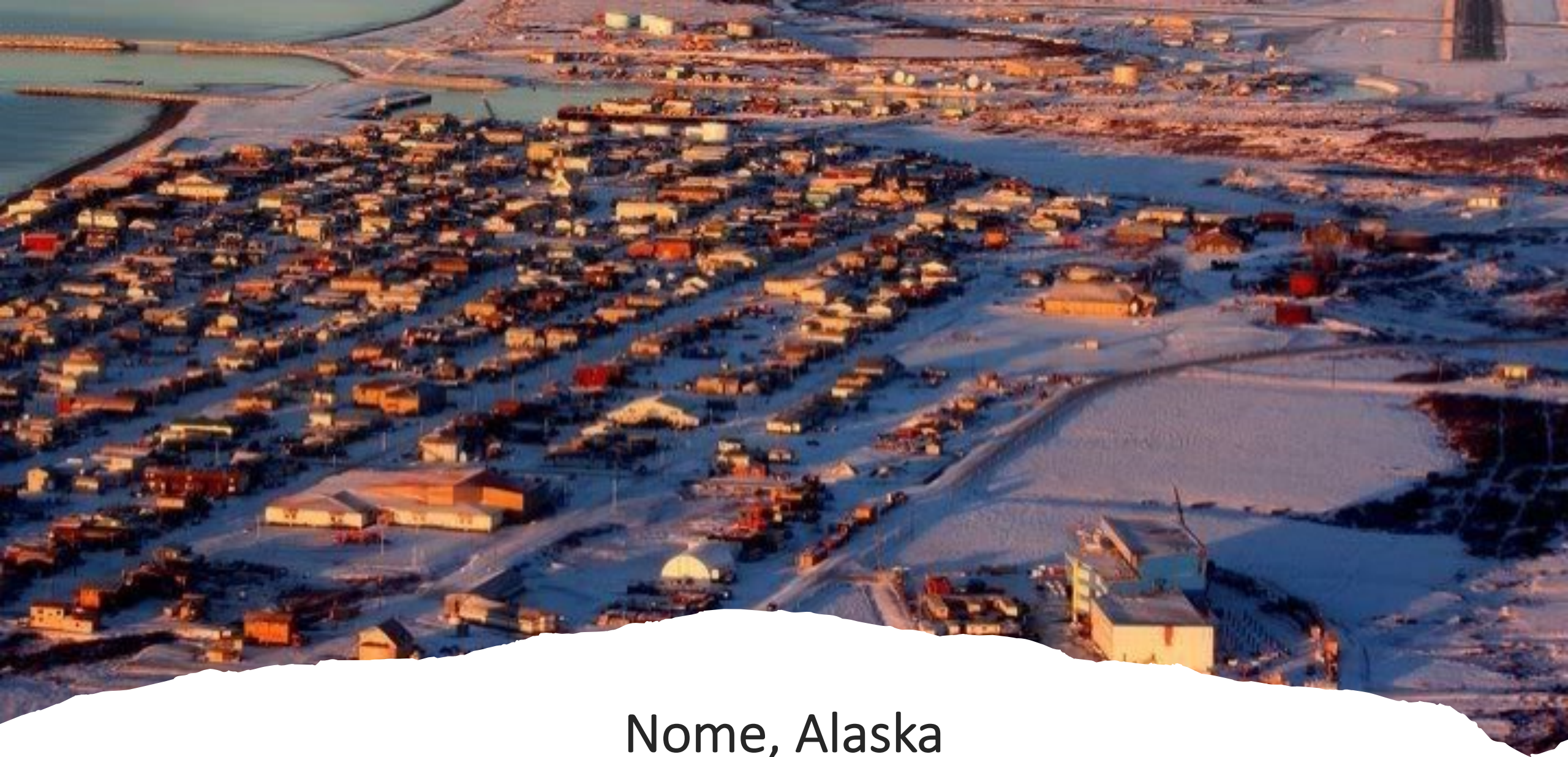


# Iqaluit, Nunavut

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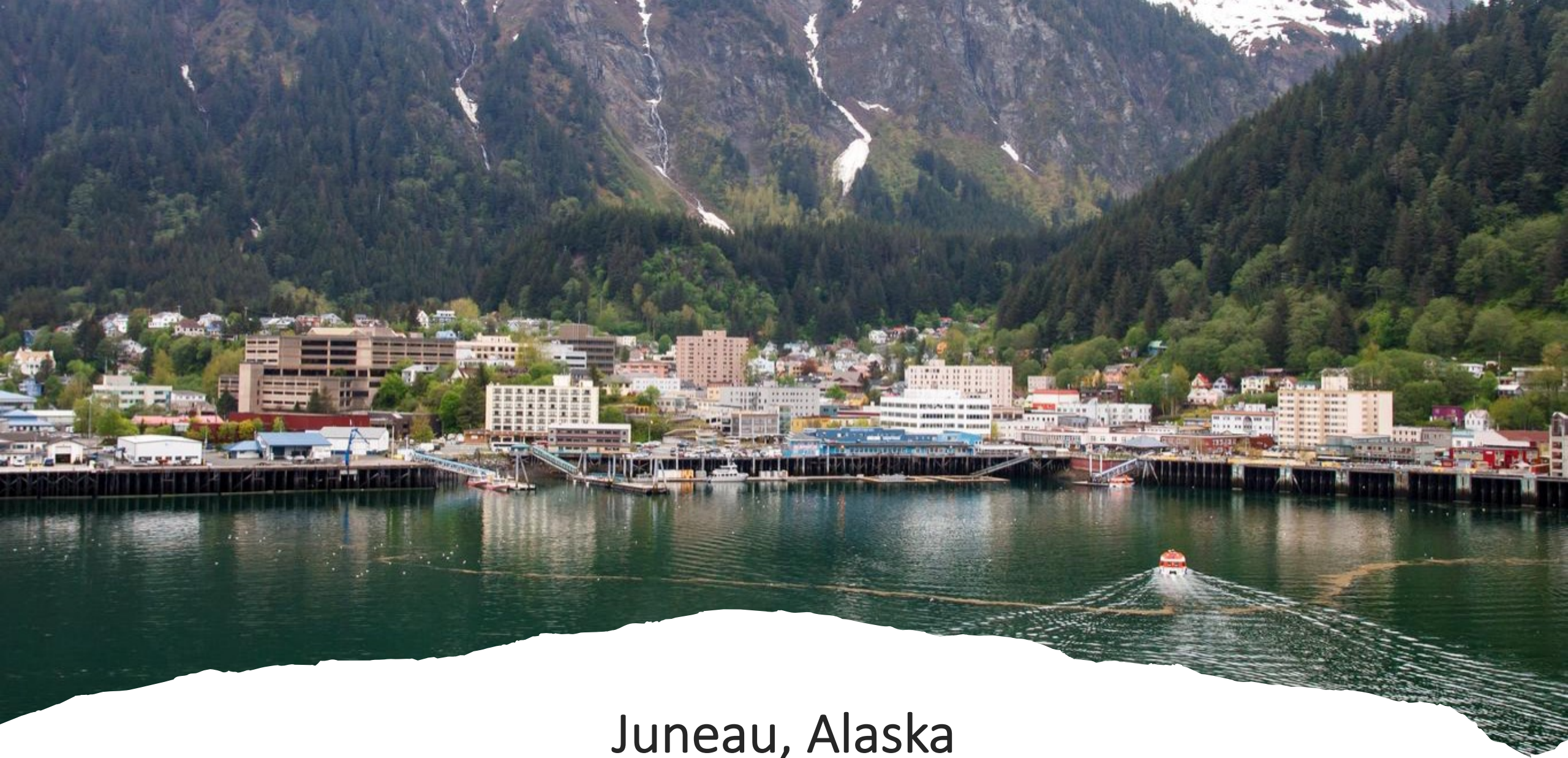
- Restructuring of multi-level governance, potentially reducing informality and bricolage and representing a radical change in inclusion of local and traditional knowledges in governance
- Many do not wish to entirely adopt traditional lifestyles. Planning challenge; dependency on cars and car infrastructure, while wrecked cars and other kinds of waste, resulting from modern lifestyles, cannot easily find a place or adequate management
- Reinvention paradox: intense process of change (positive and needed) creates doubts (everything new is questioned creating hesitance)
- Newly emerging identity of Iqaluit poses problems in narrative terms for the newly emerging polity of Nunavut





Nome, Alaska



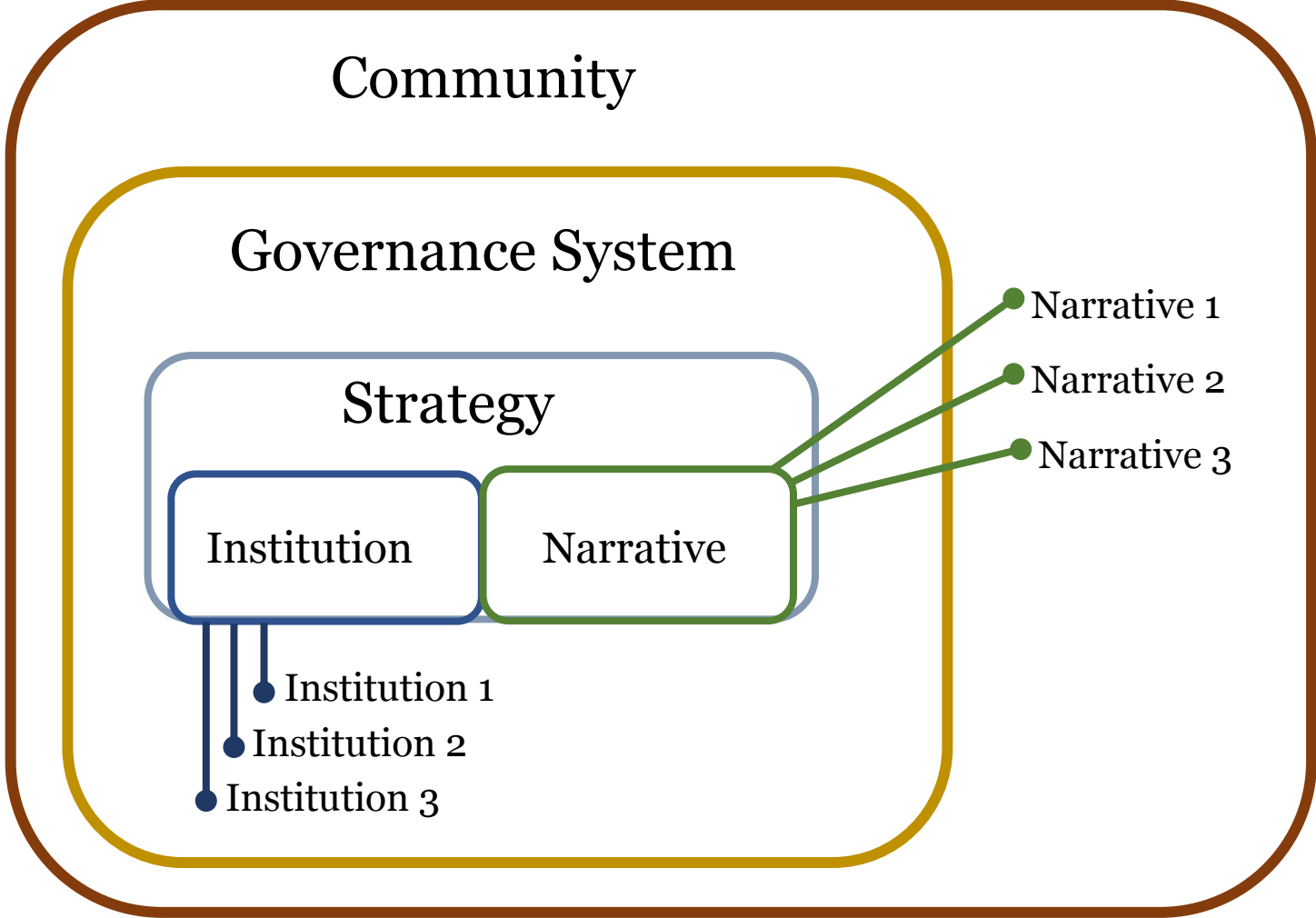
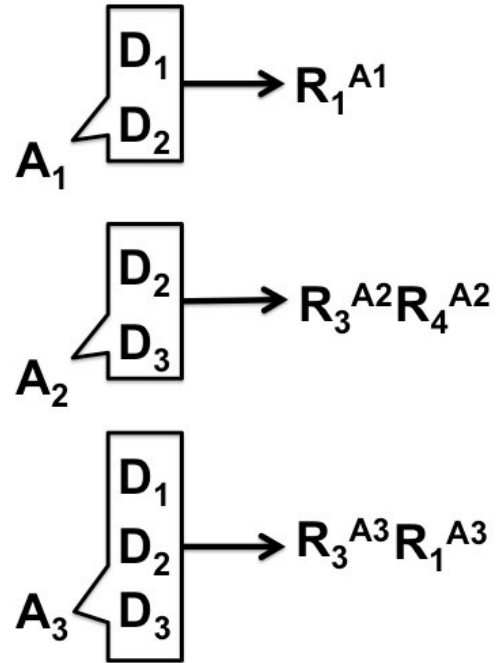


Juneau, Alaska



# Strategies

Effective strategy requires collectively binding decisions  $\rightarrow$  require some form of governance



# Northern Governance

- Traumatic history and bricolage
- Visibility and representation
- Material dependencies
- Fragile differentiation





# Traumatic history and bricolage

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- relatively recent colonization and resource extraction leading to polarization (indigenous traditions vs development)
- formal model of multi-level governance rarely works in the north



# Visibility and representation

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- selective investment in communities, in infrastructures, in health and school systems make it harder to change the development path at a given point
- long distance to centers of power, learning and economy make northern regions selectively represented in media South





# Material dependencies

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- Can be human- made (infrastructures), natural (bedrock, climate, soil fertility) or hybrid (a polluted environment, a deeply entrenched forest management tradition).



# Fragile differentiation

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- maintaining *distinct* social function systems: politics, law, religion, science, art is difficult in the north
- Adaptation and managing complexity requires differentiation
- combining too many roles makes differentiation difficult







# Desirable features of northern resilience strategies

- it needs to be a strategy
- the strategy narrative and the process of producing it has to be inclusive of and sensitive to local and traditional knowledges and interests
- *resilience strategies cannot be restricted to one domain of governance.*
- a northern local resilience strategy cannot replace a continuous conversation on assets, threats, vulnerabilities, common goods, and opportunities in the community



# Towards local planning and design as resilience strategy

Strategy in the form of spatial planning; arena for policy integration it can contribute to managing change (harness adaptation) and it can be a site for the integration of knowledge.







# Conclusions

- *Planning* as process this process has to entertain notions of spatial intervention, of design in a structured and continuous manner
- Resilience *strategy*, in the form of local *planning*, and planning- as- *design* , does not undermine the necessary flexibility and inclusivity, as argued for by others, but that, on the contrary, they can be crafted in a way that make them the soundest base available for Northern community resilience