

# BUILDING HEALTHY COMMUNITIES



## Climate Change and Extreme Heat

Climate change impacts the health of our communities. It may lead to more heat waves, severe storms, flooding, and it can affect our food supply. How we design our communities can affect our ability to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and adapt to climate change. For example, it can impact energy needs (e.g. for air conditioning), air pollution levels and cases of heat related illness.

Urban sprawl plays a significant role in climate change, as we need to travel long distances to meet our daily needs. We also use fossil fuels and electricity to heat and cool our homes, and run our businesses, thereby further contributing to the amount of greenhouse gases generated.

Heat islands are built-up areas which are hotter than nearby rural areas. Buildings and communities that include increased green spaces can help to prevent heat islands.

### PUBLIC HEALTH

1-877-464-9675

[york.ca/HealthyBuiltEnvironment](http://york.ca/HealthyBuiltEnvironment)

25-PH3-057

## DID YOU KNOW?

- York Region's Official Plan includes sustainable and resilient communities policies that are intended to address climate change mitigation and adaptation.
- York Region's Climate Change Action Plan provides an understanding of initiatives across the Region addressing climate change and builds on work underway by the Region, local municipalities and other stakeholders.
- York Region monitors for extreme heat and notifies stakeholders and the public of heat warnings.
- York Region Public Health completed a Climate Change and Health Vulnerability Assessment to assess the health risks of climate change in York Region. Visit [york.ca/climatechangeandhealth](http://york.ca/climatechangeandhealth)
- The average air temperature of a city with 1 million people or more can be 1 to 3°C warmer than the air temperature of surrounding areas.

**York Region**





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## You make a difference when you...

- Plan for climate emergencies: floods, power outages and extreme weather events
- Reduce your carbon footprint at home. Check for available provincial and federal home energy rebates which can make your home more energy efficient and reduce emissions e.g. heat pumps, furnace, window, insulation upgrades
- Give your car a break. Use public transportation, carpool, walk or bike
- Plant trees and other vegetation around your home. Increased shade reduces heating and cooling needs
- Stay informed. Follow advice from weather warnings and advisories (e.g., air quality, extreme heat, storms etc.)
- Increase the amount of plant-based foods in your diet to help improve your physical health and the health of the planet.
- Learn more about your municipality's official plan and how it affects climate change and extreme heat

## Municipalities show leadership when they...

Incorporate strategies to mitigate and adapt to climate change in official plans and other key documents

- Establish targets to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in municipal operations/activities
- Prepare adaptation plans to address the health impacts associated with climate change
- Work with developers to create green, low impact, walkable, compact and energy efficient net zero communities

**BE AN ACTIVE PARTNER WHERE YOU LIVE, LEARN, WORK AND PLAY.**  
Participate in building healthy communities!