

BUILDING HEALTHY COMMUNITIES

Climate Change and Extreme Heat

How we design our communities affects our ability to reduce greenhouse emissions and adapt to climate change. 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.

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.

The design and density of buildings, in combination with reduced green spaces, contribute to heat islands. Heat islands are built-up areas which are hotter than nearby rural areas. Communities are impacted by increased energy needs (e.g., for air conditioning), air pollution, and heat-related illnesses.

DID YOU KNOW?

- York Region's Official Plan includes policies to work with other levels of government, agencies and stakeholders to identify the links connecting climate change, community planning and public health.
- York Region monitors for extreme heat and notifies stakeholders and the public of heat warnings.
- 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.
- According to a survey of GTA residents, those who live in highly walkable neighbourhoods drive about 20% fewer kilometres each week than those who live in auto-oriented neighbourhoods.

PUBLIC HEALTH

1-877-464-9675

york.ca/healthybuiltenvironment

19-5254

The logo for York Region, featuring a stylized white bird or wing icon above the text "York Region" in a white serif font.

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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. Consider ways to conserve energy, use energy more efficiently and use green/renewable forms of energy
- 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.)
- 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: extreme heat, infrastructure, emergencies, diseases (from mosquitoes or ticks, or in water), and extreme weather events
- Work with developers to create green, low impact, walkable, compact and energy efficient communities

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