

# CLIMATE CHANGE

## in your community



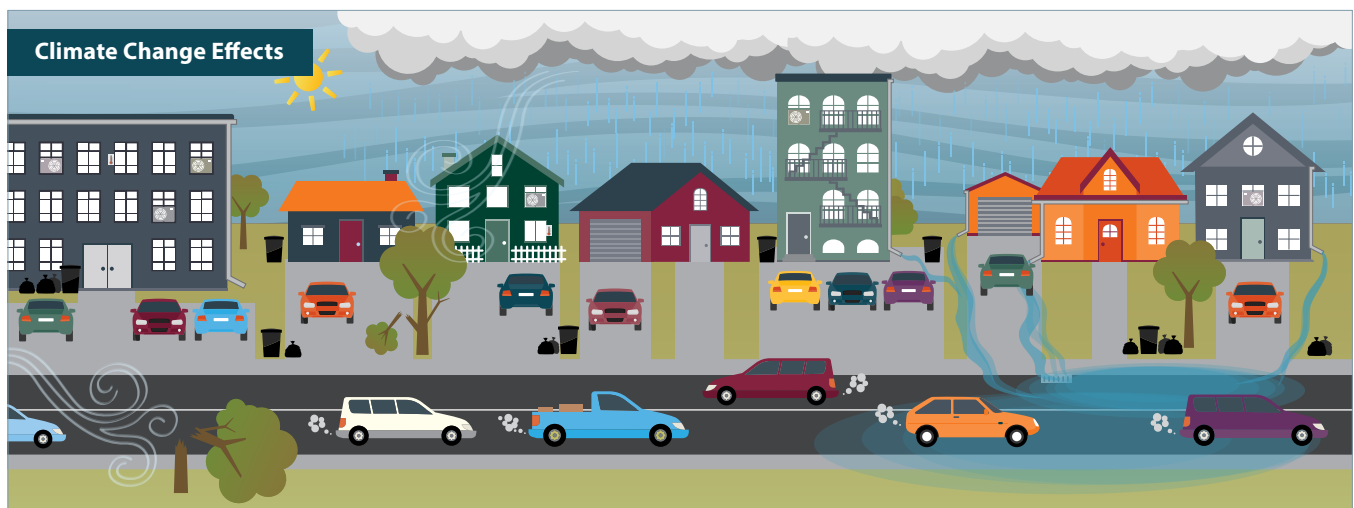
### What is Climate Change?

Climate change is the long-term change in average weather patterns. This includes:

- warmer temperatures
- more rain and snow
- stronger winds
- more ice storms
- more dry periods

### What are the impacts of climate change in the Greater Toronto Area? Some examples include:

- flooding
- damaged or falling trees
- soil, streambank, and shoreline erosion
- spread of invasive species
- heat waves
- out of sync flower bloom times and pollinator emergence
- stress on groundwater resources
- spread of vector-borne diseases like Lyme disease and West Nile Virus



### What You Can Do

Climate change will continue to impact our communities; however, there are everyday actions that can reduce its effects. While some ideas are easy to tackle on our own, others are easier when we work together with our neighbours and larger community. One of the most important things that you can do is to talk to your friends, family, and neighbours about climate change and what we can do about it!



## WATER

Intense rain events (more rain over shorter periods) can overwhelm stormwater systems and cause flooding, soil erosion, water pollution, and other challenges. Stormwater landscaping projects help rainwater soak into the ground instead of entering the stormwater system.

<b>Use a rain barrel</b>	Collect rainwater from your roof and water your gardens for free! This will also save water resources during hotter and drier summers.
<b>Replace lawn, pavement, and other hard surfaces</b>	Create soft surfaces that allow rainwater to soak into the ground. Convert your lawn into gardens, replace your asphalt driveway with permeable pavement, and redesign walkways with flagstone or a groundcover plant.
<b>Create a rain garden</b>	Create a bowl-shaped garden with loose, deep soil that collects and absorbs rainwater. It is a beautiful and functional feature that restores groundwater! This can replace lawn, an existing garden, or hard surface space.



## GREENING

Plants help fight climate change by capturing carbon dioxide and other air pollutants. In addition, they reduce the effects of a changing climate by providing cooling effects in hot weather, filtering rainwater, and reducing erosion.

<b>Choose native plants</b>	Find out what plants are native to your local area. These species are adapted to the historical climate and support native insects and other wildlife.
<b>Plant on your balcony</b>	Plant in small spaces! Wildflowers, grasses, shrubs and even some tree species can survive in containers.
<b>Support and enhance greenspaces</b>	Protect local greenspaces and increase tree cover by participating in planting programs in your community or own backyard.

## TRANSPORTATION

Communities depend on safe, clean and efficient transportation systems to move people and goods. However, transportation also accounts for over a quarter of Canada's greenhouse gas emissions\*. On a personal scale, we can take action by choosing more clean and sustainable transportation options.

<b>Commute together</b>	Take public transit or carpool when possible.
<b>Use active transportation</b>	If you are able to, consider walking, biking, or other active methods to get to your destination.
<b>Support green transportation</b>	Advocate for more bike lanes in your community and replace large, inefficient vehicles with an electric or hybrid vehicle.
<b>Fly less often</b>	Air travel is a major source of greenhouse gas. Find alternatives whenever possible or explore locally.
<b>Shop locally</b>	Reduce the amount of mileage needed to transport goods by supporting local farmers and small businesses.

\*<https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/services/climate-change/greenhouse-gas-emissions/sources-sinks-executive-summary-2020.html>



## WASTE

The trash in our landfills releases methane gas which is one of the greenhouse gases that contributes to climate change. However, the production of these products also affects climate. For example, plastics are made using oil products which increases our reliance on fossil fuels. Choosing sustainable and reusable products is an important step when looking for ways to reduce your carbon footprint.

Don't forget—**Refuse, Reduce, Reuse, Repurpose and Recycle** (in that order!).

<b>Refuse plastics where possible</b>	Choose products that are made from alternatives such as glass or plant based materials. Actively decline single use plastics. Only purchase what you need.
<b>Choose re-usable</b>	Buy products that can be used more than once such as reusable grocery bags, produce bags, water bottles, coffee mugs, diapers, feminine hygiene products, and takeout containers.
<b>Reduce food waste</b>	Shop smart! Plan your meals and organize your food in a way that prioritizes eating food before it spoils. Reuse leftovers and scraps to create new meals like soup.
<b>Reduce packaging</b>	Choose products with less packaging or packaging that can be reused or composted.
<b>Buy products that will last</b>	Consider all your purchase options and choose products built to last a long time or that can be repaired easily. Sometimes this means spending more up front for durable, high quality items, but you may find that you save more money in the end.





## ENERGY

While Ontario gets most of its energy from non-fossil fuel sources\*, it is still important for us to reduce the amount of energy we use and find sources of energy that are clean and safe.

<b>Switch to energy efficient</b>	LED light bulbs and certified energy efficient appliances use less energy and save money. Look for certifications such as Energy Star.
<b>Reduce energy use</b>	A few ideas to save energy include: making sure your home is well insulated, using trees to keep your home naturally cool, adjusting your thermostat while you are away, turning off lights and electronics when not in use, running washing appliances once they are full, and hanging your clothes to dry.
<b>Support and choose sustainable energy sources</b>	Renewable energy is energy that comes from free, unlimited resources such as sunlight, wind, and water. If you are unable to install them at home, support the use of these sources throughout your community.
<b>Eat less meat</b>	Make your diet more climate friendly by replacing your meat-sourced protein with plant based options. The livestock industry contributes to 14.5% of human made greenhouse gas emissions**, consumes significant water and energy resources, and converts valuable forest carbon sinks into farmland for livestock and their food. Choose products with a lower environmental footprint.

\*<https://www.ontario.ca/document/2017-long-term-energy-plan-discussion-guide/ontarios-energy-mix-end-2015> | \*\*<https://www.ipcc.ch/sr15/>

## Resources

- NASA Climate Change Data: [climate.nasa.gov/](https://climate.nasa.gov/)
- Canada's Action on Climate Change: [www.canada.ca/en/services/environment/weather/climatechange/climate-action.html](https://www.canada.ca/en/services/environment/weather/climatechange/climate-action.html)
- Peel Region Climate Change Master Plan: [www.peelregion.ca/climate-energy/](https://www.peelregion.ca/climate-energy/)
- Toronto Region TransformTO: [www.toronto.ca/services-payments/water-environment/environmentally-friendly-city-initiatives/transformto/](https://www.toronto.ca/services-payments/water-environment/environmentally-friendly-city-initiatives/transformto/)
- Durham Region - Climate Change, Energy, and Resilience: [www.durham.ca/en/living-here/climateenergyandresilience.aspx?\\_mid\\_=32210](https://www.durham.ca/en/living-here/climateenergyandresilience.aspx?_mid_=32210)
- David Suzuki Foundation - 10 things to do about climate change: [david Suzuki.org/what-you-can-do/top-10-ways-can-stop-climate-change/](https://david Suzuki.org/what-you-can-do/top-10-ways-can-stop-climate-change/)

For more information please contact:

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