



**Regional Municipality of Durham, ON**



Population: 661,190  
Project duration:  
2016-current

## CLIMATE CHANGE: REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF DURHAM COMMUNITY CLIMATE ADAPTATION PLAN

*This guide is designed to help municipal staff and decision makers understand how excellent sustainability projects are developed, and help them adopt best practices in their community. Read the guide to learn more about award-winning strategies, then use the guiding questions to kick-start your sustainability initiative.*

### PROJECT OVERVIEW

- The Regional Municipality of Durham developed a Community Climate Adaptation Plan to increase community resilience in the face of climate change and related extreme weather.
- The municipality partnered with other municipalities, conservation authorities and the private sector.
- The plan combines best practices from various methodologies using scientific data on future climatic conditions with local expertise and experience. Expert task forces identified and implemented programs to reduce climate-related risks.

#### How does this initiative benefit the environment?

- Enhancing **natural capital** and building **climate resilience into natural systems** are integral to the plan. Initiatives include creating and protecting green infrastructure, promoting education and outreach programs, and updating all plans and policies developed that had not fully considered climate change effects.
- Wise investments made today should yield many benefits in the future. A working group will continue to study and oversee natural **environmental adaptation** to climate change.

#### How does this initiative benefit the community?

- The plan **empowers local municipalities** to assist community members during extreme weather events.
- **The plan includes specific measures to help vulnerable populations** in the face of a severe climate event (e.g., elderly or ill people, low-income households) such as removing people from the floodplain as part of a flood forecasting program.

#### How does this initiative benefit the local economy?

- When extreme weather occurs that threatens or causes damage to the community, the programs will **expedite recovery**, reducing the risk of lost revenue for local businesses and limiting infrastructure damage.

## What are some of the successes of this project?

- The data gathered to help guide the plan will be reused by multiple agencies in a variety of planning contexts in the future.
- A **neutral third party developed a Progress Reporting Framework** through a consultative process. The framework ensures consistency in reporting across sectors and agencies, and identifies where additional resources are required to achieve the plan's goals.
- Programs identified in the plan will reduce the Region's reliance on **emergency assistance** and **disaster relief funding** from other levels of government.

### Are you interested in pursuing climate adaptation in your community? To get started answer these questions:

How could partnerships help advance your climate change adaptation initiative? Who would you need to approach? How could you work together to achieve common goals?

---

---

---

Does your community track greenhouse gas emissions? Who/what is the biggest emitter?

---

---

---

What important climate change risks could affect your community (e.g., flooding, high temperatures, drought, food/water scarcity, wildfires, wind). Who are the vulnerable populations in your municipality (e.g., outdoor workers, elderly citizens, children)? Name three ways these vulnerable groups could be affected by the climate change risk.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

Which natural assets found in your community can be used to mitigate and adapt to the effects of climate change?

---

---

---

Which assets in your community (constructed and natural) could be negatively affected by climate change? Who owns or is responsible for each asset?

---

---

---

The Regional Municipality of Durham credits success to a strong scientific foundation, the support of senior management and councillors, and multi-agency buy-in through stakeholder engagement. In your opinion, what is needed to ensure the success of your initiative?

---

---

---

---

---

---

---