

# Web site explains how climate change affects New York City

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With over half the world's people now living in cities, it's important for us to better understand how climate changes might affect urban areas. Now, a new highly-researched Web site provides scientific answers to basic questions about climate change, and how such changes might impact New York City. While the site is specifically focused on the Big Apple, some of the lessons learned here apply to other urban areas. The site is written in easy-to-follow language, and is intended for use by decision-makers, students, climate experts and everyone in between.

Named the Climate Change Information Resource, New York Metropolitan Region (CCIR-NY), the site was unveiled on Tuesday, March 29th and can be found at [ccir.ciesin.columbia.edu/nyc](http://ccir.ciesin.columbia.edu/nyc) . The site was made possible by a grant from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) to the Center for International Earth Science Information Network (CIESIN). NASA's Goddard Institute for Space Studies (GISS), New York, N.Y. and Hunter College, also in New York City, collaborated on the project.

In fact, NASA provided the science that is used to answer basic and specific questions regarding climate change in the New York Metropolitan region.

"The purpose of this site is to inform decision makers, educators and the general public in urban areas about climate variability and change," said Cynthia Rosenzweig, a senior researcher at NASA GISS, and a co-principal investigator on the CCIR-NY project. "Since many cities are

located in coastal areas, useful information is provided about the potential for flooding of transportation infrastructure, saltwater intrusion into water supplies, and erosion of public beaches. Knowledge of climate can also improve public health responses to heat stress and air quality, especially for the elderly and poor. While the site is focused on New York City, the information found here may apply to other cities."

The researchers developed a series of questions concerning climate change and then set out to answer them in a way that might be accessible to a wide-ranging audience. For example, the first section titled Climate Change Overview provides a page of answers each to questions about the general climate system, past and future changes, the available data on climate change, global climate models and future projections. Other sections include Regional Impacts, Preparing for a Different Future: Adaptation, and Limiting Future Climate Change: Mitigation.

For each question raised within these sections, there is a web page of information, which can be printed like a tear sheet or an independent fact sheet. The site also includes a resources section with an "online library" of web links, a bibliography, and fact sheets.

The development of this site was highly researched to understand the type of information most important to users. During the planning stages, the site's developers ran focus groups, and held numerous meetings with an advisory group that included officials and decision makers from city, county, state and federal levels. Representatives from the Environmental Protection Agency, the National Parks Service, and the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation took part in this committee.

This advisory group helped the site's creators steer the content so it included the most useful and relevant information for the public.

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