

# **U-M releases online tool to help cities in Great Lakes region plan for climate impacts**

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Reduced water availability and quality, floods and problems related to heat stress are some of the potential impacts cities face with a changing climate.

A new interactive tool released today by the University of Michigan's Climate Center helps cities in Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Wisconsin and Ontario to better anticipate and prepare for these challenges.

Housed within the Graham Sustainability Institute, the Climate Center produced the new online Cities Impact Assessment Tool (CIAT) as part of its efforts to provide practical information and resources to support climate adaptation in North America's Great Lakes region. The Kresge Foundation funded development of the tool, which was pre-released to six regional pilot locations: Ann Arbor, Mich.; Dayton, Ohio; Flint, Mich.; Kingston, Ontario; Toledo, Ohio; and Thunder Bay, Ontario.

"I'm amazed with how much information is available through the CIAT: reliable data, best practices and even a network of peer support," said Daniel Shipp, sustainable initiatives coordinator for the city of Kingston, Ontario, one of the first municipalities to test and evaluate the tool. "The CIAT is a practical resource for helping to develop an effective and rationalized climate adaptation strategy."

The new planning support tool, which is available at no cost to end-users, includes three core components: climate histories and projections for

divisions throughout the nine regional states and provinces; an interactive climate-peer networking map; and a searchable database of more than 500 climate adaptation strategies informed by existing municipal plans. Users can search by geographic location or by issues of concern.

The tool includes content geared toward a 40-year planning horizon. It incorporates demographic and socioeconomic information, as well as climate-trend data from the Great Lakes Integrated Sciences & Assessments, a collaborative program between the U-M Climate Center and Michigan State University that focuses on adaptation to climate change and variability in the Great Lakes region and is funded by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

"Cities cannot afford to delay in preparing for climate change," said Climate Center Director Beth Gibbons. "Changes in average and seasonal temperature and precipitation, as well as more frequent extreme storms, require cities to act now to ensure they have resilient infrastructures and social systems. This tool puts relevant information into the hands of city-level decision makers, so they can develop peer networks and make well-informed policy and infrastructure decisions."

One of the unique characteristics of the assessment tool is that it allows cities to identify and learn from 'climate peers.' These are cities with current climate conditions that align with those projected for a given city in 2050.

"By looking at conditions in climate-peer cities, end-users can gain an idea of what they can expect to face in their own areas in the near future," said Ashlee Grace, urban adaptation specialist at the Climate Center. "Our hope is that this will encourage city practitioners to reach out to their climate peer cities to share insights and strategies."

Don Scavia, director of the Graham Sustainability Institute, said the

assessment [tool](#) is part of a continuum of solutions-focused work the Climate Center is pursuing.

"As the climate continues to heat up globally and locally, our Climate Center is on the front line of providing useful and useable [climate](#) information to decision makers across the Great Lakes region," he said. "CIAT is a prime example of the critical work we're doing in this area."

**More information:** Learn more about the new resource during an open webinar at 1-2 p.m. Dec. 10. It is hosted by the Climate Change Adaptation Community of Practice, an interactive, online community dedicated to advancing knowledge and action in the area of climate adaptation. Register at [bit.ly/CCACoP-Webinar](http://bit.ly/CCACoP-Webinar).

For information about the U-M Climate Center, and to access the adaptation tool, visit [graham.umich.edu/climate](http://graham.umich.edu/climate)

Provided by University of Michigan

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