Community Conversation Toolkit

City of Saint Paul's Climate Action & Resilience Plan Update

About climate change

What causes climate change?

For about the past 150 years, humans have used fossil fuels (such as coal, oil, and natural gas) as the energy inputs for travel, space heating, electricity, and industrial processes. The acts of extracting and burning these fuels result in the release of greenhouse gases (GHGs). Greenhouse gases are released through human activity. During this time, enough GHGs have been released into the atmosphere that they have led to an increasing global average temperature. Increasing temperatures have been changing the climate worldwide and, if left unchecked, threaten to dramatically disrupt our current way of life, locally and globally.

These are the most common sources of emissions that are generated within or due to activity in cities:

Generation of electricity:
(i.e., coal or gas-fired power plants), which is used in homes, businesses, industry, outdoor lighting, and increasingly for transportation.

Space and water heating:
that use natural gas, propane, heating fuel, or electricity generated from the combustion of fossil fuels. Industrial and manufacturing processes that use natural gas or generate CO2 during production.

Modes of transportation that combust fuel:
(e.g., gasoline, diesel) to run. This includes most cars, trucks, freight, planes, boats, off-road vehicles, and more.

Generation and disposal of waste:
results in GHGs that are released during the production of goods and after goods are disposed of — from methane released at landfills or GHGs emitted from waste-to-energy plants.

Climate change in Saint Paul

How is Saint Paul affected?

Saint Paul will become warmer and wetter as a consequence of climate change. We know that warmer temperatures are often accompanied by increased humidity, increasing the heat index and making the air feel hotter. Extreme heat events are increasing in Minnesota and can cause a variety of heat-related illnesses like heat stress and heat stroke.

Extreme heat events
Heatwaves are expected to become more common and extreme heat will be worse in urban areas where there is more pavement and fewer trees.

Poor air Quality
Rising temperatures and changes in precipitation patterns may lead to increased air pollution. Increased frequency of wildfires have also impacted local air quality.

Ecological changes
Invasive species can lead to changes in tree cover and reduce the benefits that a healthy forest provides. There may also be an increase in diseases carried by ticks and mosquitos.

Changes in precipitation
Spring and summer are becoming wetter at a rapid rate. Changes in precipitation patterns will likely lead to more river and flash flooding.
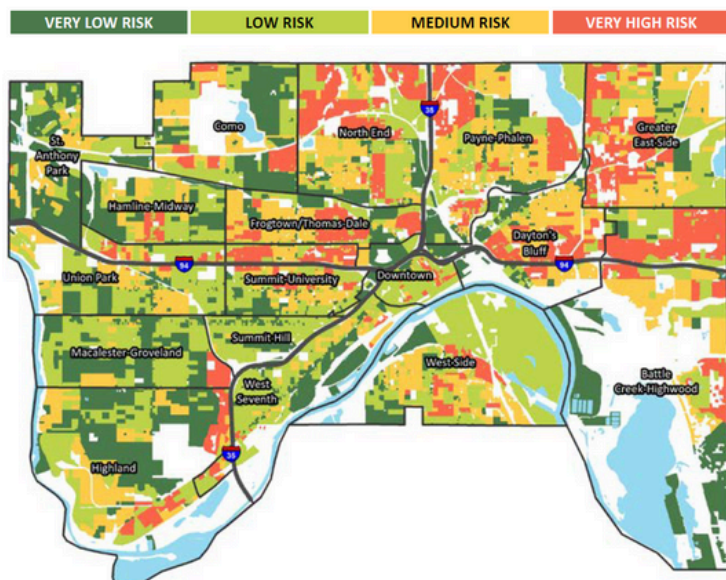
Some neighborhoods are more at risk than others when it comes to climate-related hazards like flooding, extreme heat, or poor air quality.

This map identifies which ones experience the greatest climate risks.

Saint Paul's Climate Action & Resilience Plan

The Saint Paul **Climate Action and Resilience Plan** lays out a vision to make the city carbon neutral by 2050 while preparing for climate impacts and prioritizing equity.

Reducing emissions through energy efficiency	Transitioning to renewable energy	Supporting sustainable transportation options	Cutting waste	Enhancing urban resilience

Specific goals include increasing clean energy usage in buildings, expanding public transit and biking infrastructure, and protecting natural ecosystems.

Central to the Plan is a commitment to equity, ensuring all residents benefit from the city's actions—especially those most impacted by climate change, who often are low-income, Black, Indigenous, and other people of color who live in neighborhoods with historical and current racial disparities. By fostering collaboration with community members, businesses, and other stakeholders, Saint Paul aims to reduce emissions, improve air quality, create green jobs, and build a city ready to thrive in a changing climate.

How was the current CARP created?

The current Plan was developed through research, community input, and collaboration with experts and stakeholders. The Plan uses 2015 as a baseline year to assess emissions, sets a goal of carbon neutrality by 2050, and includes both initiatives to mitigate greenhouse gas emissions and strategies to reduce vulnerabilities. The Plan integrates strategies to address broader issues like housing, transportation, and workforce development while promoting co-benefits such as improved air quality, public health, and economic opportunities.

How does the city use the CARP?

The City uses the Plan as a guiding framework to achieve the goal of carbon neutrality by 2050 and to address the local impacts of climate change. The Plan informs policy decisions, prioritizes investments and initiatives across sectors such as energy, transportation, waste, and natural resources. It provides actionable strategies to reduce emissions, enhance resilience, and improve equity, focusing on areas with the greatest potential impact, like energy-efficiency, home weatherization and transportation options. The Plan's metrics and benchmarks allow the city to track progress.

About this toolkit

This toolkit is intended to help you initiate and structure productive conversations with members of your community about climate action - whether that community is your neighborhood, workplace, or any other group. The City of Saint Paul will gather feedback from these conversations to ensure that community perspective is incorporated into the planning and development of the updated Plan.

How to use this toolkit

You can use this toolkit in whatever way feels most productive for you and for your group! In this toolkit, you will find information about climate change, Saint Paul's climate actions, and critical impacts of climate change in communities across the city. We have included a suggested approach for starting the conversation, along with discussion questions. We hope you will send back your notes as we know that meaningful change must grow from actions informed by community!

What else can my community do to get involved?

There are many ways to get involved in localized efforts, from planting native flowers in your neighborhood, to joining task forces designed to review or implement actions. By visiting the CARP website below, you can access a list of resources and events related to Saint Paul's climate action planning process.

Take a survey about climate action in Saint Paul

Find more information at the CARP site

Setting up the conversation

Tips for a good discussion

Climate change can be controversial. Below are some suggestions to keep in mind for a productive discussion.

- ✓ Be clear about the goal of the conversation. What are you hoping the group will achieve?

- ✓ Be respectful of people and opinions, and encourage everyone in the group to do the same.

- ✓ Ensure that everyone in the group has a chance to share their thoughts, and be prepared to re-direct things as needed if one or two group members are dominating the conversation. Conversely, you may wish to encourage some to expand on their comments through additional prompts (e.g., "Can you say more about that?").

- ✓ Provide a common basis of understanding by making sure all group members have a chance to review the climate information in this toolkit.

- ✓ Encourage the group to speak from their own experience.

🕐 The structure outlined in this toolkit is designed to take about 1.5 hours, but your group is welcome to adjust as needed based on your time.

How will the city use this information?

The City of Saint Paul is using many sources of information in the process of updating its Climate Action & Resilience Plan, including feedback from community members. The information that is gathered from toolkit notes will help us learn about what is most important to people, along with what they would like to see the City doing to build resiliency to help communities thrive.

Discussion goal:

Gather together members of your community to talk about impacts of climate change in your neighborhood and in your lives; engage in thoughtful conversation about ways to reduce impact and build resilience.

Part 1: Welcome

Welcome group members to the space and set ground rules for the conversation, if desired. Remind everyone of the goal for the conversation, and let them know about the plan for your time together (e.g., outline the agenda or timing of things). Begin to engage the group with one of the suggested warm-up questions (or one of your own!).

TIP: Choose a facilitator to help guide the conversation and take notes on key discussion points and ideas

Part 2: Think-Pair-Share

Introduce the first question, and ask everyone to take a moment to jot down their thoughts. Depending on the group and how much time you have, aim for 5 minutes.

Then, ask everyone to pair up with another person - ideally, this will be someone they don't know very well, but your group may wish to use intentional pairing if it feels more comfortable. Invite each pair to discuss what they wrote, noting similarities or differences between responses. The timing will again depend on your group, but about 10 minutes should suffice.

Finally, ask each pair to share out what they discussed, and encourage all to participate in the ensuing conversation.

For question 2, repeat this process with either the same pairs or different ones, depending on your group's preference.

Part 3: Big ideas

Now that everyone has had a chance to share about different aspects of climate change and about their experience, engage the group in a discussion about the "big ideas" covered in questions 3 and 4.

Review the "topics to consider" with the group, and ask if there are others the group wants to discuss.

Discuss questions 3 and 4 as a group - you may wish to approach this with informal conversation, or consider utilizing a concept mapping approach to take notes and encourage more interaction with the ideas.

Discussion questions
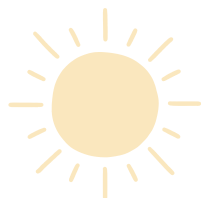
Warm-up question:
What is one special place in your neighborhood, or what is one thing you love about your neighborhood?

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1 What are the changes you have noticed in your community related to climate change? How do they impact you?

2 What are the top concerns you have about climate change for your household? For your community?

3 What are the most important things for the City to work on related to climate change? What change do you most want to see?

4 What kinds of support or resources would you like related to climate change? What are 3 things you or your community can do to reduce your impact?

Topics to consider:

- Public transit options
- Walk/bike infrastructure
- Personal vehicle use
- Reducing waste
- Increasing composting & recycling practices

- Access to fresh food
- Access to green space
- Household energy costs
- Renewable energy
- Increasing overall temperatures

- Extreme heat events
- Dramatic changes in precipitation
- Air & water quality
- Decreasing water consumption

What should our group do now?

Ways for you to share your notes and wrap up your toolkit conversation

Ready to **share your notes & feedback** with us?

Head to
engagestpaul.org/climate2025
and scroll down to "Toolkit users"

Met in person? Took notes on paper?
Using your phone or a camera, take a picture of your notes and upload with the button on the page

Met virtually & used a virtual whiteboard?
Take a screenshot of your notes and upload with the button on the page

Typed your notes?
Copy and paste them into the text box, or email them

Ready to **participate in our survey** about this topic?

Head to
engagestpaul.org/climate2025
and scroll down to "Take a survey"

Have group members take the survey individually
Set aside the last 5-10 minutes of your conversation for members of your group to take the survey individually

Discussion notes

Key issues, opportunities, and big ideas that emerged

Discussion notes

Other notes about the group, the process, or this toolkit

For more information about the Plan update, and to share your conversation notes, visit:
engagestpaul.org/climate2025

Find the City's climate data at:
climateaction.stpaul.gov

Questions? Contact us at:
carpupdate@ci.stpaul.mn.us