

3. Working with partners to *integrate mitigation and adaptive measures* for climate change into existing policies, plans, programs and practices.

Key actions include:

- Developing integrated watershed plans and detailed water budgets
- Enhancing water and climate monitoring networks
- Integrating climate change projections into the assessment of hazards such as flooding
- Reviewing stormwater management guidelines
- Increasing tree canopy coverage and restoring and enhancing wetlands in priority areas

4. Working with partners to *develop new policies, plans, programs and practices* where needed to mitigate climate change and reduce vulnerability to climate change impacts.

Key actions include:

- Reducing HCA's corporate greenhouse gas footprint
- Integrating the impacts of climate change into shoreline plans
- Implementing low impact development approaches for urban development and redevelopment
- Identifying and acquiring priority lands to connect existing greenlands



What are the benefits of the Strategy?

Increasing the resiliency of our watersheds, communities and infrastructure will provide many benefits. These include:

- Reduced property damage and potential loss of life
- Reduced impacts from extreme events including flooding
- Reduced impacts from erosion
- Healthier aquatic and terrestrial habitats
- Reduced risks to drinking water
- Reduced risks to municipal infrastructure
- Reduced impacts on outdoor recreation
- Reduced impacts on local food production
- Reduced costs from climate change impacts and extreme events
- A better informed and prepared public
- Healthier people and communities



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HAMILTON CONSERVATION AUTHORITY

CLIMATE CHANGE STRATEGY

Increasing the resiliency of our watersheds, systems and communities to meet the challenges of our changing climate.



Hamilton Conservation Authority

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Why does climate change matter?

Most international climate scientists agree on four things about climate change:

- It is taking place
- It is caused by human activities
- Its impacts are already being felt in many regions around the world
- The impacts will get worse over time

Here in the Hamilton area, the records show that our climate has changed significantly over the last 40 years. Average annual temperatures have risen by about one degree Celsius and the patterns of precipitation have changed. Our climate is warmer and wetter than it was 40 years ago, except in the winter when it is warmer and drier with more precipitation falling as rain rather than snow.

Although these measured changes are as yet relatively small, the impacts can be very big. We have already seen periods of prolonged drought and intense rainstorms that cause flooding and erosion. These climate changes can have profound effects on our watersheds, communities and infrastructure.



Flooding on Red Hill Valley Parkway (July 26, 2009)
Photo Courtesy of Hamilton Spectator



Erosion on Spencer Creek (March 12-14, 2010)



Drought in Spencer Creek (August 2007)



Micro-burst in Christie Conservation Area (Spring 2011)

What are we doing about it?

HCA is taking action now, taking a proactive approach to this challenge. HCA's Climate Change Strategy lays out a strategic direction for actions relating to climate change. The overall goal of the Strategy is to *increase the resiliency of our watersheds, systems (natural and man-made) and communities to meet the challenge of climate change*. We will achieve this by working in four major areas:

1. *Increasing our understanding* of climate change including what can be done to mitigate it, what the impacts will be on watersheds, systems and communities, and how we can adapt to these impacts.

Key actions include:

- Refining tools to improve regional climate change projections and forecasting
- Assessing vulnerability to climate change
- Identifying adaptation measures to reduce the impacts of climate change on resources, habitats and systems

2. *Sharing knowledge and information* about climate change with our partners (agencies, municipalities, academia, the business and agricultural communities, Non-Governmental Organizations and the public).

Key actions include:

- Communicating projections about climate changes and the resulting impacts
- Educating staff, partners and the public on the need for both mitigation and adaptation to climate change
- Reporting on key indicators of climate change
- Providing information, forecasts, models and tools to stakeholders.