

Climate Resilience in Youngstown, OH

THE CITY OF



**COMMUNITY
DEVELOPMENT**



Climate Resilience in Youngstown, OH

Youngstown, Ohio faces increasing risks of extreme heat, heavy rainfall, and flooding due to climate change, requiring resilience strategies like green infrastructure and cooling stations to mitigate impacts on health and infrastructure. Local officials and organizations are engaged in addressing these challenges, exploring opportunities for energy efficiency and sustainability, though funding and implementation remain significant hurdles to creating effective, long-term climate resilience.

Climate Resilience Adaptation: There are substantial synergies between successful adaptations to climate change and successful development. Reduction in poverty, which includes improvements in housing and living conditions and in provision of infrastructure and services, are central to adaptation. Well-governed cities will greatly reduce climate related risks for our lower income population.

Key Climate Risks for Youngstown

Extreme Heat: The region is projected to see a significant increase in hot days per year, impacting public health.

Heavy Rainfall & Flooding: Projections indicate more extreme precipitation events and increased yearly rainfall, increasing the risk of flooding.

Drought Risk: While currently low, the interplay of longer dry periods and intense rainfall could affect water resources and local agriculture.

Strategies for Building Resilience

Infrastructure Improvements: Investing in green infrastructure, such as increased tree canopies and better stormwater management, can help mitigate flood impacts and reduce heat.

Cooling Centers: Establishing cooling stations provides immediate relief during periods of extreme heat, a key strategy for protecting vulnerable populations.

Energy Efficiency: Upgrades to LED lighting for traffic and streetlights, as well as modernizing municipal buildings and wastewater treatment plants, can reduce energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions.

Future-Proofing Infrastructure: Adapting current infrastructure to better withstand future climate impacts is crucial for the long-term health and stability of the city.

Community Engagement: Local forums and organizations are discussing climate impacts and strategies, fostering dialogue and community-driven solutions.

Important Keys to Accomplishing Climate Resilience Needs

- Housing and infrastructure policies and housing finance systems that support better quality housing and provision of water and sanitation
- Understanding that the vulnerability of low income residents to climate change may be more closely associated with failures and limitations of local government rather than the poverty of the residents.

Steps to Accomplish Climate Resilience Needs

- Expand the circulation of climate knowledge among departments in local government
- Improve local government's ability to respond to extreme climate events
- Advance local government's capacity to respond local extreme climate events
- Improve dissemination of climate information to households and community organizations to advance knowledge and capacity to respond and act regarding extreme climate situations.
- Nurture local government's willingness to work with lower income groups in the community

Challenges and Opportunities

Funding and Implementation: A primary obstacle is the lack of funding and the slow pace of implementing resilience projects.

Collaboration: Bridging the gap between planners, residents, and infrastructure providers is essential for success.

Economic Opportunity: Some experts see the need for increased investment in infrastructure and community development as an opportunity for Youngstown to attract new residents and build a stronger future.

The Financial Cost of Climate Change in Youngstown – WKBN 2023

(WKBN) – As climate change continues to affect communities worldwide, a state-wide organization has looked at how it can affect the Youngstown area, and how much it could cost.

The Ohio Environmental Council released a report last year calculating the rising costs related to climate change. On Thursday, the group presented that report in Youngstown.

“By 2050, the state of Ohio and the local communities within it will have to pay between \$2-6 billion more a year in local government funding to respond to the impacts of climate change,” said Nolan Rutschilling, managing director of energy policy for the Ohio Environmental Council.

Rutschilling says climate change has the ability to impact many things including electrical costs, road repairs, drinking water treatment and more.

Climate change will bring more extreme weather, more variable weather, more extreme rainfall, less predictable weather, more extreme highs, more low cold temperatures. All of that means we'll see more rain, more snow, more flooding that will impact our infrastructure in the state,” he said.

Rutschilling says this will cause more potholes and damage to the roads and waterways.

According to the report, the current annual cost of utility spending in Youngstown is \$2.8 million. The report states that by 2050, that number can increase anywhere from \$14,000 – \$210,000 more.

Rutschilling says local governments have the ability to lessen the impact on costs. “From a local government perspective, it's all about planning and being able to respond. Local governments need to start considering the impacts of climate change in their long-term planning and budgeting.” Residents can also be more deliberate by doing things such as installing solar panels and using appliances that reduce energy consumption.