

Roundtable Report

Community Climate Resilience: Health, Wellbeing & Health Systems



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Executive Summary

Building Community Resilience to Climate Change

On December 13, 2024, the **Collaborative Centre for Climate, Health, and Sustainable Care**, a multi-faculty academic unit at the University of Toronto, in partnership with the Community Development Unit, Social Development, Finance & Administration at the City of Toronto, hosted the ***Community Climate Resilience Roundtable: Health, Wellbeing, and Health Systems***.

The roundtable brought together key actors from diverse sectors working on community climate resilience, including researchers, and representatives from community and non-profit organizations, Ontario Health Teams, public health, and municipal, regional, and federal governments. The event provided a forum to discuss critical challenges and opportunities in addressing the risks and impacts of climate change on the health and wellbeing of communities in Toronto, particularly from reconciliation, justice and equity perspectives.

Goals for the day:

- Convene and connect key actors working on community climate resilience from health, wellbeing and reconciliation, justice and equity perspectives
- Facilitate understanding of each other's work in the community climate resilience space
- Foster relationships for future dialogue and partnerships

This report highlights the key insights, questions and potential next steps emerging from the roundtable and serves as a support to advancing community and equity-focused climate resilience efforts in the city.

Introduction & Motivation

Climate change is having a profound impact on health and health equity, with risks expected to grow. Recognizing this, a wide range of organizations are engaging in community climate resilience work, both through climate-resilience specific initiatives or indirectly by integrating considerations of climate risks and adaptation into existing programs and services. Discussions between the *Collaborative Centre for Climate, Health & Sustainable Care* at the *University of Toronto* and the *Community Development Unit, Social Development, Finance & Administration* at the *City of Toronto*, identified a potential gap in awareness of the growing number of actors and initiatives active on climate resilience and health in Toronto. These teams decided to plan the *Community Climate Resilience Roundtable* to facilitate cross-sector knowledge exchange and relationship-building and to assess the need going forward for such forums to share ongoing efforts, identify gaps, and explore potential areas of synergy and collaboration. To this end, the roundtable brought together key actors from across sectors, including health and community organizations, municipal and regional government representatives, and researchers to foster cross-sector dialogue, knowledge-sharing, and collaboration.

The roundtable was designed with a focus on reconciliation, justice and equity - acknowledging that climate change disproportionately impacts Indigenous, Black, and equity-deserving communities. These communities are often at the frontlines of climate-related risks, and are key drivers of climate action, yet remain underrepresented in decision-making spaces. The roundtable sought to centre equity and justice by highlighting the systemic inequities and social determinants of health as critical components of climate resilience.

The day consisted of:

- Two panel discussions
- Poster gallery
- Breakout discussions

Vision for Climate Justice & Action¹

The [Jane Finch Community Development Plan](#) includes the following vision for Climate Justice & Action, which describes how the City of Toronto envisions the long-term impact of the proposed actions in the plan:

- A Jane Finch community that recognizes and incorporates the lived/living experiences of Indigenous, Black, and equity-deserving communities to support community resilience.
- A Jane Finch community that is strong and adapts to the immediate impacts of extreme weather and hazards.
- A Jane Finch community where residents, families, local organizations and institutions, labour force members (workers), and local businesses directly benefit from investments into climate mitigation and climate resilience.

The City of Toronto Social Development Division's increasing emphasis on climate justice and action offers modest insights into an evolving Social Development division-led definition of community climate resilience.

Partners on this work include: United Way, Metcalf Foundation, Laidlaw Foundation, Toronto Workforce Funders Collaborative, MLSE Foundation, LesLois Shaw Foundation, Toronto Arts Council, McConnell Foundation.

Community Coordination Plan

Developed in partnership with United Way Greater Toronto, the [Community Coordination Plan](#) ensures coordination and communication with more than 350 community-based organizations. The partnership model implements service coordination and hyper-local solutions to meet the needs of Toronto's equity-deserving communities.

The Community Coordination Plan is made up of ten geographic Clusters (see [clusters here](#)) and two non-geographic Clusters (Black Resilience & Newcomer Clusters) which collaborate on managing real-time issues, identifying and addressing emerging needs, supporting access to resources, and escalating systemic challenges through identified City and United Way Greater Toronto channels.

In responding to the COVID-19 pandemic, United Way Greater Toronto, City of Toronto, and Community Coordination Plan Cluster partner organizations identified the need to prioritize community resilience and sector preparedness to address future urban shocks and stressors, as well as equitable urgent needs responses, through strategic and coordinated collaboration. Based on the 2022 Community Coordination Plan Evaluation and subsequent conversations with the Cluster partner organizations, it was determined that creating a common set of actions and readiness factors for each Cluster is a key component of leveraging the unique capacity developed since the start of the Community Coordination Plan.

Community Coordination Plan Community Resilience Pilot

Led by the Canadian Red Cross and funded by United Way Greater Toronto, the Community Coordination Plan Community Resilience Pilot aimed to better understand the level of preparedness of partner organizations and pathways to Cluster-wide response when faced with climate-related disasters and other emergencies. Pilot activities took place in the East York Don Valley and North Etobicoke Clusters and included:

- Assessment of preparedness assets, gaps and vulnerabilities of participating organizations through the [Ready Rating Program](#)
- Identification of capacities, strengths, and opportunities in each pilot Cluster
- Creation of a common set of actions and readiness factors for each pilot Cluster
- Completion of a simulation activity, designed and implemented by Canadian Red Cross staff, with each pilot Cluster

Panel 1: City & Community Climate Resilience Priorities & Actions

This panel provided an overview of the climate resilience portfolio and priorities of the City of Toronto Environment, Climate and Forestry (ECF) Division, highlighted the disproportionate impacts of climate change faced by racialized communities in Toronto, and introduced actions and opportunities for engaging communities on climate policy and building community capacity for resilience.

Presentation 1:

City of Toronto Climate Resilience Priorities & Actions

- **Dr. Stephanie Gower**,
Program Manager –
Resilience, Environment,
Climate & Forestry
Division, City of Toronto

Summary: The Environment, Climate & Forestry Division advances the City of Toronto's environmental priorities, including leading efforts to mitigate greenhouse gas emissions and build a climate resilient city. Dr. Gower outlined the division's climate resilience priorities & actions.

Key take-aways:

- Frame climate resilience work as a present and urgent priority
- Provide data and tools to facilitate communications
- Break silos to improve collaboration on resilience work.

Coordinating & convening an all-of-city corporate climate resilience approach: The need for an approach that engages all city divisions, agencies and corporations is outlined in a [2024 Staff report to City Council](#). This work involves creating structures to enable collaboration to identify and prioritize risks, gaps and needed actions.

Embedding Indigenous Worldviews: The team aims to incorporate Indigenous worldviews into climate policy. Thus far, the Division has started building relationships with local communities through [Indigenous Climate Action Grants](#) and added a second Indigenous staff position to help with relationship-building and capacity-building.

Developing and providing information to guide climate resilience work: The City has released updated climate projections that show how Toronto's climate has changed and is expected to change in the future and is evaluating top climate risks to people, assets, and services to inform short and long-term priorities for building resilience. This includes:

- **Climate Projections:** [Toronto's Current & Future Climate Report](#), prepared for the City by Toronto and Region Conservation Authority. Visit toronto.ca/ClimateReady for infographics, reports, and more information.
- **City-wide Climate Risk & Vulnerability Assessment:** Identifying priority risks and adaptation actions for the City to become better prepared for climate change.
- **Cost of Climate Change:** Developing a report to assess the financial and social costs of inaction (underway).
- **Monitoring, Evaluation & Reporting (MER):** Conducting a research study on best practices to inform climate resilience MER program (underway).
- **Spatial Climate Vulnerability Index:** Conducting a study of best practices in evaluating spatial climate vulnerability and developing an index and dashboard to inform priority neighbourhoods for building resilience (underway).

Panel 1: City & Community Climate Resilience Priorities & Actions

Presentation 2:

Climate Adaptation & Black Communities

- **Dr. Ingrid Waldron**, Professor, HOPE Chair in Peace and Health, Global Peace and Social Justice Program, Faculty of Humanities, McMaster University

Summary: Dr. Waldron provided an overview of the intersection between climate change and systemic inequities, emphasizing the disproportionate climate burdens faced by Black and other racialized and marginalized communities. She highlighted the need for a climate justice framework that accounts for these disparities and promotes community-led solutions.

Key take-aways: Climate justice is not just about environmental change; it requires addressing long-standing social determinants of health and ensuring that communities most affected by climate impacts are meaningfully involved in decision-making.

Structural Inequities & Climate Vulnerability: Climate change compounds existing racial and socioeconomic inequities, particularly in housing, health, and environmental exposure.

Community-Based Research & Action: Dr. Waldron has been leading research in the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area (GTHA) to build on the expertise and lived experiences within Black communities, increase awareness about the unique impacts of climate change, and identify how to support specific community needs and priorities in the face of climate impacts.

Policy Advocacy & Knowledge Mobilization:

- A series of workshops were conducted in Black communities across the GTHA, summarized in a final Workshop Report and Policy Brief; these have been submitted to the City of Toronto and the City of Hamilton.
- A documentary titled "A Matter of Justice: Climate Change in Black Communities in the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area" was produced, featuring community voices and lived experiences.
- Ongoing collaborations with community organizations, including Toronto Environmental Alliance and the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists to advance climate justice advocacy.

Panel 2: Data, Knowledge & Understanding Gaps for Community Climate Resilience

This panel focused on the data, knowledge, and tools needed to advance climate resilience while addressing systemic inequities.

Presentation 1:

Leveraging CANUE Data for Actionable Tools

- **Dr. Jeffrey Brook**,
Scientific Director and
Principal Investigator,
Canadian Urban
Environmental Health
Research Consortium
(CANUE); Associate
Professor, Dalla Lana
School of Public Health,
University of Toronto

Summary: Dr. Brook introduced HealthyPlan.City, a tool designed to make health-relevant climate and environmental data more accessible and actionable for community organizations and policymakers. The platform aggregates spatial environmental health data to assess vulnerabilities and guide resilience planning.

Key take-aways: Providing communities with accessible climate and health data is essential for fostering equity-driven climate resilience planning and empowering community engagement in decision-making.

Community-Accessible Climate Data: The HealthyPlan.City tool translates data on environmental conditions and vulnerable populations into interactive maps that can inform urban planning and policy. For example, the tool could be used to map average summer temperature, socio-economic vulnerable populations, and environmental conditions to identify priority areas for risk of heat-related illness.

Health & Climate Inequities: Research conducted by CANUE highlights disparities in environmental conditions across Canadian cities, particularly in lower-income and racialized neighbourhoods.

- Making data accessible: CANUE data are available to all Canadian academic researchers and trainees.
- Development of a Climate Risk & Equity Indicator, a tool designed to compare climate risks and identify areas requiring urgent action.

Panel 2: Data, Knowledge & Understanding Gaps for Community Climate Resilience

Presentation 2:

Indigenous Knowledge and Nature-Based Solutions

- **Carolynne Crawley**,
Founder, Turtle Protectors
& Member of the
Indigenous Land
Stewardship Circle

Summary: Indigenous knowledge and practices plays a vital role in climate resilience. Indigenous communities have long been caretakers of the land and integrating Indigenous perspectives, voices, and leadership into climate action is essential for sustainable and equitable solutions.

Key take-aways: Climate resilience planning must move beyond human-centered approaches and integrate Indigenous knowledge systems, leadership, and land stewardship practices to ensure sustainable and just climate solutions.

Interconnectedness of All Living Beings: Indigenous worldviews emphasize that climate action must extend beyond human-centered approaches to consider the well-being of land, water, and non-human beings.

The Importance of Land Stewardship: Indigenous communities protect 80% of the world's biodiversity, despite making up less than 5% of the global population.

- Western climate action often overlooks climate change impacts on wildlife, plants, and ecosystems, which are central to Indigenous climate strategies.
- Urban development and climate-related disasters disproportionately harm Indigenous lands, and this should be reflected in policy.

Two-Eyed Seeing Approach: The concept of Two-Eyed Seeing calls for integrating Indigenous ways of knowing with Western scientific approaches to create more holistic and effective climate solutions.

- The Indigenous Land Stewardship Circle is actively working on initiatives that merge Indigenous ecological knowledge with urban planning in Toronto.
- Turtle Protectors is an Indigenous guided stewardship program using a two-eyed seeing approach to advocate, support and protect turtle relatives living within city parks in Toronto.

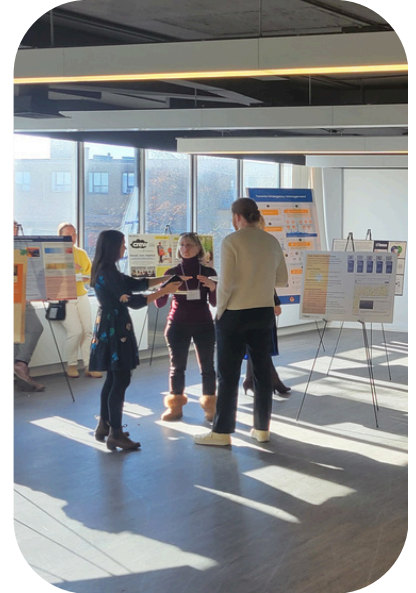
The Role of Wetlands in Climate Resilience: Wetlands serve as natural carbon sinks, mitigate excess rainfall, and reduce flood risks, yet 70% of Canada's wetlands have been destroyed since colonization.³

- Urban expansion has led to an 85% loss of wetlands in cities, exacerbating climate vulnerabilities.⁴
- Restoration and protection of wetlands and other natural landscapes are crucial for long-term climate adaptation.

Poster Gallery

As part of the roundtable, participating organizations and researchers were asked to develop posters summarizing their work, highlighting climate-related activities and priorities (strategy, programs/projects, research, etc.), which were presented in a poster gallery. Participants were also asked to include any key questions informing or emerging from their climate resilience work, arising opportunities and interests, and/or next steps on their posters.

Participants were provided viewing time during the lunch break and encouraged to discuss posters with each other. This poster gallery facilitated a baseline understanding of each other's related work and priorities in the climate resilience space and helped to inform the breakout discussions. See the [Posters Summary](#) in the appendix for brief descriptions of each poster.



Breakout Discussion

Participants were invited to participate in breakout discussions, facilitated through a World Café. Participants were asked to circulate and reflect on the following questions:

1. In our collective community climate resilience work in Toronto, what do you see is missing?

- Where is more work needed?
- What is needed to do this work (data, funding, tools, etc.)?

2. In the climate resilience work you have been involved in, how has or might centering equity stretch your work and require you to think and work in new ways?

- What could be helpful to you/your organization to support this?

3. What are the priorities and opportunities you see for collaboration to further community climate resilience work?

- Who would you like to see at the table in future, and how do we bring them in?

The following section summarizes the breakout discussions and key themes that emerged.

Breakout Discussion Summary

1. Challenges in Advancing Community Climate Resilience

Participants highlighted several challenges that impede the advancement on community climate resilience efforts, including:

- **Language & Framing:** Many organizations and individuals do not identify their work as climate-related, even when their efforts contribute to climate resilience. The use of technical jargon or sector-specific terminology can create barriers to engagement, making it difficult for some groups to see how their work aligns with climate resilience.
- **Limited Representation & Inclusion:** Indigenous, Black, other racialized, low income, unhoused, underhoused, and 2SLGBTQ+ communities, remain underrepresented in leadership roles and decision-making processes.
- **Siloed Approaches:** A lack of coordination within organizations and among levels of government, researchers, and community organizations creates inefficiencies and prevents integrated planning, coordination and responses to climate impacts and events.
- **Community Fatigue:** Organizations and communities are stretched thin due to the prolonged impacts of COVID-19 and other crises, which affects their ability to engage in additional work to better address and prepare for further impacts of climate change.

2. Opportunities for Reconciliation, Equity & Justice-Centred Approaches

Reconciliation, equity and justice emerged as a cornerstone for effective community climate resilience work, with participants identifying several opportunities to center just approaches, including:

- **Cultural Sensitivity:** Ensuring that climate resilience efforts acknowledge and integrate cultural traditions, worldviews, and lived experiences is essential for fostering trust and engagement. For example, Indigenous knowledge systems emphasize a holistic relationship with the land, which can inform nature-based approaches to climate resilience. The importance of embedding Indigenous worldviews into policy and planning was highlighted as a key priority.
- **Community Engagement:** Involving communities in sustained engagement and meaningful consultation, or even co-creation, is important to develop trust and ensure that strategies, policies, and programs to build community climate resilience reflect local needs and realities.
- **Intersectional Perspectives:** Recognizing the interconnectedness of housing, transportation, food security, mental health, and health is necessary to develop solutions that address root causes of inequities while also building resilience.



3. Integrate Climate Resilience in Health Sector Planning

Climate change is a threat multiplier, exacerbating pre-existing health conditions, social inequities, and mental health. The health sector – including public health, primary care, community care and institutional care – plays a critical role in responding to the health impacts of climate change. Yet, participants noted that health system and climate resilience planning are siloed and discussed a few opportunities to improve this, including:

- **Embed community climate resilience in health sector planning:** Climate change as a threat multiplier that exacerbates pre-existing social and health inequities, and this needs to be recognized in health sector planning and policy.
- **Overcome silos:** Collaboration between health institutions, climate policymakers, and community organizations is needed to ensure integrated approaches.
- **Strengthen capacity:** Train health and care professionals on climate-related health risks and how to support community-based adaptation strategies.

4. Data & Knowledge Sharing

Participants emphasized the importance of data and tools to inform climate resilience planning, particularly for community organizations, including:

- **Accessible Data:** There is a need for formal mechanisms to aggregate and share climate-related data across sectors, and ensuring that the data, tools, and language are made accessible to non-academic stakeholders.
- **Capacity Building:** Training and mentorship programs could empower communities to interpret data and more actively engage in local planning and decision-making. Participants emphasized that many community organizations lack access to climate data or the technical expertise to analyze it. Developing accessible, user-friendly training initiatives—such as workshops on reading climate vulnerability data and maps and how to use interactive and accessible tools — could support community leaders in informing and advocating for data-driven decisions that align with their community's needs.

5. Building Community Capacity & Collaboration

Participants discussed the need for sustained investment in community organizations and cross-sector coalitions to further develop capacity for resilience work, including:

- **Funding & Resources:** Participants stressed the importance of long-term funding to support local efforts; many community organizations and initiatives rely on a combination of paid staff and volunteer contributions, and without sustainable funding, there is a risk of burnout for both. Ensuring that climate resilience work is adequately resourced allows for the retention of skilled personnel and reduces the reliance on unpaid labor, which can disproportionately affect equity-deserving groups.



- **Mapping & Asset Building:** Conduct asset mapping to identify the resources, skills, and roles of organizations, communities, and individuals currently involved in work related to climate resilience and use this information to foster collaboration and build on existing assets.
- **Resilience Hubs:** Utilizing existing community spaces, such as libraries and neighbourhood hubs, for resilience activities can strengthen local networks and provide resources during climate-related emergencies. Other resources that communities may need should also be considered in development, such as transportation, childcare, and food access.
- **Cross-Sector Collaboration:** Bridging gaps between government, researchers, and community organizations is essential to ensure alignment and foster collective and synergistic action. There may also be opportunities to engage the private sector.

6. Challenges & Strategies for Engagement

Participants also discussed the need to engage beyond the groups that are often involved in climate change work by:

- **Framing Climate Change as an Opportunity:** Reframing climate resilience work as an opportunity to address systemic social issues that are exacerbated under climate change, such as insecure and/or substandard housing, poverty and food insecurity. This could help to engage more community organizations and community leaders in climate resilience work.
- **Building Trust & Relationships:** Transparent, consistent communication is essential to foster trust and encourage meaningful participation from equity-deserving groups. Participants emphasized that engagement efforts must be ongoing, not one-time consultations. Community organizations have expressed frustration with being approached only during crises or for input on pre-determined policies. Instead, trust-building requires co-creation, sustained dialogue, and ensuring that communities see tangible outcomes from their contributions.
 - Examples discussed included partnering with trusted local organizations to facilitate outreach and providing accessible, multilingual materials to ensure inclusivity.
- **Breaking the Echo Chamber:** Participants discussed strategies to expand climate conversations beyond those already engaged to promote broader awareness and understanding of climate change impacts, including integrating climate issues into broader civic discussions and public education campaigns.



Critical Issues & Insights

The following summarizes key ideas that emerged from the panel and breakout discussions.

1. Climate Resilient Planning

- **Embed climate resilience into city and health sector planning**, with a focus on equity-deserving communities.
- **Connect community climate resilience to the health sector** by embedding climate resilience in health sector planning, including recognizing that pre-existing social and health inequities are exacerbated by climate impacts.
- **Strengthen health worker capacity** by training health and care professionals on climate-related health risks and how to support community-based adaptation.

2. Centre Indigenous Reconciliation

- **Embed Indigenous knowledges** into climate resilience policy through meaningful collaboration, including co-governance models where Indigenous leaders play a direct role in decision-making.
- **Support Indigenous leadership** and integrate Indigenous land stewardship models.

3. Centre Equity & Justice

- **Address intersection of systemic anti-Black racism** and disproportionate climate vulnerability on established and emerging African, Caribbean, and Black communities across the GTHA.
- **Increase representation** of equity-deserving groups and vulnerable populations in leadership roles and decision-making bodies (e.g., municipal climate committees, advisory boards, etc.).
- **Integrate social and structural determinants of health** into climate policies, including addressing access to safe housing, food security, and economic stability.

4. Strengthen Community Engagement & Leadership for Resilience

- **Strengthen community relationships and engagement in decision-making** by involving community leaders and organizations in policy and program development.
- **Build trust through sustained community engagement**, ensuring that communities see tangible outcomes from their participation.
- **Strengthen networks and social fabric** within communities to enhance adaptive capacity by offering opportunities to engage with broader networks of stakeholders. Leverage existing networks, including the City and United Way Greater Toronto's [Community Coordination Plan](#), to affirm strategic approaches to community sector emergency preparedness and resilience through collaborative framework development.
- **Create long-term, flexible funding programs** to support community organizations beyond project-based grants and short-term crisis interventions.
- **Promote reciprocal relationships with nature**, engaging communities in restoration.

5. Address Data & Knowledge Gaps and Enhance Accessibility

- **Use accessible language** by avoiding technical jargon and sector-specific terminology and making connections between climate resilience and the issues that matter most to communities.
- **Recognize diverse knowledge systems** by making space for Indigenous knowledge systems and two-eyed seeing, as well as local community expertise.
- **Acknowledge diverse impacts and experiences** of climate shocks and stresses by tailoring programming to engage diverse communities and where appropriate, reflect unique cultures, experiences and needs. This could include tailoring programs for specific cultural communities, youth, or other shared lived experiences.
- **Develop accessible data hubs** by aggregating and sharing climate and health data across sectors in an accessible format.
- **Strengthen community capacity to mobilize data and engage in policy development** by investing in training on accessing and interpreting data and creating opportunities for community organizations to pair with data scientists and climate researchers.
- **Develop peer-learning platforms** to facilitate knowledge-sharing across sectors.

6. Overcome Silos and Strengthen Collaboration

- **Foster cross-sector collaboration** between government, agencies, health institutions, community organizations, and researchers.
- **Create convening bodies** (e.g., municipal climate networks) to align strategies and funding.

Conclusion

The roundtable emphasized the need for sustained collaboration, cross-sector coordination, and equity-driven approaches to climate resilience. Moving forward, key issues requiring attention include integrating climate resilience into health system planning and policy, strengthening community engagement and leadership in informing policy and program development and decision-making, and developing long-term funding mechanisms that support community organizations and community resilience initiatives. This report serves as a starting point for continued dialogue and collaboration to build a more resilient and equitable Toronto.



References

1. City of Toronto (2024). Jane Finch Community Development Plan Embed climate resilience into city and health sector planning, with a focus on equity-deserving communities.
2. National Geographic (n.d.) Can Indigenous land stewardship protect biodiversity? Retrieved from <https://www.nationalgeographic.com/environment/article/can-indigenous-land-stewardship-protect-biodiversity->
3. Government of Canada (2024, June 7). Wetlands: Nature-based climate solutions. Retrieved February 12, 2025, from <https://www.canada.ca/en/services/environment/our-environment/nature-based-climate-solutions/wetlands.html>
4. Boudreau, S. (2024, February 10). Why a rare urban wetland matters. SpruceLab. Retrieved February 12, 2025, from <https://sprucelab.ca/blog/why-a-rare-urban-wetland-matters>

Appendix: Agenda

December 13, 2024	
Time	Agenda Item
9:00 - 9:30 a.m.	Agenda Item
9:30 - 9:35 a.m.	Coffee & Connecting
9:35 - 9:40 a.m.	Land Acknowledgement
9:40 - 9:50 a.m.	African Ancestral Acknowledgement
9:50 - 10:40 a.m.	Welcome & Grounding
10:40 - 10:55 a.m.	<p>Panel & Dialogue: City & Community Climate Resilience Priorities & Actions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Stephanie Gower, Program Manager, Environment, Policy & Research, Environment & Climate Division. City of Toronto ◦ Ingrid Waldron, Professor & HOPE Chair in Peace & Health, Global Peace & Social Justice Program, McMaster University • Provocateur: Emmay Mah, Executive Director, Toronto Environmental Alliance
10:55 - 11:45 a.m.	Break
11:45am -1:00 p.m.	<p>Panel & Dialogue: Data, Knowledge & Understanding Gaps for Community Climate Resilience</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Jeff Brook, Associate Professor, Dalla Lana School of Public Health, UofT ◦ Carolynne Crawley, Founder, Msit No'kmaq • Provocateur: Jin Hee Kim, Public Health Physician, Public Health Ontario
1:00 - 1:05 p.m.	Lunch & Art Gallery: Mingle & view posters on each other's work
1:05 - 2:20 p.m.	Break
2:20 - 2:30 p.m.	World Café

Appendix: Attendees

Name	Organization
Kashtin Fitzsimmons	West Toronto Ontario Health Teams (OHT)
Margery Konan	East Toronto Health Partners OHT
Razia Rashed	East Toronto Health Partners OHT
Hijab Tufail	Canadian Red Cross
Liane Fernandes	Canadian Red Cross
Sandi Trillo	United Way
Jaymie Sampe	The 519 Community Centre
Barbara dos Santos	The 519 Community Centre
Kandace Ryckman	Health Commons Solutions Lab
Sonia Gaudry	Health Commons Solutions Lab
Melissa Wong	Social Planning Toronto
Junie Facey	Findhelp211
Pam Ryan	Toronto Public Library
Carolynne Crawley	Msit No'kmaq-Turtle Protectors
Haley Anderson	International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives (ICLEI), Ontario Resource Centre for Climate Adaptation (ORCCA)
Emmay Mah	Toronto Environmental Alliance (TEA)
Zouahl Kayoumi	TEA
Lidia Ferreira	Community Resilience to Extreme Weather (CREW)
Sean Kidd	Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH)
Mariya Bezgrebelna	CAMH
Daniel Rosenbaum	University Health Network (UHN)
Susan Deering	Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre
Louise Aubin	Peel Public Health
JinHee Kim	Public Health Ontario

Name	Organization
Katherine Charness	Health Canada, Climate Change and Health Office
Ingrid Waldron	McMaster University
Cheryl Teelucksingh	Toronto Metropolitan University
City of Toronto	
Stephanie Gower	Environment, Climate and Forestry Division
Adrian Lue	Environment, Climate and Forestry Division
Andrea Bastien	Environment, Climate and Forestry Division
Miranda Black	Environment, Climate and Forestry Division
Megan Yeandle	Toronto Emergency Management
Adel Merheb	Toronto Emergency Management
Leslie Shulman	Toronto Public Health
Kelly Sabaliaiskas	Toronto Public Health
Rebecca Wallace	Social Development, Finance & Administration
Imara Rolston	Social Development, Finance & Administration
John Smith	Social Development, Finance & Administration
Sara Teddese	Social Development, Finance & Administration
Menaka Raghavan	Social Development, Finance & Administration
University of Toronto	
Miriam Castillo-Orozco	CERC Network for Equity in Sustainability Transitions, University of Toronto Scarborough (UTSC)
Nira Elgueta	CERC Network for Equity in Sustainability Transitions, UTSC
Marianne Touchie	Department of Civil & Mining Engineering
Jeff Brook	CANUE, Dalla Lana School of Public Health
Fiona Miller	Collaborative Centre for Climate, Health, and Sustainable Care, Institute of Health Policy, Management and Evaluation
Brittany Maguire	Collaborative Centre for Climate, Health, and Sustainable Care
Asma Adam	Collaborative Centre for Climate, Health, and Sustainable Care

Appendix: Breakout Discussion Notes

This section summarizes notes collected from the breakout discussion.

Question 1. In our collective community climate resilience work, what do you see as missing?

- **Representation of Equity-Deserving Communities:** Black, other racialized, poor, and 2SLGBTQ+ communities need more representation and inclusion in climate work.
- **Power Shifts and Political Representation:** There is a need for more political representation for equity-deserving communities, as well as a shift in power dynamics to ensure that historically excluded groups are in leadership positions.
- **Community-First Engagement:** There is a need for deeper, more sustained community engagement, with a focus on building trust and empowering local voices.
- **Visible Local Champions:** Local leaders and community champions in climate resilience work need to be more visible and recognized for their efforts.
- **Cross-Issue Approaches:** Climate resilience work should address multiple interlinked issues (e.g., social justice, economic equity, and environmental sustainability).
- **Recognition of Community and Grassroots Organizations:** Grassroots and community-based organizations play a central role in community climate resilience but lack recognition and support they need to participate meaningfully and sustainably.

1.a. Where is more work needed?

- **Indigenous Leadership and Reconciliation:** Indigenous leadership, knowledge, and governance frameworks should be more prominently involved in climate work.
- **Empowerment of Equity-Deserving Groups:** More work is needed to ensure that Black, other racialized, poor, and 2SLGBTQ+ communities are not only included in conversations, but also have a voice in decision-making processes and leadership roles.
- **Capacity Building for Volunteers and Local Leaders:** Volunteers, particularly from equity-deserving communities, need more formal support, recognition, and compensation for their contributions to climate resilience efforts.
- **Fostering Community-Led Resilience:** More work is needed to ensure community-led decision-making processes, where local knowledge is centered and supported.
- **Support for Grassroots Initiatives:** Grassroots and community organizations should be more involved in climate resilience planning and implementation.
- **Building Cross-Issue and Cross-Sector Coalitions:** More efforts are needed to build coalitions that bridge those working in social justice, climate resilience, and economic development issues to create more integrated engagement and solutions.
- **Inclusion of Smaller Businesses:** Small businesses are often overlooked in climate resilience work. There is a need to better integrate them into community climate resilience strategies, helping them contribute to and benefit from these efforts.
- **Balancing Mitigation and Adaptation:** Consideration of strategies to balance mitigation (reducing contribution to climate change) and adaptation (adjusting to shocks and stresses of climate change), and those that offer co-benefits.

- **Nature-Based Solutions Implementation:** Nature-based solutions should be considered more for community climate resilience strategies. Urban forest cover, stormwater wetlands, rain gardens and other green infrastructure were identified as critical strategies to mitigate climate impacts (i.e., extreme heat, flooding).

1.b. What is needed to do this work (data, funding, tools, etc.)?

- **Ongoing and Transparent Community Engagement:** Transparent, continuous engagement is needed with communities to understand evolving needs, foster trust, and ensure that climate resilience efforts are community driven.
- **Access to Resources and Physical Spaces:** Communities may need improved access to physical spaces for climate resilience activities, as well as increased access to support and resources (e.g. transportation, childcare, and food access).
- **Sustained, Equitable Funding:** There is a need for long-term, equitable funding for community climate resilience work, particularly that prioritizes grassroot and community organizations and equity-deserving communities.
- **Coordination of Funding Mechanisms:** Funding mechanisms should be better coordinated across government, philanthropic sectors, and community organizations to ensure resources are effectively directed where they are needed.
- **Compensation for Volunteer Work:** Volunteers, particularly from equity-deserving communities, should be compensated for their work to prevent burnout and ensure that engagement is sustainable in the long run.
- **Data Access and Tools:** Communities may need access to data, along with tools and training to help interpret and use climate data for analysis of risks and opportunities, and informed local decision-making and action.
- **Knowledge-Sharing:** Platforms and networks for knowledge-sharing, peer learning, and good practice exchange for building community capacity and resilience.
- **Training and Mentorship:** More opportunities for training, education, and mentorship to build the capacity of community leaders and organizations on climate resilience. This could include facilitating connections between community organizations and researchers.
- **Integrated, Holistic Approach:** A holistic approach to climate resilience is needed, which incorporates social justice, equity, and environmental sustainability.

Question 2. In the climate resilience work you have been involved in, how has or might centering equity stretch your work and require you to think and work in new ways?

- **Including Equity-Deserving Populations:** Centering equity means recognizing and including underserved groups whose needs are often overlooked.
- **Expanding Stakeholder Engagement:** Centering equity requires engaging a broader and more diverse range of community members, especially including historically excluded and underserved groups, and ensuring they have a voice in decision-making.
- **Understanding Diverse Experiences:** Different communities may experience climate shocks and stresses differently. Approaches must be tailored to reflect unique experiences and needs to engage diverse communities.
- **Culturally Aware Communication:** Communications about climate change may resonate differently with different communities, and messaging may need to be tailored.

- **Addressing Climate Anxiety:** Incorporating mental health and climate anxiety into our resilience strategies is crucial, especially for vulnerable groups.
- **Challenging Institutional Boundaries:** Equity requires breaking down silos and working across institutions with different agendas to create more inclusive solutions.
- **Redefining Success Metrics:** Success in community climate resilience must go beyond reducing potential impact of climate risks — it should also include social trust, accessibility, and equity in service provision.

2.a. What could be helpful to you/your organization to support centering equity?

- **Capacity Building:** Training on community engagement at the intersections of climate change and equity, focusing on connecting with at-risk populations and empowering local communities and leaders. This could also include training on equity-focused emergency preparedness and response (e.g. for handling climate anxiety and trauma, 2SLGBTQ+ affirming practices).
- **Inclusive and Equitable Engagement:** More inclusive community engagement processes that respect cultural differences and diverse needs. Structures to support volunteer-led initiatives, ensuring responsibilities are shared equitably.
- **Trust Building:** Building trust through clear communication (e.g. on climate risks and emergency procedures), consistent and transparent actions, and follow-through.
- **Social Resilience:** Strengthening social fabric and networks within communities to enhance adaptive capacity, including through opportunities to engage with a broader network of community stakeholders.
- **Data and Mapping:** Better tools to understand population vulnerabilities, patterns, and climate risks through data. Filling data gaps, especially around equity-deserving communities' climate vulnerabilities.
- **Health Sector Planning:** A focus on incorporating climate resilience into health sector planning, particularly for vulnerable populations.

Question 3. What are the priorities and opportunities you see for collaboration to further community climate resilience work?

- **Leveraging Community Spaces:** Utilize community spaces such as libraries, neighborhood hubs, and gathering areas as hubs for building resilience, sharing knowledge, and fostering connection and collaboration.
- **Public Engagement:** Prioritize public engagement and clear messaging on climate hazards, ensuring communities understand the risks and opportunities associated with climate risks and community resilience building.
- **Youth Engagement:** Engage young people and youth organizations in climate resilience work to build a foundation for long-term community engagement.
- **Mapping and Asset Building:** Conduct asset mapping to identify the resources, skills, and roles of organizations, communities, and individuals involved in climate resilience work and use this information to foster collaboration.
- **Learning from Other Regions:** Look to other cities, regions, and countries for lessons on how to integrate climate resilience with equity.
- **Cross-Sector Collaboration:** Foster stronger connections between diverse sectors—local government, private sector, community groups, and academia—to work collectively towards common climate resilience goals.

- **Reframing Climate Challenges:** Reframe climate change risks and adaptation as an opportunity to address overlapping and systemic challenges (i.e. health & wellbeing, mental health, housing, food security, transportation, poverty, etc.)
 - **Health and Climate Co-Benefits:** Identify and promote co-benefits between health and wellbeing, sustainability, and climate resilience.
 - **Mental Health:** Address the mental health impacts of climate change, especially for underserved populations, and recognize the role of mental health services in resilience planning.
 - **Food Security:** Strengthen local food systems and address food security issues, particularly in vulnerable communities, as part of community resilience.
 - **Transportation and Infrastructure:** Strengthen transportation systems to enhance mobility and access to resources for vulnerable communities.

3.a. Who would you like to see at the table in future, and how do we bring them in?

- **At-Risk Communities:** Ensure representation from vulnerable groups such as refugees, undocumented individuals, 2SLGBTQ+ people, and those facing mental health challenges. Engage these communities through targeted outreach and collaboration.
- **Community Champions:** Mobilize local champions who are engaged in climate resilience efforts, and support them with resources, connections, and platforms.
- **Community Groups:** Engage grassroots and community organizations, including tenant and neighbourhood organizations, to inform climate resilience strategies and actions.
- **Indigenous Leaders:** Bring Indigenous leaders and elders into the decision-making process, respecting their knowledge and leadership in climate resilience efforts.
- **Local Government:** Local councilors and city officials must be involved to understand the needs of their communities and champion climate resilience policies.
- **Youth and Education Leaders:** Engage young people and educational institutions, fostering their involvement in resilience planning and long-term climate action.
- **Private Sector:** Involve private sector partners, particularly those with expertise in infrastructure, technology, and planning, to provide practical solutions and funding.
- **Health Sector:** Bring healthcare providers and public health experts to the table to integrate health considerations into climate resilience planning, focusing on the co-benefits between climate action and health and wellbeing.
- **Researchers:** Involve researchers and data experts to help communities access and interpret data on local climate impacts, risks, and opportunities for action.

Appendix: Posters Summary

Climate Resilience Work	Emerging Questions	Opportunities & Next Steps
Canadian Red Cross		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Disaster risk reduction and climate adaptation through preparedness workshops, resilience hubs, and Indigenous-led initiatives. Supporting emergency response efforts for extreme weather events and climate-related disasters Collaborating with municipalities to build capacity for localized emergency response programs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How can Indigenous knowledge inform disaster risk reduction strategies? How can at-risk populations be prioritized in response planning? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scale <i>Be Ready</i> emergency preparedness workshops to equip communities with essential response skills Expand partnerships with Indigenous communities to develop culturally relevant emergency response Strengthen volunteer networks to support emergency preparedness efforts at grassroots level
Canadian Poverty, Health Equity, and Climate Change Initiative		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Researching climate change's impact on health and poverty, particularly for housing-insecure populations Advocating for climate-informed social policies that address systemic inequities Conducting community-based participatory research to elevate lived experiences in policy discussions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How can climate-health equity be integrated into policy and urban planning? What interventions can better support low-income communities in climate resilience efforts? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advocate for climate-health equity policies (access to cooling in shelters, affordable housing units) Develop policy recommendations to integrate climate justice into urban planning frameworks Expand research collaborations to improve data collection on climate-related health inequities
City of Toronto – Community Development Unit		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strengthening civic participation and developing equity-based resilience strategies Exploring resilience hubs as social infrastructure to support climate adaptation Focusing on community-led responses to extreme weather and climate-related displacement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How do we center equity in community climate resilience work? How can we improve coordination between grassroots organizations and municipal government? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Formalize a community development framework for climate resilience Strengthen partnerships with Indigenous, Black, and equity-deserving communities Expand resident-led climate adaptation programs within neighbourhoods

Appendix: Posters Summary

Climate Resilience Work	Emerging Questions	Opportunities & Next Steps
City of Toronto – Environment, Climate & Forestry Division		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leading municipal climate resilience policy, including risk assessments and monitoring • Incorporating Indigenous worldviews in climate policy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How can interdivisional collaboration be improved to streamline climate adaptation work? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a Spatial Climate Vulnerability Index to prioritize high-risk neighborhoods for climate interventions
City of Toronto – Toronto Emergency Management (TEM)		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinating city-wide preparedness and response to climate-related emergencies, with a focus on equity-deserving communities • Conducting climate risk assessments to inform emergency response planning • Supporting the implementation of resilience hubs for emergency preparedness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How can climate adaptation be better integrated into emergency planning? • What strategies are needed to ensure emergency response plans are accessible and actionable for vulnerable populations? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop community-centered emergency preparedness, ensuring marginalized communities have tailored resources and response plans • Enhance collaboration with community organizations to improve local emergency response networks • Expand public education on climate-related emergencies and preparedness strategies
City of Toronto – Toronto Public Health		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhancing climate change health surveillance, focusing on heat and wildfire smoke risks • Developing interventions for extreme heat, including cooling center strategies • Addressing mental health impacts of climate change, including climate anxiety and trauma 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do we better support vulnerable residents during extreme heat and smoke events? • How can public health strategies align with broader climate adaptation planning? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthen partnerships to monitor and mitigate climate health risks, such as cooling infrastructure and air quality interventions • Expand community engagement to increase awareness and accessibility of extreme heat and air quality resources • Incorporate climate-related mental health initiatives into broader public health programming

Appendix: Posters Summary

Climate Resilience Work	Emerging Questions	Opportunities & Next Steps
City of Toronto & United Way – Community Coordination Plan		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coordinating nonprofit and municipal response to crises through a community cluster approach Leveraging lessons from COVID-19 response to strengthen climate resilience networks Enhancing cross-sector partnerships to align emergency response strategies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What role can community agencies and resident leaders play in emergency response? What data is available to assess climate vulnerability and how can it be leveraged for community response? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve climate-related data accessibility for local nonprofits to support decision-making Establish common emergency preparedness actions for each cluster to enhance efficiency Expand collaboration with municipalities to develop localized climate resilience hubs in high-risk areas
City of Mississauga		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Updating municipal climate resilience plan, supporting community food production, and establishing resilience hubs Providing financial incentives to residents for floor prevention improvements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What programs or supports does the community need most to build their resilience? How can the City best reach those residents who are most in need of the City's support? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete social vulnerability assessments to help prioritize where to focus programs and resources Pilot resilience hub model
CREW (Community Resilience to Extreme Weather)		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Grassroots-led climate resilience programs focusing on emergency preparedness, intergenerational engagement, and social cohesion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What resources do communities need to implement local climate action? How can hyper-local responses complement city-wide strategies? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expand emergency preparedness programs through volunteer training and resilience hubs Strengthen collaboration with local organizations
East Toronto Health Partners – Ontario Health Team & Taylor-Massey Residents Council		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supporting community leadership through Community Health Ambassadors and residents wellness council, which can play key role in climate emergency response 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How can Ontario Health Teams better support community resilience and preparedness? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strengthen role of community health ambassadors in climate emergency response Enhance collaboration with City of Toronto for emergency planning

Climate Resilience Work	Emerging Questions	Opportunities & Next Steps
Health Canada – Climate Change and Health Office		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implementing Canada's National Adaptation Strategy, focusing on climate-resilient health systems and extreme heat response Supporting municipalities and health authorities in integrating climate risk data into health system planning Running the HealthADAPT program to strengthen local health adaptation efforts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How can national adaptation efforts be localized to better support Toronto's communities? What role can the health sector play in proactive climate adaptation planning? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expand HeatADAPT program to enhance community-based cooling strategies and health interventions Develop guidance for health authorities on integrating climate risk data into long-term planning Strengthen cross-sector collaborations to align health and climate resilience strategies at federal, provincial, and municipal levels
Peel Public Health – Office of Climate Change & Energy Management		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conducted Climate Change and Health Vulnerability Assessment (2012 report) Mapping heat vulnerability Implementing tenant-focused adaptation strategies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How can collaboration between public health, housing services, conservation authorities, and municipalities be strengthened to improve knowledge translation and understanding of how to support community adaptation? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expand heat adaptation programs for multi-unit housing: capacity building among service providers, tenant education, prioritization for infrastructure supports Strengthen partnerships for effective climate communication strategies
Public Health Ontario (PHO)		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exploring climate related indicators for public health Developing a temperature-mortality model based on Ontario exposure and health data Developing a pilot study of summertime residential indoor temperatures where AC is not used 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What specific data and analyses can drive policy and action to improve public health? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage with field-based data users to ground-truth analyses and knowledge translation efforts

Climate Resilience Work	Emerging Questions	Opportunities & Next Steps
Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identifying barriers to accessing cooling devices for vulnerable populations Conducting research on climate change's impact on patient care and hospital preparedness Exploring strategies for hospitals to play a more active role in climate adaptation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How can healthcare providers support patients in securing government-funded cooling devices? What role can hospitals play in emergency preparedness for climate-related events? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop clear processes for primary care teams to identify and assist high-risk patients Advocate for hospital-based cooling centers during extreme heat events Strengthen inter-hospital networks to coordinate climate adaptation strategies
The ENRICH Project		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Addressing climate change's disproportionate impact on Black communities through research, advocacy, and policy development Investigating the intersections of environmental racism, climate justice, and public health Engaging in policy advocacy to ensure marginalized communities are included in resilience planning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How can Black communities be involved in climate resilience planning? What municipal partnerships are needed to advance climate equity? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop climate resilience plans for Black communities in collaboration with the City of Toronto Advocate for policies that address environmental racism and climate justice Strengthen community-led climate adaptation programs that focus on Black populations
Toronto Environmental Alliance (TEA)		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supporting community-led emergency response models for extreme weather, with a focus on high-rise buildings Advocating for policy changes to integrate climate resilience into housing regulations Conducting research on urban climate vulnerabilities and tenant adaptation strategies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How can grassroots-led emergency preparedness models be scaled across Toronto? What policies can better support tenants in climate adaptation efforts? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expand emergency response training for high-rise residents (volunteer-led) Advocate for the inclusion of tenant-focused climate adaptation in municipal housing regulations Strengthen partnerships with housing advocacy organizations to address climate vulnerabilities in rental housing

Climate Resilience Work	Emerging Questions	Opportunities & Next Steps
United Way Greater Toronto		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expanding Community Hubs to serve as resilience centers, providing services and space for emergency response • Supporting frontline organizations in preparing for and responding to climate-related crises • Advocating for more investment in social infrastructure to strengthen resilience in equity-deserving communities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What role can Community Hubs play in future emergency preparedness? • How can frontline organizations be better equipped to handle climate shocks? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrate resilience planning into new Community Hub developments, ensuring infrastructure is climate-adaptive • Advocate for sustained funding for frontline organizations engaged in resilience work • Strengthen partnerships between community agencies and municipal emergency response networks

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