

**Frequently Asked Questions – Climate Vulnerability Assessment**  
Prepared 9/27/23 by the Milwaukee County Office of Sustainability

*What is a vulnerability assessment, and why is it important?*

Vulnerability assessments help to identify the people and places most vulnerable to climate change. Milwaukee County's [assessment](#) examines local climate hazard projections under low- and high-emissions scenarios. The assessment identifies key climate change impacts, including temperature and heat wave impacts, precipitation impacts, flooding and erosional impacts, and highlights high priority vulnerabilities across the County.

By conducting a vulnerability assessment, Milwaukee County can help to ensure that the [Climate Action 2050 \(CA50\) Plan](#) is aligned with the [County's vision](#) to achieve racial equity. While everyone is impacted by climate change, some populations are more likely to have health conditions that make them sensitive to climate hazards like extreme heat and air pollution. The CA50 planning team will use the assessment findings to develop strategies and policies to mitigate these impacts and enhance community resilience to climate change.

*When and how was Milwaukee County's vulnerability assessment developed?*

In June 2023, [Climate Action 2050 Plan](#) consultants Energetics prepared the [Vulnerability Assessment Report](#) for Milwaukee County. Using outputs from four downscaled global climate models, the consultants identified three primary climate hazards in Milwaukee County: heat waves, flooding, and poor air quality. Under a global high-emissions scenario, Energetics found that average temperatures in the County could match those of St. Louis, Missouri by the year 2100, with wetter winters and drier summers.

*What are some key findings from the County's vulnerability assessment?*

As described in the [assessment report](#), climate change will have direct impacts on Milwaukee County residents and businesses. For example, heat waves could increase demand for air conditioning, leading to power outages and increased heat-related health concerns for residents. Unfortunately, these negative impacts could be compounded by the fact that vulnerable communities do not have the same access to adequate healthcare, transportation, or cooling centers.

Consultants Energetics found that some communities in Milwaukee County may be less resilient to climate change. For instance, neighborhoods with high concentrations of impermeable surfaces (buildings, paved roads, and parking lots), and a deficit of tree canopy and open space are more susceptible to heat waves and poor air quality. In general, local communities with less resilient infrastructure also tend to have higher social vulnerability – see pages 48-49 of the assessment report.

The assessment report identifies several park properties located in Milwaukee County that could potentially be affected by 100-year and 500-year floodplains (Hart Park, Kletsch Park, Lincoln Park, and Brown Deer Village Park). Flooding of these or other park properties could make them less accessible and enjoyable for county residents and visitors. This could result in decreased physical activity and social isolation, which can have negative impacts on health and well-being.

*Where can I go for more information?*

The [Vulnerability Assessment Report](#) includes an executive summary as well as detailed information about climate change vulnerability in Milwaukee County. The [Climate Action 2050 Plan](#) is being guided by Milwaukee County's Sustainability Task Force, whose meetings are open to the public. To learn about

upcoming or previous Sustainability Task Force meetings, visit <https://milwaukeecounty.legistar.com/Calendar.aspx>.