

For municipalities taking action for health and climate

Municipalities play a key role in protecting public health in the context of the climate crisis and biodiversity loss. By acting on the environment, land use planning, transportation, and safety, they are leveraging on several of their areas of responsibility to improve air quality, support the energy transition, protect biodiversity, and reduce inequalities in access to healthy and resilient living environments*.



How to make a difference?

1. Commit to healthy air

- Develop an ambitious action plan to reduce greenhouse gas emissions with measurable targets, and ensure the municipality leads by example in its decarbonization practices, urban planning, infrastructure, and purchasing.

2. Recognize the right to cool environments to protect vulnerable populations from extreme heat

- Adopt a municipal bylaw that includes measures to protect against oppressive heat, such as access to nearby cooling spaces (green and blue areas), free drinking water, awareness campaigns, creation of climate shelters, or adding shade in public spaces.

3. Join the Montréal Pledge for the protection of biodiversity

- Integrate into local policies concrete actions from this call to action to strengthen efforts to preserve ecosystems, which are essential for health and quality of life within a « One Health »** perspective.

* Please note that several links and resources in this document are only available in French.

** According to the World Health Organization, approach is « an integrated, unifying approach that aims to optimize the health of people, animals, and ecosystems, while finding a balance between these dimensions. ».

Get inspired, take action!

Air quality

- Several Québec municipalities have committed to reducing greenhouse gas emissions and achieving carbon neutrality through their « climate plans », including the cities of **Montréal**, **Québec**, and **Gatineau**.
- Canadian Association of Physicians for the Environment has published a **reference framework** for healthy air and recommends strengthening air quality monitoring and control tools in Québec.
- The Union des municipalités du Québec offers the **Decarbonization program** to help municipalities efficiently decarbonize their parks, buildings, and municipal vehicles.

Right to cool environments

Several resources are available to better understand the right to cool environments:

- ◊ An **infographic** from the University of British Columbia summarizing discussions on the right to cool environments.
- ◊ Two French articles from the **Conseil d'architecture, d'urbanisme et de l'environnement de Paris** and **Demain la ville** explaining the concept of the right to cool environments
- The City of Toronto has adopted a **Shade Code** to limit overexposure to the sun's ultraviolet rays through urban design, thus supporting physical activity, air quality, and the reduction of urban heat islands.
- The Institut national de santé publique du Québec offers several resources to address **urban heat islands**.
- The Urban Sustainability Directors Network explains the concept of **climate shelters** and provides examples of projects implemented by municipalities.

Biodiversity protection

Several initiatives support the call to action launched by the City of Montréal during COP15:

- The Borough of Mercier–Hochelaga–Maisonneuve has adopted a **biodiversity plan** that identifies species, key issues, and a series of actions to protect local wildlife and plant life.
- The City of Québec has developed its **2025–2040 Biodiversity Strategy** to conserve biodiversity, integrate it into the city, and promote access to nature.
- Nature Québec promotes the **approche 3-30-300**: be able to see at least 3 trees from your home; live in a neighborhood where 30% of the area is covered by trees; and live within 300 meters of a green space. This also serves as an indicator to address territorial inequalities.

Want to learn more about these health and climate priorities and initiatives?

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