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## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **GREAT LAKES CITIES PREPARE THE NATION FOR CLIMATE CHANGE**

#### **Grant will help cities evaluate vulnerabilities to climate change impacts**

March 15, 2017, Ann Arbor, MI – The Urban Sustainability Director’s Network (USDN) Innovation Fund has awarded a grant to the Great Lakes Climate Adaptation Network (GLCAN) to help five Great Lakes cities assess vulnerabilities to climate change impacts. The Huron River Watershed Council (HRWC) will work with the City of Ann Arbor and GLCAN to develop Vulnerability Assessments for use in city planning and budgeting, and to prepare for high heat, heavy intense rains and other anticipated climate impacts. The process and tools coming out of the project can be used by all cities in planning for climate change.

Cities require vulnerability assessments for virtually every planning process. From planning for natural hazards, to infrastructure design, to how a city will grow, vulnerability assessments shape future land use, policy, budget and decision-making. This effort will provide cities with climate-smart information that can be integrated into nearly all types of city planning, regardless of city size or location.

“Great Lakes cities face similar challenges of increased precipitation and extreme storms and GLCAN is a perfect venue for us to share information and create innovative strategies to support small to medium cities as they plan for climate change. We are pleased to partner with HRWC and the University of Michigan to support this project.” said Matthew Naud, the Environmental Coordinator for Ann Arbor.

HRWC will work with Ann Arbor, Dearborn, Bloomington, Indianapolis and Cleveland to develop a process and associated tools to allow cities throughout the US to replicate these efforts. NOAA’s Great Lakes Integrated Sciences + Assessments program will provide climate change data on historic trends and models of future trends to help cities assess vulnerabilities. As a result of the project, the participating Great Lakes cities will have a better understanding of anticipated climate changes and their potential impacts to the natural resources, infrastructure and people within their bounds. The assessments also seek to identify the particular vulnerabilities of underserved communities as they are often among the most impacted by extreme weather events.

“The intent of this project is really two-fold: first, reduce government expenditures by creating a process that allows a community to develop a single vulnerability assessment as opposed to creating multiple, competing assessments; and two, ensure that all planning and decision-making based on vulnerability assessments takes into consideration equity and climate change,” says Missy Stults, a climate adaptation expert working on the project.

Rebecca Esselman with the Huron River Watershed Council concludes, “Cities everywhere are feeling the impacts of climate change. Our planning approaches and how and where we invest in our cities must be recalibrated in order to prepare for a future where extreme weather events are more severe and more frequent.” These assessments will provide a path toward building more resilient cities.

#### **About the Huron River Watershed Council**

HRWC is a nonprofit coalition of local communities, businesses, and residents established in 1965 to protect the Huron River and its tributary streams, lakes, wetlands, and groundwater. HRWC protects and restores the river for healthy and vibrant communities. Services include hands-on citizen education,

technical assistance in policy development, and river protection and monitoring projects. See [www.hrwc.org](http://www.hrwc.org) for information.

### **About the Urban Sustainability Directors Network**

USDN's work is member led and member driven. Members collectively determine what priorities they have each year and lead the work to carry them out. USDN's ultimate goal is to build and strengthen the connections between members in order to quickly access each other's knowledge and expertise to achieve better, more effective outcomes at scale.

The connections fostered by USDN have become increasingly important as cities both large and small lead the way in developing the next generation of sustainable communities. Learn more about USDN [here](#).

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