

PLANET TEXAS 2050



*Art by Juliet Whitsett
Planet Texas 2050 Artist Fellow*

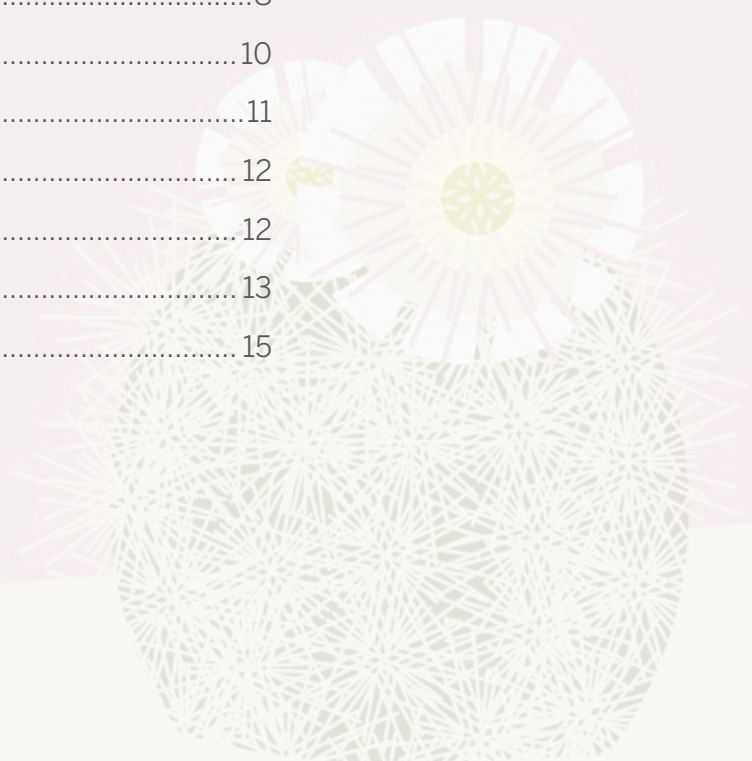
Fiscal Years 2022 and 2023 Biennial Report



The University of Texas at Austin
Research Development
*Vice President for Research, Scholarship
and Creative Endeavors*

Table of Contents

- Making Texas resilient is our grand challenge.2
 - Our Focus2
- Planet Texas 2050 Highlights in Numbers3
- Program Achievements4
 - Municipal Partnerships for Resilience4
 - Community Impact and Expanding Partnerships7
 - Creative Collaborations8
 - Planet Texas 2050 Headlines10
- Creating Connections11
- Funded Grants12
- Planet Texas 2050 Partners12
- Publications.....13
- Planet Texas 2050 Team15



Making Texas resilient is our grand challenge.

The reality of increased extreme weather events, combined with rapid population growth, poses complex challenges to our communities, ecosystems, and economic stability. These compounding and cascading effects will bring more floods, more droughts and more heat, affecting more people across Texas and beyond. In order to thrive, we need innovative strategies to equitably adapt to these new realities and to mitigate negative impacts to our communities.

Planet Texas 2050's interdisciplinary research teams—architects, archaeologists, city planners, public health experts, geologists, engineers, biologists, computer scientists, artists, and community-based partners—collaborate in various ways at The University of Texas at Austin to design solutions that will make our communities stronger, more resilient, and better prepared for current and future challenges.

Our Focus

- The intersection of social vulnerability, hazard risk and climate
- Community-driven research for climate change mitigation & adaptation
- Improved planning, preparedness, and response through advanced predictive modeling
- Mapping climate change-induced infectious disease spread
- How ancestral adaptations to climate change can inform future resilience
- K-12 climate literacy through arts-integrated curricula
- Creating opportunity for arts-based practice, creative inquiry, and collaboration that is integrated with resilience research

Planet Texas 2050 Highlights In Numbers

EXPANDING NETWORKS

- 157** active researchers
- 29** UT departments & disciplines
- 14** schools & colleges
- 29** external partners
- 30** hosted events over the past 2 years

ENGAGING STUDENTS

77 undergraduate & graduate student researchers

SCHOLARLY OUTPUT & PUBLICITY

- 17** scholarly works acknowledging PT2050 support published over the past 2 years
- 32** news articles over the past 2 years

BUILDING CAPACITY

\$30.7M awarded in external funding to date

Program Achievements

In FY22 and FY23, Planet Texas 2050 (PT2050) continued to build on the success of its first several years. In addition to the research conducted as part of the six flagship projects, PT2050 supported more artist fellows, partnered with new organizations across the state, and brought together engaged UT researchers, community, and partners from institutions and organizations throughout Austin and beyond at its annual symposium.

Municipal Partnerships for Resilience

The collaborations between the City and PT2050 researchers have been crucial to ensuring Austin’s leaders are basing their climate resilience actions on research informed by leading expertise and guided by a commitment to finding solutions with community members.

Hazard Hubs

One of PT2050’s **six flagship initiatives, Networks for Hazard Preparedness and Response**, focuses on helping communities in Austin and Southeast Texas adapt to the changing climate and better prepare for natural disasters, particularly flooding.

The project team hosts a series of “Hazard Hub” meetings with various stakeholders working across a range of hazards (extreme heat, wildfires, flooding, and water and air quality) to help guide the next phases of their work. They are also working with Travis County Emergency Management (TCEM) to determine how their flood inundation tools can best be used for TCEM’s planning purposes.

“Our relationship with Planet Texas has been crucial to ensuring the City of Austin is making climate resilience policy decisions based on the most advanced and accurate data and research available.”

—Mayor Kirk Watson



Locate water's edge



Pin drop on map

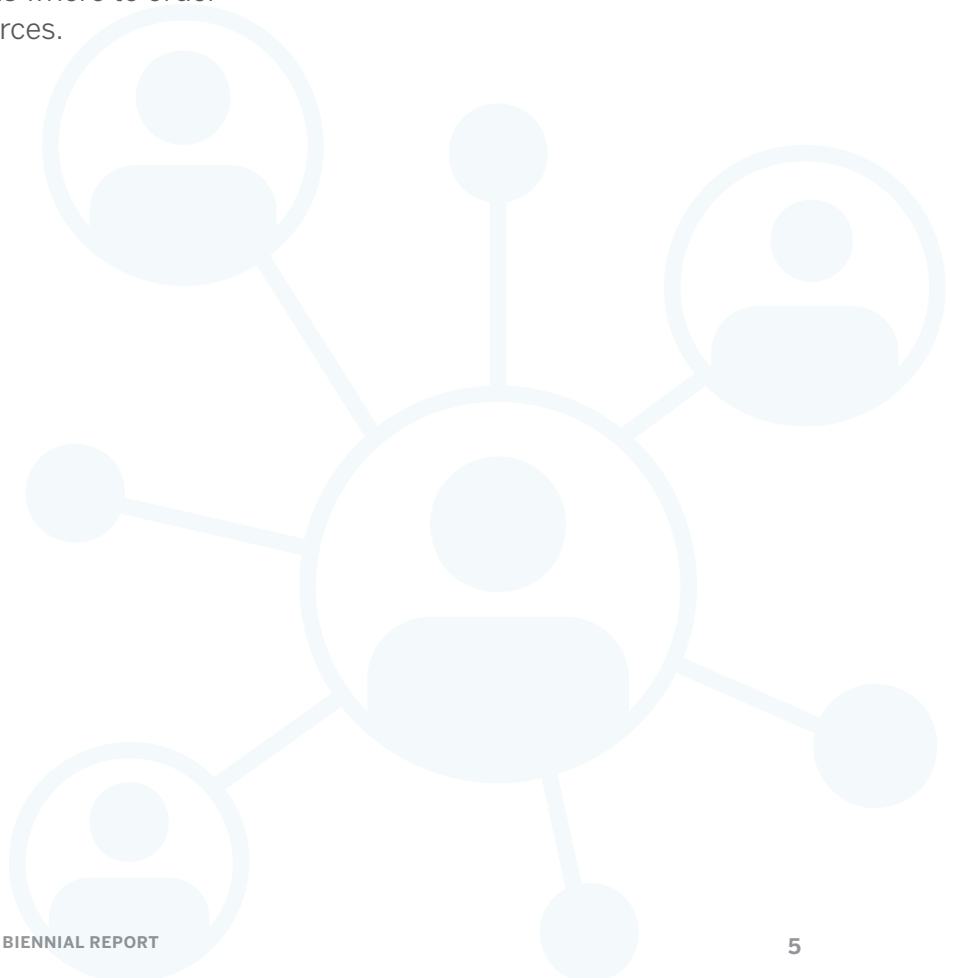


Polygon return of flood inundation

Pin2Flood mobile App, from Pin2Flood website. Credit: UT Austin

Pin2Flood

Pin2Flood is a mobile app that enables first responders to track flooded areas in real time. Project co-lead and PT2050 chair Paola Passalacqua and her team developed this app with insights from leaders with first-hand experience, including former Austin Fire Department Chief of Staff Harry Evans. When firefighters arrive at a scene, they can drop a digital “pin” in places where they see flooding. The app then returns an accurate flood map in minutes, showing other areas that are at risk. This helps emergency departments make life-saving decisions, such as where to order evacuations or send critical resources.





Pilot resilience hub mockup. Credit: [City of Austin Office of Resilience](#)

Resilience Hubs

Katherine Lieberknecht, an assistant professor in the Community and Regional Planning program at the School of Architecture, co-leads another PT2050 flagship project, **Equitable and Regenerative Cities in a Post-Carbon Future**, with Professor Fernanda Leite, from the Department of Civil, Architectural and Environmental Engineering. The goal of the Equitable Cities project is to reimagine more equitable and resource-efficient metropolitan areas while safeguarding natural resources that people and the planet depend on. One of the project's main initiatives informs the community engagement framework for the **City's Resilience Hub Network**, a series of physical facilities that offer day-to-day services and support the community before, during, and after a disaster.

Community Impact and Expanding Partnerships

Over the past two years, PT2050 has expanded its reach and impact by adding new external partners and deepening connections with existing ones.

Southeast Texas Urban Integrated Field Lab

Led by UT Austin, four Texas universities were awarded a U.S. Department of Energy grant to establish a new research center—the Southeast Texas Urban Integrated Field Lab (SETx-IFL)—to study the risks and impacts of flooding and air pollution in a fast-growing part of Southeast Texas. The researchers will focus on the interactions between these two key issues, as well as their potential acceleration under various climate scenarios. PT2050 chair Paola Passalacqua is leading the project.

The Urban Integrated Field Lab grant will build on a network of more than 100 community, industry, and government participants in studies of flooding in the region over the years and will help to extend research efforts and build capacity. As part of the five-year project, researchers will collect data and develop simulation models focused on flooding impacts and air pollution under various climate scenarios. This approach is novel because flooding and air pollution are rarely jointly examined in research.

“This partnership is a perfect example of the collective impact Texas universities can have by identifying and solving some of the greatest challenges in our home state.”

—UT President Jay Hartzell

Climate Justice in the Rio Grande Valley

PT2050 leadership team member Miriam Solis, an assistant professor in UT's School of Architecture, Carmen Valdez, an associate professor in population health at Dell Medical School, and Tasha Banks, also in the Department of Population Health, are co-leading a **project collecting the stories of young people of color** in both Austin and the Rio Grande Valley to understand how the consequences of climate change—from adverse weather events like floods to degradation of buildings and other built environments—impact their communities' health. In the Rio Grande Valley, they're also partnering with municipal, nonprofit and grassroots organizations in coalition-building, creating local capacity to act on youth stories.

Using a research method called **PhotoVoice**, the team guides youth participants in taking photographs of their local environments to elicit creative thinking in ways that respond to their everyday realities and produce ideas to improve their communities. Using PhotoVoice, the team collects participants' ideas for safer or healthier environments. Once the narratives are collected, the team plans to assist coalitions in pursuing small-scale projects and policy interventions to help communities better meet their own health needs.

Creative Collaborations

Science and data alone are insufficient to address the existential challenges we now face. It will be impossible to solve the climate crisis, across Texas and beyond, without diverse and powerful storytelling to help ground us in our shared humanity, create meaning from complexity, and maintain collective capacity for hope for a better future.

Artists play an indispensable role in the movement to combat the climate crisis and fortify community resilience in the face of climate-related challenges. Thus, over the past two years, PT2050 developed multiple programs to further integrate artists and arts-based practices into its work.

Podcast Series

In September 2022, UT's audio production house, The Drag, released the podcast **Planet Texas**, which covers climate-related topics and disasters in Texas, including the 2021 winter storm, Hurricane Harvey, and flooding in Austin. PT2050 approached The Drag about doing a podcast, and undergraduates Aurora Berry and Will Brooks spent more than a year researching, reporting, and writing to produce the award-winning five-episode series, often in conversation with PT2050 researchers.

Planet Texas 2050 Artist Fellowship

The PT2050 Artist Fellowship is a cohort-based fellowship for multi-disciplinary artists both in and outside of the University, organized to catalyze and support meaningful collaboration between artists, climate and resilience researchers, and other beneficiaries.



One of those fellowships was awarded to **Juliet Whitsett**, an independent artist and community art educator who is also a UT graduate and longtime Texas resident who works throughout the region to build awareness about the state's fragile ecosystem. The images above come from her signature series, ***Biodiversity of Texas***, a collection of digital prints of the state's endangered and threatened species.

Another fellowship recipient, **Forklift Danceworks**, used their time with PT2050 researchers to inform a multi-year project, **The Way of Water**, about water and the people who steward it.

Planet Texas 2050 Headlines

UT Austin News Coverage

Spring 2023	Prescription for a Healthier Future: Climate Justice
Dec 2022	Saving Austin's Water
11/2/2022	UT researchers are working with City staff and community groups to build an Austin-wide climate atlas
11/1/2022	Research Initiative Planet Texas 2050 Uses Art to Tell Story of Climate Change
10/16/2022	Texas Universities Partner to Study Combined Impact of Flooding and Air Pollution in Beaumont-Port Arthur
10/13/2022	Community-Centered Research and Environmental Planning in Beaumont, Texas
11/21/2021	First Global River Database Documents 40 years of Change (UT News)
9/21/2021	Technological Leaps Help Biologists Study Quickly Changing Landscapes
8/17/2021	Telling Climate Change Stories

External News Features and Mentions

7/20/2023	A Sanitation Worker, a Climate Scientist, and a Modern Dancer Walk Onto a Stage...
7/5/2023	New museum exhibit explores historical hurricanes in the Valley
5/31/2023	Programa Especial: Planeta en Crisis
4/24/2023	Research duo bringing breakthrough vector-borne disease research to UTRGV
11/22/2022	Texas researchers, Austin activists partner on new Climate Atlas
8/25/2022	New UT research shows Austin's creeks do more than just control floods
8/14/2022	Residentes del Valle relatan experiencias vividas durante recientes inundaciones
8/1/2022	Austin is repelling rain; other cities attracting it — UT study discovers
11/26/2021	Opinion: We all must rise to the challenge of climate change (Austin American-Statesman)
11/8/2021	How extreme temperature changes impact crops, agriculture (Fox Weather)
10/11/2021	New app in works to help emergency crews examine floods in Texas
9/17/2021	Looking for Solutions for Residents Feeling Extreme Heat
9/16/2021	To Save Lives, Researchers Are Creating an Online Library of Potential Flood Maps

UT OVPR Communications

6/28/2023	Art of the State
6/27/2023	Climate Resilience on the Texas Gulf Coast: Science Rooted in Local Wisdom
2/27/2023	How Flooding is Informing Infectious Disease Spread
8/31/2022	Changing of the Planet Texas 2050 Chairs
8/29/2022	Report Finds Growth in Austin's Green Jobs Economy
8/29/2022	Moving Resilience Research to Action in the Gulf South
6/21/2022	City of Austin, UT Collaborate on Photovoice Exhibition and Green Jobs Report
4/20/2022	Making Science Accessible: A collaboration with Science Journal for Kids
10/25/2021	Planet Texas 2050 Enters New Phase with New Chair
9/16/2021	The Next Generation of Flood Response

Creating Connections

PT2050's growing network of researchers come from nearly every college and school on campus, from the Jackson School of Geosciences and Cockrell School of Engineering to the Colleges of Liberal Arts, Fine Arts, and Natural Sciences. This intellectual diversity is crucial to fostering interdisciplinary research, a key component of the program's success.

Explore the [interactive network map](#) to see how different researchers, schools, and organizations are connected to PT2050. Search by name, College/School/Unit, or project, or click any node on the map and pause to see its connections appear. You can magnify or expand the view, and you can click on any individual to see the projects and people they are affiliated with.

Funded Grants

Through FY23, PT2050 researchers have received \$30.7 million in external grants, gifts, and awards that directly enable the grand challenge's work. External awards from the past two fiscal years are listed below. Many of these grant proposals were developed with the support of OVPR's Research Development team.

U.S. Department of Energy

Southeast Texas Urban IFL: Equitable Urban Resilience in the Gulf Region
\$17,200,000
Paola Passalacqua, Cockrell School of Engineering

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban (HUD) Development

Texas Disaster Information System
\$3,760,602
Suzanne Pierce, Texas Advanced Computing Center

Wellcome Trust

FloDisMod - A Framework for Flood and Disease Modeling
\$660,000
Clint Dawson, Oden Institute for Computational Engineering and Sciences

Construction Industry Institute

Addressing Decarbonization in the Construction of Capital Projects
\$300,000
Fernanda Leite, Cockrell School of Engineering

National Aeronautics and Space Administration

ATX CA3TCH UP: Climate Atlas for Accountability and Advocacy strategies through Co-production with Historically Underserved community Partners in Austin, TX
\$249,842
Patrick Bixler, LBJ School of Public Affairs

UCLA Latino Policy and Politics Institute

Leveraging Community-Engaged Research to Address Extreme Heat Events
\$25,000
Miriam Solis, School of Architecture

Planet Texas 2050 Partners

AT&T

Austin Fire Department

Austin Independent School District

Austin Watershed Protection

Austin Youth River Watch

City of Austin

Community Coalition for Health

Community Powered Workshop

Creative Policy

Cynthia & George Mitchell Foundation

EcoRise

Forklift Danceworks

GiddyUp Art Studios

Go Austin/Vamos Austin

Indigenous Cultures Institute

Institute for a Disaster Resilient Texas

Majestic Collaborations

Microsoft

Museum of South Texas History

Round Rock Independent School District

St. Edwards University/Wild Basin

Texas Children in Nature Network

Texas Water Development Board

The Austin Common

The Drag Podcast

The Hook Fellowship

The Nature Conservancy

Travis County

Waterloo Greenway

Publications

PT2050 researchers continued to make advancements through successful multi-disciplinary collaborations that resulted in numerous discoveries recorded in peer-reviewed articles in academic journals. These discoveries have potential to impact communities in Austin, Texas, and beyond. Publications from the past two fiscal years are listed below; nearly all are available online.

- Ballard, M., Lee, K. M., Capistrant-Fossa, K., McNeese, A. R., Sen, P., Jerome, T. S., Wilson, P. S., & Dunton, K. H. (2022). [A yearlong record of acoustic propagation and ambient sound in a seagrass meadow](#). *The Journal of the Acoustical Society of America*, 152(4), A107–A107.
- Belaire, J. A., Higgins, C., Zoll, D., Lieberknecht, K., Bixler, R. P., Neff, J. L., Keitt, T. H., & Jha, S. (2022). [Fine-scale monitoring and mapping of biodiversity and ecosystem services reveals multiple synergies and few tradeoffs in urban green space management](#). *The Science of the Total Environment*, 849, 157801.*
- Bixler, R. P., & Jones, J. (2022). [Indicators for Community Resilience: Social Vulnerability, Adaptive Capacity, and Multi-Hazard Exposure in Austin, Texas](#). *Community quality-of-life indicators: Best cases IX*, 11.
- Bixler, R. P., Coudert, M., Richter, S. M., Jones, J. M., Llanes Pulido, C., Akhavan, N., Bartos, M., Passalacqua, P., & Niyogi, D. (2022). [Reflexive co-production for urban resilience: Guiding framework and experiences from Austin, Texas](#). *Frontiers in Sustainable Cities*, 4.*
- Bixler, R. P., Paul, S., Bhakta, D., Farchy, T., Olson, J., Preisser, M., & Passalacqua, P. (2023). [Adaptive governance for disaster risk reduction](#). In *Handbook on Adaptive Governance* (pp. 233-251). Edward Elgar Publishing.
- Bixler, R. P., Yang, E., Richter, S. M., & Coudert, M. (2021). [Boundary crossing for urban community resilience: A social vulnerability and multi-hazard approach in Austin, Texas, USA](#). *International Journal of Disaster Risk Reduction*, 66, 102613.*
- Cook, D. E., Beach, T. P., Luzzadder-Beach, S., Dunning, N. P., & Turner, S. D. (2022). [Environmental legacy of pre-Columbian Maya mercury](#). *Frontiers in Environmental Science*, 10, 986119.*
- Dunton, K. H. (2022). [A yearlong record of acoustic propagation and ambient sound in a seagrass meadow](#). *The Journal of the Acoustical Society of America*, 152(4), A107-A107.
- Fung, K. Y., Yang, Z. L., & Niyogi, D. (2022). [Improving the local climate zone classification with building height, imperviousness, and machine learning for urban models](#). *Computational Urban Science*, 2(1), 16.
- Goel, N., & Keitt, T. H. (2022). [The mismatch between range and niche limits due to source-sink dynamics can be greater than species mean dispersal distance](#). *The American Naturalist*, 200(3), 448-455.*
- Han, B., & Leite, F. (2022). [Generic extended reality and integrated development for visualization applications in architecture, engineering, and construction](#). *Automation in Construction*, 140, 104329.*
- Han, B., Weeks, D. J., & Leite, F. (2023). [Virtual reality-facilitated engineering education: A case study on sustainable systems knowledge](#). *Computer Applications in Engineering Education*. <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1002/cae.22632>*
- Hwang, H., Vedlitz, A., & Bixler, R. P. (2023). [Growing community resilience from the grassroots: Risk awareness, confidence in institutions, and civic participation in a natural hazards context](#). *Natural Hazards Review*, 24(3), 04023020.*
- Jarriel, T., Swartz, J., & Passalacqua, P. (2021). [Global rates and patterns of channel migration in river deltas](#). *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 118(46).*
- Keitt, T.H. & Abelson, E.S. (2021). [Ecology in the age of automation](#). *Science*, 373, 858–859.*
- Lieberknecht, K. (2023). [Leading with local knowledge: Climate adaptation, local knowledge, and participation in Austin, Texas' network of plans and the co-designed climate navigators' tool and process](#). *Journal of Planning Education and Research*, 0(0).
- Lieberknecht, K., & Mueller, E. J. (2023). [Planning for equitable climate relocation: gaps in knowledge and a proposal for future directions](#). *Journal of Planning Literature*, 38(2), 229-244.

- Lieberknecht, K., Houser, H., Rabinowitz, A., Pierce, S. A., Rodríguez, L., Leite, F., Lowell, J., & Gray, J. N. (2022). [Creating meeting grounds for transdisciplinary climate research: the role of humanities and social sciences in grand challenges](#). *Interdisciplinary Science Reviews*, 1-23.*
- Locker, A. J., Valdez, F., Breecker, D. O., Banner, J. L., Loewy, S. L., Luzzadder-Beach, S., Drake, S. M., Hyde, D. M., Trachman, R. M., & Lewis, B. S. (2023). [Ancient Maya movement in the Rio Bravo Conservation and Management Area, NW Belize](#). *Journal of Archaeological Science: Reports*, 49, 104052.*
- Ma, J. W., Leite, F., Lieberknecht, K., Stephens, K. K., & Bixler, R. P. [Using Q-Methodology to Discover Disaster Resilience Perspectives from Local Residents](#). Available at SSRN 4326547.
- Patel, P., Kalyanam, R., He, L., Aliaga, D., & Niyogi, D. (2023). [Deep learning based urban morphology for city-scale environmental modeling](#). *PNAS Nexus*, 2(3), pgad027.
- Preisser, M., Passalacqua, P., & Bixler, R. P. (2023). [A network-based disaster resilience metric for estimating individuals' loss of access to critical resources during flooding](#) (No. EGU23-9923). Copernicus Meetings.
- Preisser, M., Passalacqua, P., Bixler, R. P., & Hofmann, J. (2022). [Intersecting near-real time fluvial and pluvial inundation estimates with sociodemographic vulnerability to quantify a household flood impact index](#). *Hydrology and Earth System Sciences*, 26(15), 3941–3964.*
- Sánchez Pérez, M., Feria Arroyo, T. P., Venegas Barrera, C. S., Sosa-Gutiérrez, C., Torres, J., Brown, K. A., & Gordillo Pérez, G. (2023). [Predicting the impact of climate change on the distribution of rhipicephalus sanguineus in the americas](#). *Sustainability*, 15(5), 4557.*
- Singh, M., Acharya, N., Jamshidi, S., Jiao, J., Yang, Z. L., Coudert, M., ... & Niyogi, D. (2023). [DownScaleBench for developing and applying a deep learning based urban climate downscaling-first results for high-resolution urban precipitation climatology over Austin, Texas](#). *Computational Urban Science*, 3(1), 22.
- Stokes B, Contina A, González-Guzmán L, Keitt T. (2022). Home Range Variation of Green Jay (*Cyanocorax yncas*) in the Lower Rio Grande Valley, Texas. Technical report prepared for and submitted to Texas Parks and Wildlife Department.
- Tewari, K., Tewari, M., & Niyogi, D. (2023). [Need for considering urban climate change factors on stroke, neurodegenerative diseases, and mood disorders studies](#). *Computational Urban Science*, 3(1), 4.*
- Ye, X., & Niyogi, D. (2022). [Resilience of human settlements to climate change needs the convergence of urban planning and urban climate science](#). *Computational Urban Science*, 2(1), 1-4.
- Zoll, D., Bixler, R. P., Lieberknecht, K., Belaire, J. A., Shariatmadari, A., & Jha, S. (2023). [Intersectional climate perceptions: Understanding the impacts of race and gender on climate experiences, future concerns, and planning efforts](#). *Urban Climate*, 50, 101576.*
- Zoll, D., Lieberknecht, K., Bixler, R. P., Belaire, J. A., & Jha, S. [Integrating equity, climate risks, and population growth for targeting conservation planning](#). *Environmental Science & Policy*, 147, 267-278.*

* Indicated publications formally acknowledge Planet Texas 2050 support.

Planet Texas 2050 Team

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Flagship Project Co-Leads

PT2050 researchers are committed to developing programs, tools, and policy recommendations that will improve Texas’ adaptability and build its resilience. To do that, we have created a set of innovative and interdisciplinary projects that leverage the talents and expertise of our research network to tackle critical issues when it comes to helping Texas respond to rapid growth and climate change.

AI-enabled Model Integration for Complex Decision Making

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