

Mayoral Direction

Decision Number: 2026-20

Date: August 7, 2026

Subject: Direction to Staff – Flood Resilience Efforts

I, Mat Siscoe, Mayor of the City of St. Catharines, pursuant to Section 284.3 of the Municipal Act, hereby direct the Chief Administrative Officer to report back to Council on the following:

1. Independent Flood Resilience Review and Action Plan

That staff report back with a proposed framework for the establishment of an independent Flood Resilience Working Group, comprised of recognized engineering, infrastructure, environmental and emergency planning professionals, together with respected community leaders and local experts with demonstrated knowledge of St. Catharines' stormwater systems and waterways, to undertake an independent review of the recent flooding events and develop a comprehensive action plan to strengthen the City's resilience to future extreme rainfall events. The framework should clearly define the Working Group's mandate, scope, timing, deliverables and relationship to existing City-led work, including applicable Master Servicing Studies, asset management planning, infrastructure renewal programs and other ongoing operational or technical reviews.

The Working Group should be supported by City staff as required, while remaining independent in its analysis and recommendations.

The review should include, but not be limited to:

- an assessment of the performance of the City's stormwater and sanitary systems during the recent flooding events;
- an evaluation of existing infrastructure capacity and the challenges posed by increasingly frequent and intense rainfall events associated with a changing climate;
- identification of opportunities to increase stormwater storage and retention through traditional infrastructure, green infrastructure and nature-based solutions;
- recommendations to improve the performance of natural watercourses, including creeks, channels and other drainage features;

- recommendations for infrastructure retrofits, operational improvements and policy changes that will reduce flood risk in existing neighbourhoods,
- identification of both short-term and long-term actions to improve community flood resilience,
- development of a prioritized implementation strategy, including order-of-magnitude costing and funding opportunities, and
- preparation of a business case that can be used to support applications for Provincial and Federal funding for major flood mitigation and climate resilience investments.

The proposed framework should include a governance and implementation approach that addresses scope control, technical review requirements, staff resource impacts, cost implications, timing considerations, and how Working Group recommendations would be advanced through the City's normal Council, budget and capital project approval processes

The review process should be transparent and ensure residents have confidence that the causes of the flooding have been thoroughly examined and that practical recommendations are being developed to reduce the risk of similar events in the future

2. Priority Flood Mitigation Areas

That staff develop transparent criteria to identify neighbourhoods and locations requiring priority investigation and action as a result of recent flooding. Criteria could include but not be limited to severity and frequency of flooding, locations of vulnerable populations and critical infrastructure, number of complaint/service requests, historical flood prone areas, and areas with flood-based road closures

Staff are to report back with both immediate mitigation measures and longer-term capital recommendations for each priority area, including how any recommended actions align with existing Master Servicing Studies, planned infrastructure renewal, asset management priorities and available funding sources.

3. Enhancement of the Flood Alleviation Program (FLAP)

That staff report back on opportunities to enhance and expand the City's existing Flood Alleviation Program (FLAP), informed by best practices from other municipal residential flood protection programs, including the City of Toronto's Basement Flooding Protection Program, to better assist homeowners in reducing the risk of basement flooding and property damage. The review should consider how the program can provide consistent technical advice to homeowners, including the potential role of qualified consultants or other appropriate technical support, while managing municipal risk, program costs and administrative capacity.

The report should include, but not be limited to

- an evaluation of potential enhancements to eligible flood protection measures, including backwater valves, sump pumps, battery backup systems, foundation drain (weeping tile) disconnections and other residential flood mitigation improvements;
- additional funding options, including municipal funding, Provincial and Federal grant opportunities, and homeowner cost-sharing models,
- recommendations respecting possible eligibility criteria, subsidy levels and program administration;
- opportunities to integrate enhancements to FLAP with broader stormwater infrastructure investments and climate resilience initiatives,
- an assessment of historical participation in FLAP, identification of barriers to homeowner uptake, and recommendations to improve participation, and
- estimated financial implications and an implementation timeline for any recommended program enhancements.
- consideration of a staged application or review process that could support initial investigation and technical assessment before homeowners proceed with eligible flood protection works

4. Stormwater Infrastructure Maintenance Review

That staff review the City's inspection, maintenance and replacement practices for stormwater infrastructure, including culverts, roadside ditches, catch basins, sewer outlets, watercourses and related assets, and report back with recommendations to potential service level changes. The review should identify how any proposed service level adjustments align with existing infrastructure studies, asset condition data, maintenance programs, capital planning assumptions, staffing capacity, and financial implications

5. Public Reporting and Monitoring

That staff report back on opportunities to improve public reporting and monitoring of stormwater issues, including:

- an easy-to-use online reporting portal for residents to report blocked watercourses, drainage issues, trail washouts and other stormwater concerns,
- appropriate signage in areas adjacent to watercourses encouraging residents to report blockages or hazards,
- methods to use resident reports to better prioritize maintenance activities

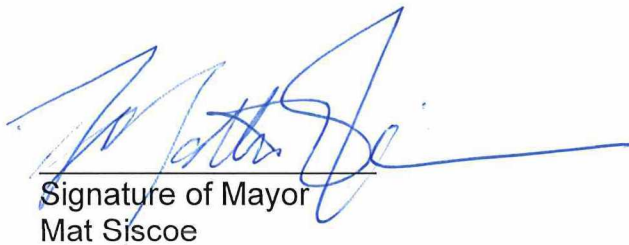
6. Public Education and Preparedness

That staff develop a comprehensive public education strategy aimed at reducing residential flood risk, including:

- significantly increasing awareness of available flood mitigation grants and incentive programs;
- educating residents on maintenance of private flood protection measures such as backwater valves, sump pumps and related equipment;
- providing guidance on private property drainage, including downspouts, weeping tiles, sump pump discharges and related drainage infrastructure;
- identifying practical actions residents can take before major rainfall events to reduce flood damage;
- improving communication of available City resources before, during and after significant storm events.

7. Waste Management

That staff be directed to arrange for a third consecutive week of “take all” curbside waste collection on a city-wide basis for flood impacted households during the week of August 16 and proceed with a fourth week if necessary.



Signature of Mayor
Mat Siscoe