

**City Council****Notice of Motion**

MM8.9	ACTION			Ward: All
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**Protecting the Toronto Islands - Long-Term Flooding Mitigation and Adaptation - by Councillor Joe Cressy, seconded by Councillor James Pasternak**

*\* Notice of this Motion has been given.*

*\* This Motion is subject to referral to the Infrastructure and Environment Committee. A two-thirds vote is required to waive referral.*

**Recommendations**

Councillor Joe Cressy, seconded by Councillor James Pasternak, recommends that:

1. City Council request the General Manager, Parks, Forestry and Recreation, in consultation with the Director, Environment and Energy and other relevant City staff, to report to the September 9, 2019 meeting of the Infrastructure and Environment Committee on the substance and recommendations of the forthcoming Toronto and Region Conservation Authority report, expected at the June 21, 2019 meeting of the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority Board, with respect to flood characterization, flood risk assessment, flooding mapping and flooding mitigation alternatives for the Lake Ontario watershed, including the Toronto Islands, and that such report include recommendations and next steps for long-term flooding mitigation and adaptation.

**Summary**

The Toronto Islands are a jewel in the heart of Canada's largest metropolis. In addition to being home to hundreds of residents, they represent a significant destination for residents and visitors from across our City, providing a way to enjoy and respect the natural environment, mere minutes from downtown. The Toronto Islands are a sanctuary for all of us.

As with countless areas across our Province, our country and indeed around the entire world, the realities of the climate crisis continue to unfold in our City. We are seeing a rise in severe storms, record-breaking water levels in Lake Ontario, and seasonal weather conditions that not only endanger our communities, but cause significant damage to infrastructure each and every year. This growing crisis has been acutely felt on the Toronto Islands.

In 2017, the Islands experienced a significant flooding event as a result of the highest Lake Ontario levels on record. Large swaths of the Islands were submerged under water, causing them to be closed to the public for a significant portion of the season. There were impacts to local businesses and significant pressure on residents of the Islands.

This year, we have again faced record-high Lake Ontario water levels. Since 2017, City staff have been working tirelessly to put in place immediate mitigation and response plans to protect the Islands, and the residential community. This season, over 30 water pumps were in place to remove water from across the Islands. More than 24,000 sandbags, including 30 metre bags, were installed in critical areas, including throughout the residential community. City staff worked around-the clock to protect and respond to the flooding event as it continued to change, and water levels continued to rise.

Thanks to this work, and the around-the-clock efforts by the local community, the Islands remained open throughout this year's flooding event. However, with the highest Lake Ontario levels on record measured during this year's event, there has been damage, and there will be impacts. In the era of a growing climate emergency, an annual sandbagging effort cannot be a long-term solution.

Following the 2017 flooding event, the City partnered with the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority to both review conditions and plan for the future. Coming forward to the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority Board on June 21, 2019, the project report will include: a Flood Characterization Report; Flood Risk Assessment Report; Flood Mapping; and critically, a Flood Mitigation Alternatives Report, which will evaluate structural options to mitigate flood risk in the long-term.

The Toronto Islands Flood Characterization and Risk Assessment Project will characterize the lake-based flood hazard on the Toronto Islands, and will help facilitate an understanding of the community and infrastructure vulnerabilities, potential impacts and risk to residents and municipal assets, provide flood maps and response plan to supplement the City's Emergency Management Plan, as well as inform future structural and non-structural flood mitigation investments. Information from this project has been extremely helpful in responding to the current flood situation.

The Flood Mitigation Report will outline several flood mitigation options in addition to the work already completed on the islands.

It is critical that we consider the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority's recommendations, and plan for next steps for long-term mitigation and protection of the Toronto Islands.

### **Background Information (City Council)**

Member Motion MM8.9

(<http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2019/mm/bgrd/backgroundfile-134480.pdf>)