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# 2026 CAPITAL BUDGET BRIEFING NOTE
# Basement Flooding Protection Program – Program Status Update and Project List: 2026 to 2030

## Issue:

City Council, through the creation of the City's Basement Flooding Protection Program (BFPP), directed Toronto Water to reduce the risk of basement flooding across the City by implementing a combination of public drainage system improvements and leveraging policies, by-laws, and incentives to reduce flood risks on private and public properties.

Through the annual budget process, this briefing note provides an update on Toronto Water's efforts to reduce basement flooding risks. Attachment 1 includes ward by ward updates summarizing the progress on Basement Flooding studies, status of projects identified, project implementation and progress, and subsidies granted for private property flood protection devices.

City Council has also directed the General Manager of Toronto Water to submit an updated five-year list of BFPP capital projects as part of the annual Capital Budget submission process. This briefing note provides a list of projects proposed for construction initiation in 2026 through 2030.

The attached ward profiles and list of projects by ward provide Councillors with updates on the rate-supported program and projects proceeding in their respective wards.

## Background:

The Basement Flooding Protection Program (BFPP) increases the City of Toronto's resilience to climate change and the hazard of flooding. Toronto Water specifically contributes to the achievement of action items B1.1, B1.2, and B1.3 of the City's Resilience Strategy through its:

- efforts to upgrade municipal drainage infrastructure;
- continuous contributions to research; and
- annual consideration of the program's accomplishments.

The BFPP was expanded City-wide following the severe storm of July 8, 2013 and resulted in the creation of new Basement Flooding Study Areas (bringing the total to 67 Study Areas). At its meeting on March 10 and 11, 2015, City Council requested the General Manager of Toronto Water initiate and expedite the completion of new Basement Flooding Environmental Assessment (EA) studies for the remainder of the City, specifically Study Areas 42 through 67, and in the order of priority as shown in Schedule A to the report (December 18, 2014).

Since the program's inception, severe rain events have underscored the critical need to complete Basement Flooding EA studies city-wide, enhance the level of service of the City's infrastructure, and strengthen the city's resilience to extreme weather.

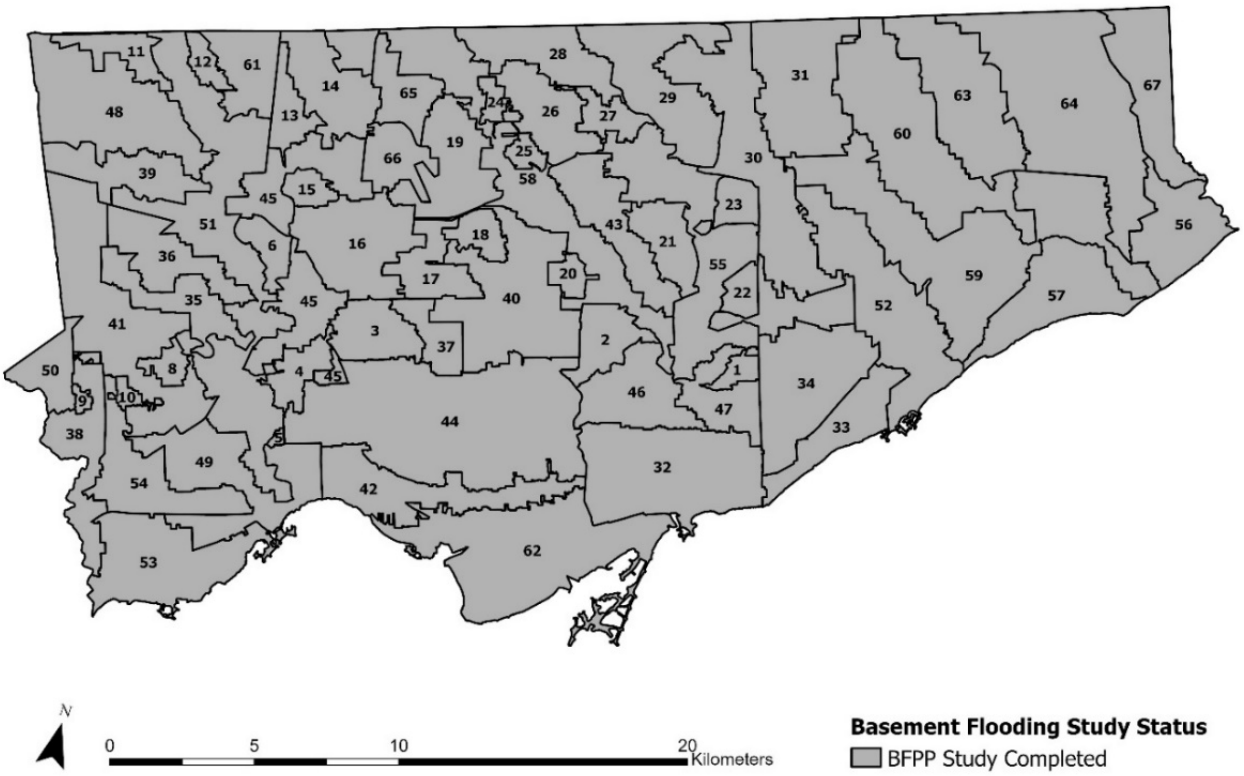
## Basement Flooding Studies

Studies are conducted to assess the capacities of the City's existing overland, storm, sanitary, and combined sewer drainage systems and recommend infrastructure improvements that reduce the risk of basement and surface flooding. However, deficiencies in private drainage systems are not identified or assessed through the studies.

Infrastructure upgrades are identified through Basement Flooding EA studies, which were carried out in accordance with the Municipal Class EA Study process. These comprehensive studies examine both the sewer system and above ground areas to develop recommendations to reduce the risk of flooding.

As of December 2024, all 67 Basement Flooding Study Areas have been completed. **Figure 1** depicts the 67 Basement Flooding Study Areas.

**Figure 1 - Basement Flooding Study Areas**




## Project Cost Estimate Update

Toronto Water continues to revise cost estimates for many planned Basement Flooding projects to align with current construction market rates. In 2025, Toronto Water completed an exercise to review and update the cost estimates for Basement Flooding projects beyond the 5-year Capital Plan. Cost estimates were developed during the Basement Flooding EA studies completed between 2008 and 2023 and were outdated. Cost estimates were updated to current market dollar amounts, improving Toronto Water's ability to plan

and manage the program. The cost estimate update increases the total program cost from $18 billion to an estimated $22 billon in infrastructure improvements across the city. Updated costs are reflected in the attached Ward Profile Summaries (Attachment 1). Project cost estimates are approximate and subject to change based on project refinement, design and construction.

## Implementation of Infrastructure Upgrades

Infrastructure upgrades to municipal drainage systems are prioritized and scheduled based on Council approved criteria to protect the greatest number of properties as soon as possible within approved budgets. These upgrades are also coordinated with other capital projects. By the end of 2025, approximately $1.3 billion is projected to have been spent on construction and related activities (e.g., engineering, design, studies, flow monitoring, etc.) within the BFPP. To date, BFPP construction has mitigated basement flooding risks for an estimated 33,000 benefitting properties.

Projects are prioritized for implementation based on a City Council-adopted $68,000 cost-per-benefitting-property (CPBP) threshold. To proceed with the design and construction of BFPP infrastructure upgrades, storm and combined sewer upgrade projects must cost less than $68,000 per property at the study stage. Properties are benefitting if they meet the targeted levels of service for drainage upon completion of infrastructure upgrades. The targeted levels of service, as previously adopted by City Council, are the 100-year design storm standard for drainage systems (surface flooding in the right of way, storm and combined sewers), and the May 12, 2000 design storm (as recorded at Oriole Yard) for sanitary drainage systems.

On November 25, 2020, Council also directed that, following the completion of all 67 Basement Flooding EA studies, and once all qualifying projects under $68,000 per benefitting property have been scheduled for implementation, Basement Flooding projects be sequenced based on whether they achieve the greatest impact. The full staff report can be found at: Council Report 2020.IE17.5

Projects that meet the $68,000 CPBP threshold at the completion of the study stage are eligible to proceed to preliminary design. The preliminary design stage ensures the physical constructability of projects and refines project cost estimates, which may result in scope changes and potential cost increases. Projects still meeting the $68,000 CPBP threshold after the preliminary design stage proceed to detailed design and construction.

Projects that exceed the $68,000 CPBP threshold at the study stage, or at the completion of the preliminary design stage, are added to the deferred projects list. These projects will be prioritized for design and construction in the future based on achieving the greatest impact. Projects may also be sequenced for detailed design and construction if the replacement of the existing drainage systems warrants replacement due to poor structural condition.

Now that all 67 Basement Flooding EA studies have been completed, Toronto Water has a comprehensive picture of the entire program. In 2026, a Basement Flooding project prioritization study will be initiated to review the program and summarize the cost and schedule to design and construct all identified solutions in the program. As noted earlier, in 2025, cost estimates for the program were updated to an estimated $22 billon in infrastructure improvements across the city. The study initiated in 2026 will produce an updated project sequence to help prioritize all remaining projects within the program.

The attached Ward Profile Summaries provide information on the implementation status of projects in each ward (Attachment 1).

## Basement Flooding Protection Program - External Funding

Toronto Water will continue to explore external funding opportunities for Basement Flooding projects as they become available. Current efforts include applications made under the Federal government's Disaster Mitigation and Adaptation Fund (DMAF).

Three major projects that have already received DMAF funding approval are the Mid-Town Toronto Storm Sewer Relief Project, the Fairbank Silverthorn Storm Sewer Project and the Rockcliffe Basement Flooding Protection Program Project.

1. **The Mid-Town Toronto Storm Sewer Relief project** (Project #17-15) has completed the detailed design phase with construction scheduled to start in 2027 pending the expected acquisition of an easement needed from the Toronto District School Board to place infrastructure in Memorial Park (Chaplin Avenue).
2. **The Fairbank Silverthorn Storm Sewer project** (Project #3-03) is being completed in two phases. Construction for Phase 1 (2.4km main tunnel and 1.8km micro-tunnelled sewers) was initiated in October 2021 and was substantially completed in September 2025. Phase 2 (5.6km new local storm sewers, inlet control devices, and state-of-good-repair watermain and sanitary sewers) initiated construction in January 2025 and the project completion is forecast for early 2028.
3. **The Rockcliffe Basement Flooding Protection Program Project** (Project #45-48) has been approved for federal funding as part of a broader DMAF application for the Rockcliffe Flood Mitigation Strategy work. Project 45-48 initiated preliminary design in 2024 that will be completed early 2026. The scope of this project includes new storm sewer upgrades on several neighbourhood streets, a new outfall at Black Creek West Park, and a new storm trunk sewer along Alliance Avenue. The construction works are forecast to start in 2029.

## Basement Flooding Protection Subsidy Program

The City's Basement Flooding Protection Subsidy Program (BFPSP) offers property owners of single-family, duplex, triplex and fourplex residential homes financial assistance of up to $3,400 per property to install flood protection devices, including a backwater valve, sump pump, and pipe severance and capping of the home's storm sewer or external weeping tile. Properties are eligible for one-time subsidies for each flood protection device, not per incident of flooding.

Created for homeowners in response to the May 12, 2000 storm event, the BFPSP was initially known as the "Voluntary Private Home Isolation from Public Sewer System Program" The program was expanded City-wide in 2006 after subsequent storms and City Council, at its meeting in July 2006 adopted a report to expand the program City-wide. Council also requested the General Manager of Toronto Water to incorporate funding to support the program in its 2007 Capital Budget submission. The Council decision can be viewed at: Flood Damages Grant Program

At its meeting on December 13, 14 and 15, 2023, City Council adopted a recommendation from the General Manager of Toronto Water to include registered property owners of existing residential fourplexes in the BFPSP eligibility criteria, subject to meeting the other program eligibility criteria. This is aligned with the adoption of an Official Plan Amendment

and Zoning By-Law amendment to permit residential multiplexes, up to fourplexes, in all areas designated as Neighbourhoods in Toronto's Official Plan.

Subsequently, at its meeting on November 12 and 13, 2025, City Council adopted the Enhancing Basement Flooding Subsidy report (Agenda Item History - 2025.IE25.3). Subject to the final Toronto Water 2026 Budget, City Council directed the General Manager of Toronto Water to amend the BFPSP effective May 1, 2026, such that:

a) the maximum amounts for back water valve and sump pump subsidies under the Basement Flooding Protection Subsidy Program be increased by 28 percent to reflect inflationary increases in equipment and installation costs since 2013;

b) a new subsidy for home plumbing assessment be established to provide up to $500 per property to eligible property owners for professional assessments conducted by a licensed plumber to identify basement flooding risks and mitigation opportunities;

c) the backwater valve subsidy be modified to include eligibility for the installation of a second backwater valve per household;

d) a new subsidy be established to provide up to $300 per household for the installation of a battery backup system for pump sumps;

e) the maximum total, per property, subsidy available under the Basement Flooding Protection Subsidy Program be increased to $6,650; and

f) the eligibility period for submitting applications be extended from one year to two years following completion of the installation of eligible basement flooding protection measures, to provide homeowners with additional time to meet program requirements and submit necessary documentation.

As reported to Council in Fall 2025 (*IE25.3*), the BFPSP has received over 59,000 applications and issued over $85 million in subsidies. Over 49,000 homes, or approximately 14 per cent of residential properties in Toronto, have installed flood protection devices (as properties may have multiple devices installed). The number of approved subsidy applications by the City varies considerably from ward to ward and by types of devices installed, as shown in **Figure 2**, **Figure 3**, and **Figure 4**, below.

**Figure 2 – Number of Properties Receiving a Subsidy for Installation of Flood Protection Devices by Ward (up to June 2025)**


**Figure 3 – Properties with Installed Flooding Protection Device(s) (up to June 2025)**

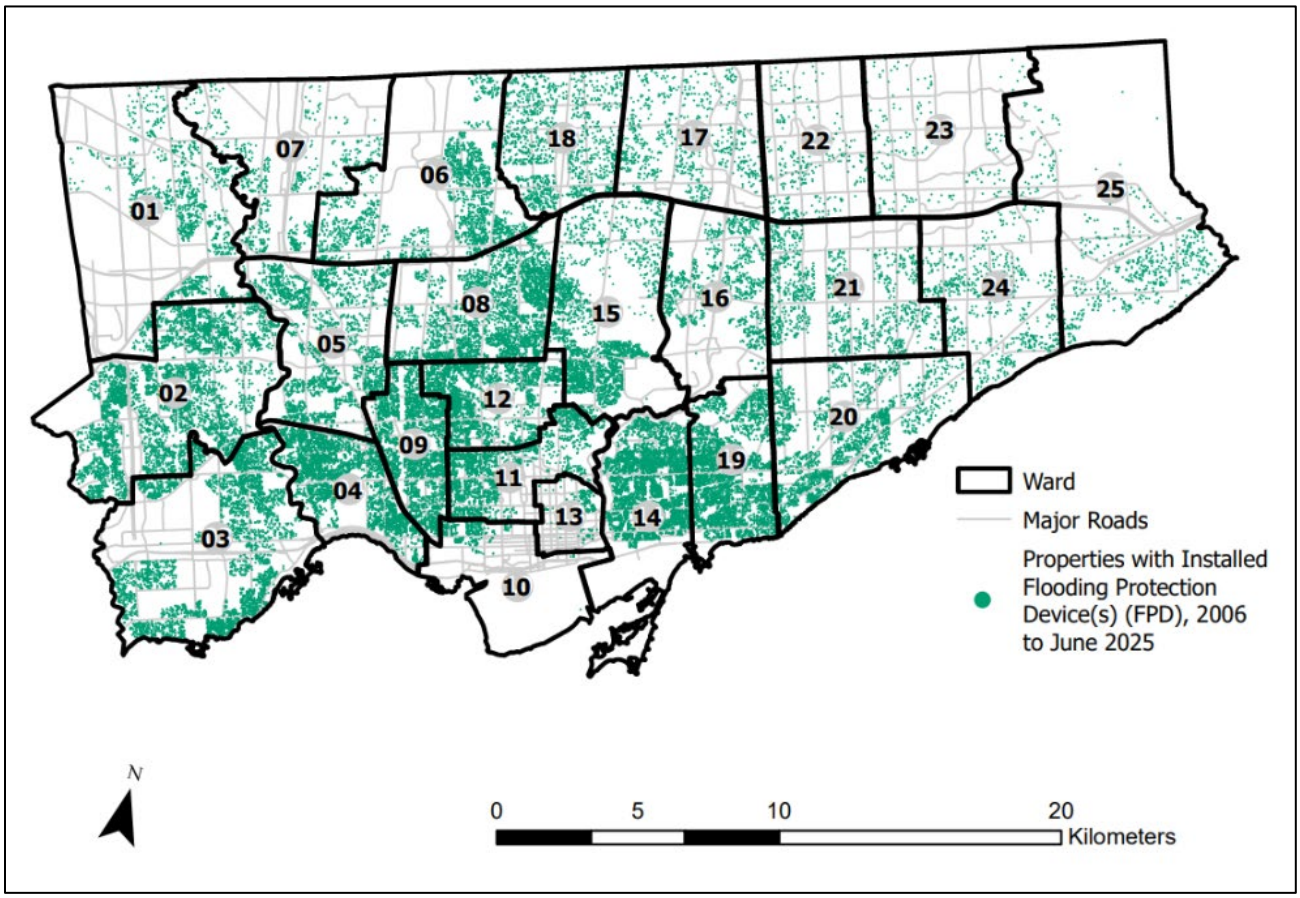
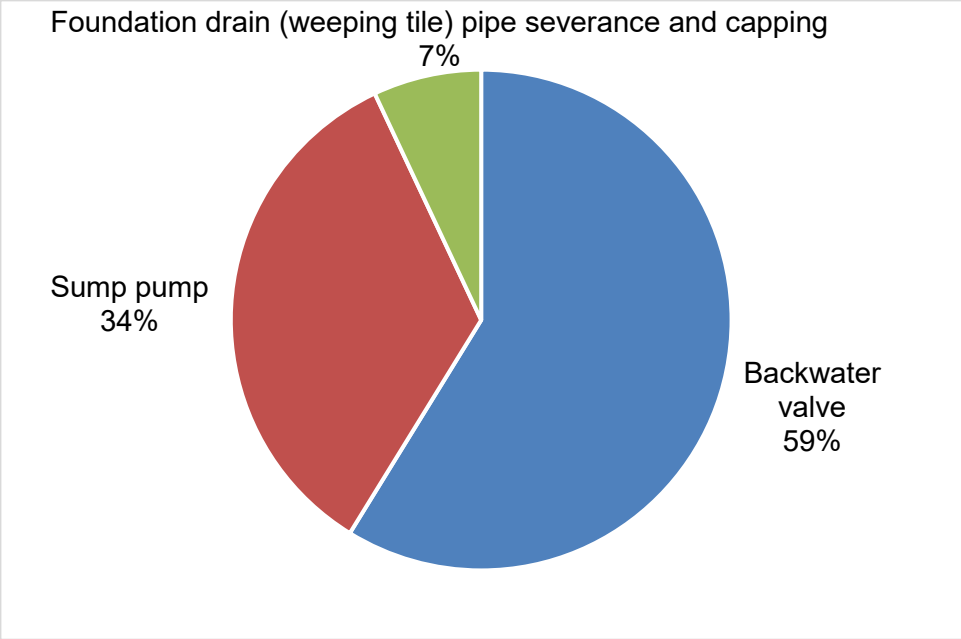


**Figure 4 - Type of Flooding Protection Devices Installed (up to June 2025)**




Update on Improved Delivery of the Basement Flooding Protection Program

As outlined in a 2025 update report to Council (Agenda Item History - 2025.IE20.7) the Basement Flooding studies have identified nearly 1,200 recommended projects. Of those projects, approximately 650 were found to meet the program's cost per benefitting property threshold and are eligible to progress design. At the current rate of project delivery, these projects will take about 50 years to complete. To date, 177 projects have been constructed, reducing flood risk for an estimated 33,000 benefitting properties. In response to City Council direction (IE20.7, Item 2), Toronto Water, in collaboration with Engineering and Construction Services, reviewed the capital delivery resources and cash flow requirements for the BFPP. The review identified that the current rate of project delivery has not met annual funding targets for multiple years.

To improve delivery rates and help meet the funding targets, Engineering and Construction Services will be adding additional staff to the BFPP Design and Construction – Linear Underground Infrastructure section.

Toronto Water will continue to collaborate with Engineering and Construction Services and applicable divisions to monitor delivery performance and ensure the program remains on track to meet budget and service objectives. The BFPP will align with the recommendations from the Enhancing the Capital Construction Delivery (ECCD) initiative. This may include improvements to project execution through the Integrated Project Management Framework, enhancements to community engagement, refinement of procurement and vendor management, and the exploration of new delivery models and contracts. These measures will increase efficiency and accelerate the delivery of BFPP projects.

## Key Points – Basement Flooding Protection Program:

- In 2025, Toronto Water completed an exercise to review and update the cost estimates for Basement Flooding projects in the program beyond the 5-year Capital

Plan. The result of the update includes an increase of the total program cost from $18 billion to an estimated $22 billion in infrastructure improvements across the city.

- In 2026, a Basement Flooding project prioritization study will be initiated to review the program and summarize the cost and schedule to design and construct all identified solutions. An updated project sequence will be developed.
- Toronto Water will continue to support the Enhancing Capital Construction Delivery initiative to ensure that BFPP projects can be effectively completed as planned and capital expenditure targets can be reached. Improvements arising from this initiative will help ensure that BFPP projects, among other capital projects, are effectively planned and scheduled, increasing reliability of project delivery. To help improve delivery rates and help meet the funding targets, Engineering and Construction Services will be adding staff to the BFPP Design and Construction – Linear Underground Infrastructure section.

## Key Points – Ward Profile Summaries (Attachment 1):

BFPP progress varies considerably from ward to ward. Attachment 1 to this briefing note provides a ward-by-ward summary and highlights the accomplishments achieved to date. Specifically, the progress regarding studies, construction of infrastructure upgrades and participation in the subsidy program is outlined.

The Ward Profile Summaries highlight that, while significant progress has been made, many projects are still required to achieve the level of service needed to reduce basement flooding risks across the entire City.

The summary for each City ward includes:

- A map showing the limits of each ward, the boundaries for the BFPP study areas, and projects identified through Basement Flooding studies. Project location, scope, and status are subject to change based on project refinement, design and construction.
- A table listing the date each study within the ward was completed.
- A pie chart illustrating the status of the infrastructure improvement works that were recommended through completed studies. The chart is subdivided into five categories: ‘Constructed’, ‘Under Construction’, ‘Planned within 5-year Capital Plan’, ‘Planned beyond 5-year Capital Plan (meets $68k CPBP)’, and ‘Deferred (exceeds $68k CPBP)’. Implementation costs are approximate and vary from year to year. As projects are in various stages of design and construction, cost estimates are updated and replaced with actual costs.
- Bar charts illustrating the accomplishments of the City's BFPSP, which provides financial assistance to pay for some of the costs of installing flood protection devices. Both program participation and program expenditure summaries up to June 30, 2025 are provided.

## Key Points – Project List 2026-2030 (Attachment 2):

- Table 1 (attached) contains a 5-year list of projects organized by year and by Ward. This list reflects Toronto Water's 2026 Capital Budget, and years 2027 to 2030 of the 10-year Capital Plan.

- This briefing note is based on the best available scheduling information at the time of writing. New project changes may have arisen since the note was prepared, and the information provided is subject to change. As change requests are processed, the City's T.O. INview application will be updated, though it may not fully align with the schedules and scopes outlined in this briefing note.
- Scheduling of construction projects is subject to change, due to capital coordination issues, necessary regulatory approvals and funding availability. Schedules are updated throughout the year through submissions to Capital Delivery Coordination Unit. These updates are regularly uploaded to the City's website.

## Attachments:

Attachment 1 – BFPP Program Status Ward Profile Summaries

Attachment 2 – BFPP Program Status Update 2026 – 2030 Project List

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