

Rising to the Occasion

Practical Actions to Build Community Flood Resilience

Flooding is Canada’s most common and costly natural hazard, and climate change is expected to increase the frequency and severity of flood events.

Small and rural communities face unique flood challenges, where limited capacity and aging infrastructure can make preparation and recovery more difficult. Practical, low-cost actions can strengthen preparedness, improve operations, protect natural drainage functions, engage residents to reduce impacts, and support future investment decisions.

How to Read Cost and Effort Scales

\$	In-Kind/Staff Time	⚙️	Implement through routine operations
\$\$	Cover within existing budgets	⚙️⚙️	Some dedicated coordination required
\$\$\$	Additional resources required	⚙️⚙️⚙️	At the upper-end of a quick-win action

Conduct Annual Flood Preparedness Reviews

Conduct annual pre-season flood reviews through existing operations meetings to confirm roles, update contacts and procedures, identify flood areas, verify resources, and document improvements.

When to Get Started: Add a flood preparedness agenda item to winter emergency management committee meetings.

- 👤 Recommended Lead: Conservation Authority
- 💡 See [Grand River Conservation Authority’s flood coordinator process](#)

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Potential Partners

- Emergency Management
- Public Works
- Communications

Key Metric

% of flood response gaps addressed before flood season

Integrate Naturalization into Routine Maintenance

Adopt naturalized maintenance practices on suitable low-use municipal lands by reducing mowing, clearing, and disturbance to support native vegetation, infiltration, and flood resilience.

When to Get Started: Annual review of mowing and grounds maintenance plans, schedules, and contracts.

- 👤 Recommended Leads: Public Works & Indigenous Knowledge Holders
- 💡 Explore the [City of Windsor’s approach to naturalized areas](#)

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Potential Partners

- Operations
- Procurement
- Conservation Authority

Key Metric

% of eligible municipal lands transitioned to naturalized maintenance practices

Complete a Municipal Flood Risk Check-Up

Complete the Municipal Flood Risk Check-Up to benchmark current flood resilience practices, identify gaps, and prioritize actions to reduce flood risk.

When to Get Started: Annual emergency management plan review and budget planning cycle.

- 👤 Recommended Lead: Emergency Management
- 💡 [Assess flood resilience with the Municipal Flood Risk Check-Up Tool](#)

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Potential Partners

- Operations
- Procurement
- Conservation Authority

Key Metric

% of eligible municipal lands transitioned to naturalized maintenance practices

Promote Home Flood Protection Measures

Develop reusable flood messaging, templates, and outreach materials to support annual public education on household flood protection and stormwater management actions.

When to Get Started: Integrate into existing communication activities and events in March & April.

- 👤 Recommended Lead: Emergency Management
- 💡 [Adapt the Intact Centre’s flood protection resources for your audience](#)

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Potential Partners

- Communications
- Public Health

Key Metric

of residents reached through annual outreach

Create a Flood Event Tracking Log

Create a flood event tracking log to capture flood locations, resident complaints, damages, response costs, and lessons learned to support future funding and decisions.

When to Get Started: Build and share across teams before spring melt and flood season

- 👤 Recommended Lead: Public Works
- 💡 [Draw inspiration from Calgary’s flood records for tracking categories](#)

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Potential Partners

- Emergency Management
- Customer Service
- Finance

Key Metric

% of flood events with complete damage, cost, and location data

Your dedicated partner in climate adaptation

Working on a climate-related project? Our ORCCA Support Desk can help with:

- Accessing Climate Information
- Adaptation Planning
- Finding Tools and Resources
- Building Capacity and Advancing Action
- Making Connections

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