

## NEWS RELEASE

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### Severe rainfall event overwhelms City infrastructure

*Climate change and rare severe storm events inspire studies and upgrades*

#### Summary

On Sunday September 16, the City experienced a rare and severe storm event in North Nanaimo. The intense rain caused localized flooding in some areas. A total of 35mm of rain fell in a one hour period. A similar rain event occurred in this same area in May 2016, but these events have no precedent in Nanaimo's rainfall records, which date back to 1980.

The City's standard is to convey normal storm runoff within pipes or ditches; however, as with other communities, storm drainage systems are not designed to handle these extreme rainfall conditions and can be overwhelmed by the volume of water, during which excess water flows overland and will follow the path of least resistance, which could be on private property.

The City will complete technical studies in Nanaimo, area by area, to better understand the impact of climate change on drainage systems. The next area to be reviewed is Eagle Point, one of the areas hardest hit by the Sept 16 storm. It includes Woodgrove, Costco, Home Depot and the surrounding area.

Where possible, the City's Public Works Drainage Operations crews will also complete localized drainage improvements to help reduce storm impact. Continual assessments and improvements will help City crews to prepare for storms by clearing debris from drainage inlets and catch basins, before the rains come.

Tips for residents to prepare for floods and flooding:• Take photographs inside your home. This may help with insurance claims. • Clear debris around your home, along the curbside, from private drains, catch basins and driveway culverts before the rains start. • Please consider the needs of your neighbours as they may require assistance clearing their private drains. • Don't walk, swim or drive through floodwater. •

Take precautions when driving through areas with pooling water. Drive slowly, take your time and don't pass other vehicles. • Always take extra precautions when the City receives a substantial amount of rain after a snowfall.

*Strategic Link:* Drainage infrastructure is a part of the City's comprehensive Asset Management Plan.

#### Key Points

- Residents are asked to report clogged and/or overflowing storm drainage inlets, catch basins or manholes to the city of Nanaimo's Public Works Operations at 250-758-5222.
- These rainfall events can cause significant flooding. Stay away from creeks and parks during the storm and during following cleanup, and avoid walking on sea defences, riverbanks and near overflowing culverts, drains and manholes

#### Quotes

"This rainfall event was highly unusual. If events like these occur more frequently as a result of climate change, it will be very challenging for the City's infrastructure to keep up."

Poul Rosen  
Senior Manager, Engineering  
City of Nanaimo

## Quick Facts

- As a result of this storm, damage occurred in Seabold Park and it will be closed until further notice.
- Stay safe and don't walk, swim or drive through floodwater. Six inches of fast-flowing water can knock you over. Two feet of water can float a car.
- Sandbags are available at the Public Works Operations Yard (2020 Labieux Road).

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