

Shoreline protection efforts continue in 2021

May 14, 2021 — A move to protect shorelines from the impacts of climate change will deliver a boost for local fish habitats as well.

With climate change driving increasingly high Lake Ontario levels, and erosion posing an ever-present risk to lakefront properties and infrastructure, the City is moving forward to mitigate impacts on a stretch of the waterfront.

Specifically, the City has approved a contractor for 2021 shoreline protection along a stretch of Shore Boulevard. The roughly \$1.7 million project will see an armour stone retaining wall constructed on the lake front between 8 and 14 Shore Blvd., similar to work that was completed last year on Abbey Mews.

“A changing global climate means we have to adapt, and that includes actions to protect our shorelines as important areas of natural infrastructure. Investments like these do just that, setting our City on strong footing for a future with higher lake levels,” said Director of Engineering, Facilities and Environmental Services Anthony Martuccio.

The pending Shore Boulevard, and completed Abbey Mews, shoreline protection efforts will result in the loss of some fish habitat on the Lake Ontario waterfront. The City will move forward with a habitat compensation project to offset this loss. Working with the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority; Trout Unlimited Canada; and the Department of Fisheries and Oceans; the City has identified a site on the Twelve Mile Creek in Pelham that will positively impact fish habitats not only in that municipality, but also in St. Catharines as its downstream neighbour.

The habitat compensation work, should it move forward, will entail the installation of a by-pass channel onto publicly accessible lands to divert around an existing pond and dam, providing for better movement of fish and improved cold-water habitat. Completing this project would provide benefit throughout the Twelve Mile Creek watershed, which runs through the City, ultimately connecting to Lake Ontario.

As part of a City Council decision Monday night, staff were directed to reach out to the Township of Pelham to obtain permission for the fish habitat compensation project.

The investments in shoreline protection and strengthening of local fish habitats both contribute to the City’s strategic goals of environmental stewardship. The shoreline protection efforts specifically will help the City adapt to the impacts of climate change, efforts that will increase across the corporation as the City finalizes its Climate Adaptation Plan in the months ahead.

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