



# City of Chicago



R2021-1123

Office of the City Clerk

## Document Tracking Sheet

**Meeting Date:** 10/14/2021

**Sponsor(s):** Cardenas (12)

**Type:** Resolution

**Title:** Call for Department of Water Management to establish solutions to flooding and publish report detailing known causes of persistent and repetitive flooding

**Committee(s) Assignment:** Committee on Environmental Protection and Energy

**A RESOLUTION CALLING UPON CITY DEPARTMENTS TO IDENTIFY & PUBLISH A  
REPORT ON FLOODING SOLUTIONS**

**WHEREAS**, The City of Chicago is in a declared state of emergency due to climate change, which continues to represent an existential threat to human existence; and

**WHEREAS**, Some of the Earth's largest carbon sinks have been deeply affected, including the ocean, which is now +/-0.62 to +/- 0.14 degrees warmer on average and is developing new dead zones, and the Amazon Rain Forest is exploited to the point it is emitting carbon dioxide rather than sequestering it; and

**WHEREAS**, As the atmosphere warms, rains can be heavier and yield more evaporation; and

**WHEREAS**, While Earth's natural environments are resilient and capable of healing if human activity becomes carbon negative, we are past the tipping point and must enact human-made innovations to forge resilient systems and mitigate the effects of climate change; and

**WHEREAS**, September 2021, a Hurricane Ida storm down poured over half a foot of rain in a short number of hours in New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Connecticut killing over 50 people; and

**WHEREAS**, Extreme weather events can cause indirect chaos such as power outages, suffering and death, and more than 20 people indirectly died from Hurricane Ida events; and

**WHEREAS**, Chicago, once considered a haven from the effects of climate change due to its access to freshwater and moderate climate, now regularly faces extreme weather events caused by climate change; such events cause Lake Michigan's water levels to rise and fall, the lakefront to erode, and overburden Chicago's aging stormwater infrastructure; and

**WHEREAS**, Neighborhoods like Chatham are projected to see properties at risk of flooding increase by 120% in 15-years, and 240% in 30-years according to Flood Factor; and

**WHEREAS**, Albany Park has 44% of its properties at risk and those that have been effected paid \$6.2 million dollars in annual flood damages with steady future projections; and

**WHEREAS**, Over 11,000 properties citywide have a 20% likelihood of rainwater reaching their property; and

**WHEREAS**, Extreme weather events cause Combined Sewer Overflows (CSO), which occur when stormwater, wastewater, and runoff from rain or snowmelt enter the City's stormwater and wastewater systems at a rate that exceeds the system's capacity and processing abilities; CSOs are a danger to the City's drinking water supply, cause basement flooding, and endanger City residents; and

**WHEREAS**, The increased frequency of extreme weather events and, in turn, CSOs, requires attention including potentially overhauling the current system and incorporating green infrastructure; and

**WHEREAS**, The estimated number of Chicago households at risk of flooding will increase by 1.6% in 15 years, and 3.2% in 30 years, and approximately 164,269 properties are already at risk of which, 50% are at major risk or worse; and

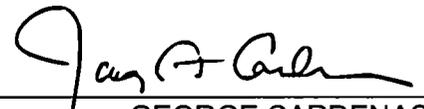
**WHEREAS**, According to the Center for Neighborhood Technology, as of October 2021, flood damages in Chicago cost around \$70.6 million for the year, 87% of claims were paid in communities of color, and from 2007-2016, ¼ of these households were below the poverty line, while communities with the fewest number of claims are predominately white communities; and

**WHEREAS**, The City of Seattle published a flood risk report contextualizing flooding as a key issue to address and the City of Chicago has not published a report with infrastructure considerations or solutions; now, therefore

**BE IT RESOLVED**, That we, the Mayor and members of the City Council of the City of Chicago gathered here this fourteenth day of October, 2021, do hereby call upon the Department of Water Management to coordinate with all applicable City departments, including the Department of Transportation, the Department of Housing, the Chicago Department of Public Health, and the Office of Communications and Emergency Management to identify programmatic solutions – including rule changes and revised application procedures – to identify solutions to flooding; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, That we call upon the Commissioner of Water Management to publish a report within 12 months of passage of this resolution detailing known causes of persistent and repetitive flooding across Chicago's 77 community areas, and a comprehensive proposal for mitigating the devastating impacts of flooding on our City; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, Such report shall also: (i) evaluate the efficacy of past solutions; (ii) propose near- and long-term solutions, including nature-based solutions, to such flooding for each community area based on each area's unique circumstances, existing infrastructure, land cover, and land uses; (iii) include authentic community engagement and feedback on the proposed solutions; and (iv) evaluate racial equity disparities and impacts for both the existing flooding of our communities, as well as for each proposed solution.



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GEORGE CARDENAS  
Alderman, 12th Ward