

**From:**

**Sent:** Monday, September 26, 2022 6:26 AM

**To:** Masse, Penny <pmasse@london.ca>

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Fwd: Harris Park Erosion Control Structure Replacement

Dear Council Members,

### **Harris Park Erosion Control Structure Replacement**

**Stabilizing a river embankment is an ecological process and requires ecological restoration expertise and this is not found within the Stormwater Management Department.** To protect from erosion, embankments need vegetation, including trees and the best time to do this work is in the fall when water levels are low. Harris Park suffers from stampeding because it is utilized as a concert venue rather than a natural green space that supports the river Thames. The City of London is renowned as being environmentally regressive and continues to build on floodplains which are natural areas that slow rushing waters in times of high water and prevents erosion downstream.

Restoring a flood plain would be the best approach to stabilizing the east embankment of the Thames River. It currently has a bricked retaining wall which is no longer considered appropriate. The approach as to how Stormwater Management intends to mitigate erosion was never discussed at the Civic Works Committee.

Restoration does not require stormwater management but an ecological restoration plan. Stormwater is not the agency to do this work. The Mud Creek project is a fine example of why stormwater management is the worst agency to do this work. Mud Creek which had natural floodplains, protected properties downstream from erosion. After stormwater management altered the flow and depth of the creek, rushing water will move faster. because the creek is now much deeper than before.

**Stormwater is a myopic approach to water management.** If you are going to spend scarce tax dollars on this project, then please use it to contract an ecological restoration expert to do the work. It would be worth it to contract out to area First Nations to do the work. They likely understand rivers systems as they live with them or at the very least a Conservation Authority. It is also time to bring First Nations into the governance and/or management of city business, as this would be welcomed by many.

**Please remember that the Endangered Spiny Softshell Turtle is present along this stretch of the river.** Stormwater management's idea of ecology and preserving river systems is so myopic that is out of date and should not be tasked with restoring a natural system. An entirely different agency with an ecology approach needs to be contracted out to do this work. Approving the funding should be conditional on hiring First Nations or an ecologist to design the work.

So uneducated was the conversation at committee that Micheal Van Holst asked whether the work would alter the flow of the river and he didn't seem ask not out of concern for the river or its species. Councillor Van Holst also asked about using the embankment to increase recreational use, clearly not understanding that increased intrusive activity would negatively impact the Endangered Spiny Softshell Turtle. **If the work needs to be done, then please contract it out to an expert in ecological restoration.**

And for Mr. Van Holst, the world is dying. The least we can do is take up less space and keep our ego in check.

FYI - please read this article. See what other cities are doing. While it is not expected that London would take the same action but the approach or restoration should mimic natural processes.

<https://www.motherjones.com/environment/2022/09/beavers-wildfires-wetlands-conservation-flooding-publicist/?fbclid=IwAR3Ge6NLH2wC9XH6uDrAiUengxV0N-rp0U7nTv7LLxgpkpWF1xOF1cRPauM>

Sincerely,

AnnaMaria Valastro