

Protection against flooding in Sunnyside: May 15, 2019 meeting, 5 min.

Good morning. My name is Mary Louise Mitchell and I live in Sunnyside. The aftereffects of the 2013 flood remain vivid in the minds of those of us who lived through it. This is why I was shocked when an electrically controlled fob for entry to my apartment building was issued to me at the beginning of this month. In the event of another flood, and another week-long power outage, how would I get in to examine the damage and remove rotting food from the fridge? I have been following with interest, and some anxiety, the actions of the city in preparing to respond to the possibility of another flood.

The city has planned and carried out several flood mitigation projects to provide protection to Sunnyside homes and residents. Some, like the Upper Plateau Separation Project, have been planned and funded, but not yet completed. Two remain at the earlier stage of envisioning what is needed. Construction of a barrier against overland flooding in Sunnyside and the planning, funding and construction of an upstream dam on the Bow River may be seen as related to one another. If we had an adequate upstream dam on the Bow right now, perhaps we would not need an improved barrier in Sunnyside. But we do not have one, we do not have the authority to plan or build one outside of Calgary, and we have no idea whether the new Government of Alberta will ever agree to plan, fund, and build such a dam.

The city of Calgary cannot plan and build something outside of its municipal boundaries and does not have the finances for such a major project without provincial funding. In any case, such a dam could not come into use for many years: perhaps twenty years from now. The city has been relying, in recent years, since the 2013 flood, on an agreement with TransAlta to reduce peak flows. In two years this agreement will expire and we have no commitment from the province that it will continue or be adequate in the face of a major flood. In the meantime, the city's plans to offer Sunnyside only one in twenty years overland flood barrier protection, the weakest in the city, are leaving my neighbourhood vulnerable to further overland flooding. And these plans do not take into account the chances of worse major natural disasters in years to come as a result of climate change ("*Golder Hydrology Study, 2014*").

I am here today to ask that the city consider the safety and security of Sunnyside residents in planning the level of barrier protection needed for my community. We deserve, and need, the same level of protection offered to other city neighbourhoods. I note that neighbourhoods adjacent to Sunnyside, such as Hillhurst, East of Sunnyside to Centre Street, and the Downtown East Village have been chosen for one in fifty year protection. We in Sunnyside are directly across from the downtown area, with one in 200 year barrier protection. Where will the water flowing against that barrier go in the event of another major flood? We need better protection. The cost to residents, and to the city, if we again suffer overland flooding, will be enormous. We should not, and need not, risk this happening again. Please reconsider the level of barrier protection needed in Sunnyside.

