



Institute for Catastrophic
Loss Reduction

Building resilient communities

Institut de Prévention
des Sinistres Catastrophiques

Construction de resilient communities

December 17, 2018
For immediate release

ICLR releases new book 'Cities adapt to extreme weather: Celebrating local leadership'

TORONTO: Local governments are taking action to reduce the risk to Canadians from extreme weather. *Cities adapt to extreme weather: Celebrating local leadership* is the third book by the Institute for Catastrophic Loss Reduction extolling local governments adapting to climate change and building more resilient communities. The three books include a total of 60 case studies describing local action in Canada that is consistent with best practices for climate resilience as identified by the Institute. The Institute is pleased to share these narratives praising successful local action. These communities are demonstrating their commitment to 'get ahead' of the risk damage from severe weather and climate change by building back better in recovery or through proactive investments in anticipation of future risks.

- Craig Snodgrass, Mayor of **High River**, reports "We went through hell in 2013. We had a 'build back better' mentality and now we are the most well protected community in Canada for flood risk."
- Linda Hepner, Mayor of **Surrey** advises "By getting ahead of the issue [coastal flooding] and setting direction now for where we want to be in 100 years, we are positioning Surrey to make smarter investments in the protection of residential neighbourhoods, businesses, significant habitat areas and provincially critical infrastructure."
- **Montreal** is the first community in Canada to establish a resilience office, appoint a Chief Resilience Officer, and, in 2018, publish a City Resilience Strategy. Mayor Valérie Plante said that "our strategy will enable the population, institutions, businesses and systems to react and resist more effectively and efficiently to unforeseen events."
- Josie Osborne, Mayor of **Tofino**, said "A prepared community is one that can take care of itself, and that starts in our homes and schools by educating children and families about emergency preparedness and response."
- Marianne Tiessen Bell, Mayor of **Perth-Andover**, reports that following devastating flooding in 2012, homes at risk were relocated or flood-proofed, and "if the flooding cannot be prevented, then all of the businesses need to move away from the river."
- Following a fatal avalanche in 1999, **Kangiqsualujjuaq** introduced regulations to prohibit new construction with 100 metres of the bottom of any steep slopes, and all homes and businesses in the new exclusion zone were relocated or demolished.
- The **District of North Vancouver** has won international awards for its disaster risk reduction efforts, including its pioneering use, since 2005, of risk tolerance criteria to guide its landslide, wildfire, flood and earthquake risk reduction strategy.
- **Fort Nelson First Nation** launched an innovative pilot study in 2017 to use drones to develop a FireSmart wildfire damage reduction plan for every building in the community.
- **Victoriaville** introduced financial incentives in 2011 for homeowners and builders to promote sustainable homes, including incentives to install hurricane clips, window shutters, high performance windows, and other risk reduction for new and existing homes.

Cities adapt to extreme weather also recognizes actions in **Brampton, Dufferin County, Fort McMurray, Kamloops, Kingston, Moncton, Perth County, Percé, Prince Albert, Richmond and Vancouver.**

Cities adapt to extreme weather: Celebrating local leadership was written by Paul Kovacs, Sophie Guilbault, Leila Darwish and Mikaela Comella. The report builds on previous Institute reports – *Cities adapt to extreme rainfall* and *Cities adapt to extreme heat*. These communities are leading the way in Canada with risk reduction action that other communities should consider.

Paul Kovacs, Executive Director of the Institute for Catastrophic Loss Reduction said “Extreme rainfall, heat and weather will increasingly affect many communities as a result of climate change. The Institute is excited to identify and celebrate actions that have been implemented by community leaders across Canada to successfully adapt to climate risks. The identified actions are consistent with the Institute’s views about best practices to reduce the risk of loss and damage from extreme events. We are confident that similar actions will benefit most communities. Damage due to extreme weather is rising across Canada, and most of these losses are preventable through the application of research by the Institute and others. This report puts a spotlight on local officials that demonstrate leadership through their actions to build a more resilience society adapted to cope with extreme weather risks.”

Cities adapt to extreme weather: Celebrating local leadership can be downloaded for free in its entirety or by chapter at www.iclr.org/municipality

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Established in 1997 by Canada’s property and casualty insurers, the Institute for Catastrophic Loss Reduction is an independent, not-for-profit research institute based in Toronto and at Western University in London, Canada. The International Council for Science designated the Institute as an International Centre of Excellence in integrated research on disaster risk. The Institute is also a founding member of the Global Alliance of Disaster Research Institutes. The Institute’s research staff are internationally recognized for pioneering work in a number of fields including wind and seismic engineering, atmospheric sciences, water resources engineering and economics. Multi-disciplined research is a foundation for the Institute’s work to build communities more resilient to disasters.

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