



**GREAT LAKES AND  
ST. LAWRENCE**  
CITIES INITIATIVE



**PRESS RELEASE**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **NOAA Administrator Meets with Mayors to Discuss Infrastructure Flood Solutions Underway in Southeast Michigan**

The Cities Initiative to partner with mayors to fund restoration of the North Branch of Ecorse Creek

Dearborn Heights, MI, April 25, 2024 – Today, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Administrator Rick Spinrad, Ph.D., met with local mayors to discuss infrastructure flood solutions underway in Southeast Michigan. Mayors in attendance included Mayor Bill Bazzi of Dearborn Heights, Mayor Lamar Tidwell of Ecorse, Mayor Michael Higgins of Lincoln Park, Mayor Gail McLeod of Allen Park, and Mayor Tim Woolley of Taylor.

The Cities Initiative received Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (also known as the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law) funding through the National Coastal Resilience Fund, a partnership between NOAA and the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation. The grant will allow the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative to support six projects across the Great Lakes. In Southeast Michigan, the Cities Initiative will work with local mayors to restore the North Branch of Ecorse Creek to manage flooding, safeguard community assets and improve water quality. Project outcomes include creating a safe and accessible recreation destination and environmental asset while contributing to overall improvements in Detroit River water quality and the resilience of the Great Lakes.

The Army Corps of Engineers has documented flood risk to transportation assets and housing in the watershed at approximately \$22 million annually (2017 dollars).

“The North Branch of Ecorse Creek has experienced constant flooding for some time, causing devastating impacts on residents,” said Mayor Bill Bazzi of Dearborn Heights. “We are proud to partner once again with the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative to restore the North Branch of Ecorse Creek and give back a sense of safety and security to surrounding communities.”

Flooding following a rainstorm in August 2023 was so extreme that it led to the closure of Detroit Metro Airport in Romulus and prompted a Presidential Disaster Declaration. To this day, streambank erosion is encroaching onto residential properties, exposing foundations, and damaging infrastructure. Fifteen stream crossings, including bridges and culverts, are at risk of being overtopped.

“President Biden’s Investing in America Agenda, fueled by funds from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, is all about getting results for people and the communities where they live and work,” said NOAA Administrator Rick Spinrad, Ph.D. “When completed, this project will help reduce flood risk for up to 200,000 people, enhance fish and wildlife habitat, improve streambank stability, and increase public access and recreational opportunities. It’s a great example of how strategic investments in resilience can help impact a community’s bottom line.”



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Through its Resilient Coastal Projects Initiative, the Cities Initiative has supported over 70 cities across the Great Lakes, securing nearly \$3 million to date for the design and construction of coastal resilience projects. Partners for the North Branch of Ecorse Creek project, in addition to the Cities Initiative, include the Downriver Community Conference and seven municipalities along the North Branch of Ecorse Creek; Wayne County; Friends of the Detroit River; and Stantec Consulting Services.

More information on the RCPI is available on the Cities Initiative's website:  
<https://glslcities.org/initiatives/resilient-coastal-projects-initiative/>

### **About the Cities Initiative**

The Cities Initiative is a multinational coalition of over 260 local governments led by mayors and chief elected officers working collaboratively to safeguard the economic, environmental, and social health of communities in the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River Basin. It is committed to stewarding the basin's freshwater and ensuring that all residents have access to clean, safe, and affordable water as the foundation for sustainable, vibrant, inclusive and resilient communities.

### **Media Contact**

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