



COUNCIL INFORMATION PACKAGE

Friday, November 1, 2024

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MEMORANDUM

TO: Welland City Council

FROM: Lina DeChellis, Director of Economic Development & Strategic Initiatives

DATE: October 30, 2024

SUBJECT: Physician Recruitment Incentive – Phoenix Medical Clinic

I'm pleased to inform Council, that Dr. Aditya Nautiyal, Dr. Emeka Nzenwata and Dr. Donald Oboh have chosen Welland for their family practice. All three doctors will be joining Phoenix Medical Clinic located at 453 Thorold Road which is scheduled to open November 4. If you know of anyone looking for a Family Physician, they can register as a patient by visiting [Apply online to the Phoenix Medical Clinic](#).

The Phoenix Medical Clinic grand opening is scheduled for Thursday, November 7 at 11:30 a.m.

City staff have been working closely with the Region's Physician Recruitment Specialist and have been successful in attracting 11 new family physicians since the approval of the Physician Recruitment Incentive in June 2023.

Memorandum

COM-C 12-2024

Subject: Homelessness Plans for Winter 2024-25

Date: October 8, 2024

To: Public Health and Social Services Committee

From: Adrienne Jugley, Commissioner, Community Services

Niagara Region's Homelessness Services team has put a number of strategies into place to support clients during the winter months.

The homelessness services system and those who are unhoused, continue to be challenged by the housing market, rental vacancy rates and rental costs in Niagara. Even more worrisome, the unhoused population continue to present with disabling substance use and mental health issues as a lingering impact of a prolonged pandemic that saw long periods of isolation and reduced services. All of these combined pressures, coupled with the anticipation of colder winter months have resulted in the need for Niagara to implement strategies that support enhanced capacity within the homelessness system, but still within the assets and finances available.

Emergency Shelter Capacity and Community Assets

- Niagara Region funded emergency shelters (Southridge, YWCA, The Raft, Salvation Army Booth Centre and Hope Centre) currently account for 162 year-round units (136 beds and 26 family/motel units).
- Niagara Region directly operates two year-round shelters, one in St. Catharines and one in Niagara Falls offering a total of capacity of 105 – 115 spaces depending on mix of couples and singles.
- Niagara Region will enhance services at the Niagara Falls shelter increasing the spaces available by 8 beds for the duration of the winter, Nov 1 – April 15.
- Homelessness Services, in partnership with Public Health are working with emergency shelters and homelessness serving agencies to implement appropriate outbreak management plans and Infection Prevention and Control (IPAC) measures for the upcoming respiratory illness outbreak season, to maintain safer environments.

-
- Homelessness Services, in partnership with the Hope Centre, is working to increase shelter capacity in their service area by increasing the number of shelter hotel rooms from 18 to 26 for the winter months, until such time as the new South Niagara Shelter is operational. At that time the 49-unit shelter will open, and 18 of the 26 hotel rooms will close, leaving 8 to continue to support families.
 - An “overflow” shelter phone line will be in operation to address shelter needs for eligible individuals (families and individuals with accessibility needs) when the regional shelter system is full. It is available daily until 11 p.m. and directly accessible through 211 or referred through a shelter provider. This ensures that those in critical need, after diversion efforts have been exhausted, and who are at greatest risk, can be sheltered should the system be otherwise full. This is a practice consistent with much of Ontario as all communities are grappling with limited shelter capacity.

Further Proactive Strategies to Support Housing Focused Approach

- Beyond emergency-based responses, Homelessness Services invests in prevention and diversion programs which seek to reduce the number of households who otherwise would require emergency shelter. The shelter diversion program will continue throughout the winter to reduce demand on shelters. This is considered a best practice approach both reducing pressure on the shelter system and ensuring that residents have the most appropriate solutions for their needs – it is recognized that shelters are not a ‘one-size fits all’ response.
- Niagara’s Assertive Street Outreach (NASO) region-wide program will continue to support clients to move directly from street to housing, as well as support those who can be supported in local shelters. To date, in 2024, NASO has had 50 successful housing placements directly from the street.

Additional supports during cold weather alerts

- Niagara will send an alert to all regionally funded homelessness agencies and first responder organizations to make them aware of cold weather alerts and confirm the services available for unhoused individuals, each time an alert is declared.

-
- Niagara Region, at the two directly operated shelters, will temporarily increase space available during cold weather alerts, leveraging the common room areas increasing capacity by 15 beds in St. Catharines and 25 beds in Niagara Falls. Staffing to support these 'just in time responses' will be managed through offering of overtime and leveraging any available casual staff.
 - Niagara Assertive Street Outreach will enhance hours and staffing during an alert to the extent possible within staffing, including incurring overtime costs, for which the Region will reimburse, to support clients in accessing services.
 - During alerts, as noted in the Region's shelter standards, some service restrictions will be lifted for the duration of the alert to ensure individuals are supported.

Niagara's diverse strategies offer both emergency and proactive approaches to ensure that agencies are in the best position possible to respond to the multiple pressures currently facing the homelessness serving system.

Respectfully submitted and signed by

Adrienne Jugley, MSW, RSW, CHE
Commissioner

October 24, 2024

Ann-Marie Norio Regional Clerk
Office of the Regional Clerk
1815 Sir Isaac Brock Way
St. Catharines ON L2V 4T7

Sent via email: Ann-Marie.Norio@niagararegion.ca

Re: Endorse Correspondence from Niagara Region regarding Municipal Codes of Conduct
Our File: 35.11.2

Dear Ms. Norio,

At its meeting held October 7, 2024, St. Catharines City Council approved the following motion:

That Council endorse Item 8.4, sub-item 4, Correspondence from the Niagara Region regarding Municipal Codes of Conduct; and

If you have any questions, please contact the Office of the City Clerk at extension 1512.



Donna Delvecchio, Acting City Clerk
Legal and Clerks Services, Office of the City Clerk
:sm

Encl. Correspondence from the Niagara Region regarding Municipal Codes of Conduct

September 27, 2024

CL 14- 2024, September 26, 2024

Distribution List

SENT ELECTRONICALLY

Motion Respecting Municipal Codes of Conduct

Regional Council, at its meeting held on September 26, 2024, passed the following motion:

WHEREAS on August 17, 2023, Regional Council supported the recommendations made by AMO that:

- a) Codes of Conduct should be updated to include workplace safety and harassment policies;
- b) Codes of Conduct should have an escalating enforcement mechanism through administrative monetary penalties that recognize local circumstances;
- c) Integrity Commissioners should have better, standardized training to improve consistency of decisions across the province;
- d) In the most egregious cases, such as harassment or assault, municipalities should be able to apply to a judge to remove a sitting member if recommended by an Integrity Commissioner;
- e) A member removed under this process should be unable to sit in another election during the term of office removed and the subsequent term;

WHEREAS Regional Council urged the Ontario Government to table and pass legislation to make these changes as soon as possible;

WHEREAS Bill 207, Municipal Accountability and Integrity Act, 2024, has been introduced that provides changes from the proposed Bill 5 which failed upon second reading including:

- a) Instead of municipalities hiring their own Integrity Commissioner (who then investigates them) an Integrity Commissioner Provincial Board would be established;
- b) Councils can no longer ignore an Integrity Commissioner recommendation that removal be elevated to the courts- it would go direct from an Integrity Commissioner to judicial review in instances of recommended removal;
- c) Adherence to anti-discrimination policies in addition to violence and harassment policies;
- d) Trauma-informed design;
- e) Protections for people who come forward; and
- f) A duty to report.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:

1. That Niagara Regional Council **SUPPORTS** the call of the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) for the Government of Ontario to introduce legislation to strengthen municipal Codes of Conduct and compliance with them in consultation with municipal governments;
2. That the legislation **ENCOMPASSES** the Association of Municipalities of Ontario's recommendations for:
 - a) Updating municipal Codes of Conduct to account for workplace safety and harassment;
 - b) Creating a flexible administrative penalty regime, adapted to the local economic and financial circumstances of municipalities across Ontario;
 - c) Increasing training of municipal Integrity Commissioners to enhance consistency of investigations and recommendations across the province;
 - d) Allowing municipalities to apply to a member of the judiciary to remove a sitting member if recommended through the report of a municipal Integrity Commissioner; and
 - e) Prohibit a member so removed from sitting for election in the term of removal and the subsequent term of office; and
3. That a copy of this resolution **BE FORWARDED** to the President of the Association of Municipalities of Ontario, Robin Jones; Premier of Ontario, Doug Ford; Minister Paul Calandra, Member of Provincial Parliament, Jeff Burch; Member of Parliament, Wayne Gates; Member of Provincial Parliament, Jennie Stevens; Member of Provincial Parliament Sam Oosterhoff and all local area municipalities.

Yours truly,



Ann-Marie Norio
Regional Clerk

:kl
CLK-C 2024-105

Distribution List:

President of the Association of Municipalities of Ontario
Premier of Ontario
Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing
Local MPPs
Local Area Municipalities

THE CORPORATION OF THE TOWNSHIP OF LARDER LAKE
69 Fourth Avenue, Larder Lake, ON
 Phone: 705-643-2158 Fax: 705-643-2311



MOVED BY:
 [Signature] Thomas Armstrong
 _____ Patricia Hull
 _____ Paul Kelly
 _____ Lynne Paquette

SECONDED BY:
 _____ Thomas Armstrong
 [Signature] Patricia Hull
 _____ Paul Kelly
 _____ Lynne Paquette

Motion #: 7
 Resolution #: 7
 Date: October 22, 2024

BE IT RESOLVED THAT Council for the Corporation of the Township of Larder Lake hereby supports resolution no. 2024-325 passed by the Municipality of St. Charles, regarding recommendations for government regulations of nicotine pouches; And

FURTHER THAT, this resolution be forwarded to the Premier of Ontario Doug Ford, the Deputy Minister of Health, Sylvia Jones; our local member of Provincial Parliament (MPP); THE Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO), the Public Health Sudbury & Districts and ALL Ontario Municipalities.

Recorded vote requested:

	For	Against
Tom Armstrong	✓	
Patricia Hull	✓	
Paul Kelly	✓	
Lynne Paquette	✓	
Patty Quinn	✓	

I declare this motion

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Carried
<input type="checkbox"/> Lost / Defeated
<input type="checkbox"/> Deferred to: _____ (enter date)
Because:
<input type="checkbox"/> Referred to: _____ (enter body)
Expected response: _____ (enter date)

Disclosure of Pecuniary Interest*

Chair:

[Signature]

*Disclosed his/her (their) interest(s), abstained from discussion and did not vote on this question.

THE CORPORATION OF THE TOWNSHIP OF LARDER LAKE

69 Fourth Avenue, Larder Lake, ON
 Phone: 705-643-2158 Fax: 705-643-2311



MOVED BY:

- Thomas Armstrong
- Patricia Hull
- Paul Kelly
- Lynne Paquette

SECONDED BY:

- Thomas Armstrong
- Patricia Hull
- Paul Kelly
- Lynne Paquette

Motion #: 6

Resolution #: 6

Date: October 22, 2024

BE IT RESOLVED THAT Council for the Corporation of the Township of Larder Lake hereby supports resolution no. 24-366 passed by the City of Quinte West, regarding a call on the federal government to provide a supplement to the allocations provided to municipalities under the AMO CCBBF agreement for 2024-2028 for the same amount that was allocated, effectively doubling the allocation for those years; And

FURTHER THAT, this resolution be forwarded to MFOA, AMO, MP Charlie Angus, and Federal Finance Minister Chrystia Freeland, and all Municipalities in Ontario.

Recorded vote requested:

	For	Against
Tom Armstrong	✓	
Patricia Hull	✓	
Paul Kelly	✓	
Lynne Paquette	✓	
Patty Quinn	✓	

I declare this motion

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Carried
<input type="checkbox"/> Lost / Defeated
<input type="checkbox"/> Deferred to: _____ (enter date)
Because:
<input type="checkbox"/> Referred to: _____ (enter body)
Expected response: _____ (enter date)

Disclosure of Pecuniary Interest*

Chair: 

*Disclosed his/her (their) interest(s), abstained from discussion and did not vote on this question.

October 28, 2024

CL 15-2024, October 24, 2024
BRCOTW 3-2024, October 17, 2024
CSD 44-2024, October 17, 2024

LOCAL AREA MUNICIPALITIES

SENT ELECTRONICALLY

Waste Management 2025 Operating Budget and Requisition

CSD 44-2024

Regional Council, at its meeting held on October 24, 2024, passed the following recommendation of its Budget Review Committee of the Whole:

That Report CSD 44-2024, dated October 17, 2024, respecting Waste Management 2025 Operating Budget and Requisition, **BE RECEIVED** and the following recommendations **BE APPROVED**:

1. That the Waste Management Services net operating budget increase (inclusive of program changes related to staffing resources for service delivery) of \$416,952 or 0.9% **BE APPROVED**;
2. That \$350,000 **BE TRANSFERRED** from the Waste Management Stabilization Reserve in order to fund one-time costs included in the 2025 Waste Management Services operating budget;
3. That the 2025 Waste Management Services gross operating budget of \$53,029,717 and net budget of \$45,584,715 as per Appendix 1 to Report CSD 44-2024 **BE APPROVED**;
4. That the net budget amount of \$45,584,715 **BE APPORTIONED** between the local area municipalities in accordance with the methodology approved in PWA 55-2011 and outlined in Appendix 2 to Report CSD 44-2024;
5. That the necessary by-laws **BE PREPARED** and **PRESENTED** to Council for consideration; and
6. That a copy of Report CSD 44-2024 **BE CIRCULATED** to the local area municipalities.

A copy of Report CSD 44-2024 is enclosed for your reference.

Yours truly,



Ann-Marie Norio
Regional Clerk

:ab

CLK-C 2024-111

cc:

- B. Brens, Associate Director, Budget Planning & Strategy
- D. Carnegie, Acting Commissioner/ Treasurer, Corporate Services
- K. Beach, Executive Assistant, Commissioner/ Treasurer, Corporate Services

Subject: Waste Management 2025 Operating Budget and Requisition

Report to: Budget Review Committee of the Whole

Report date: Thursday, October 17, 2024

Recommendations

1. That the Waste Management Services net operating budget increase (inclusive of program changes related to staffing resources for service delivery) of \$416,952 or 0.9% **BE APPROVED**;
2. That \$350,000 **BE TRANSFERRED** from the Waste Management Stabilization Reserve in order to fund one-time costs included in the 2025 Waste Management Services operating budget;
3. That the 2025 Waste Management Services gross operating budget of \$53,029,717 and net budget of \$45,584,715 as per Appendix 1 to Report CSD 44-2024 **BE APPROVED**;
4. That the net budget amount of \$45,584,715 **BE APPORTIONED** between the local area municipalities in accordance with the methodology approved in PWA 55-2011 and outlined in Appendix 2 to Report CSD 44-2024;
5. That the necessary by-laws **BE PREPARED** and **PRESENTED** to Council for consideration; and
6. That a copy of Report CSD 44-2024 **BE CIRCULATED** to the local area municipalities.

Key Facts

- The proposed Waste Management Services (WMS) net operating budget represents an overall increase of \$416,952, or 0.9% over 2024 as shown in Appendix 1 to Report CSD 44-2024.
- Key drivers to the 2025 budget include inflation, fuel pricing, increased contract pricing, people strategy support, inclusion of supplemental taxes revenue, and an updated reserve strategy.
- Approximately 80% of all services provided by WMS are being executed through external contracts, therefore the budget is subject to inflation volatility.

- Assessment growth for Niagara Region and Area Municipalities has not been finalized; however, estimated assessment growth of 1.5% is included in Appendix 2 to Report CSD 44-2024. The estimate of 1.5% for 2025 results in the net requisition decrease to be approximately 0.6% (0.9% less growth of 1.5%) with an estimated average typical annual residential decrease of \$0.32 per year.
- The net requisition amount has been allocated in accordance with the methodology approved in PWA 55-2011. The impacts by municipality in Appendix 3 to Report CSD 44-2024 are affected by the budget increase, growth in households by municipality and the enhanced services as requested and selected by each Local Area Municipality (LAM).

Financial Considerations

The gross operating expenditures are \$53.0 million, which net of revenues equates to a net requisition of \$45.6 million. This represents approximately \$0.4 million or 0.9% (0.9% for base operating and 0.0% for staffing program changes) increase over the 2024 net requisition as outlined in Appendix 1 to Report CSD 44-2024. A thorough review of operating needs and key contract assumptions has been completed which resulted in a reduction from the 2025 Budget Planning Strategy.

Table 1 – Summary of Proposed WMS Budget (in millions of dollars)

Waste Management 2025 Budget Summary	2024	2025	Increase (%)
Base Operating Expenses Net of Revenues	\$40.6	\$41.3	1.7%
Capital Transfers (Note 1)	4.6	4.6	
Transfers from Reserve for One-Time Costs	-	(0.3)	
Base Net Budget Requisition	\$45.2	\$45.6	0.9%
Program Changes	-	(0.0)	0.0%
Total Net Budget Requisition before Assessment Growth	\$45.2	\$45.6	0.9%
Total Net Budget Requisition after Assessment Growth			(0.6%)

Note 1 – Includes the annual base budget transfers to the Landfill Liability Reserve and the Capital Reserve of \$2.4 million and \$1.8 million, respectively.

A schedule providing the budgeted revenues and expenditures for 2024 and 2025 by type of expenditure is included as Appendix 1 to Report CSD 44-2024.

A contributing factor of the budget increase is inflation of the Consumer Price Index (“CPI”) and diesel fuel prices, both of which are components of the cost escalations of contracts administered by WMS. Another contributing factor to the budget increase relates to tenders awarded for operating contracts where increases have a direct impact on WMS operating budget. Further details are outlined in the Analysis section under Base Budget Increases, Pressures and Mitigations.

Through this budget process, staff updated the reserve strategy (last updated in 2018) considering the 2021 Asset Management Plan and updated capital data available on post closure costs of landfills. In late 2023, accounting standards changed to require the Asset Retirement Obligation (ARO) for the landfills to consider the full contaminating lifespans of the landfills instead of being capped at 40 years. As a result, post closure cost estimates were updated for the full post closure contaminating lifespan instead of a rolling 40 years and assumptions refreshed. Staff updated the financial funding model based on this newly available information with the goal of establishing a consistent annual contribution to reserve that would meet the post closure landfill needs over the landfill’s lifespan. This approach ensures the post closure landfill needs can be met while prioritizing annual stability of taxes to the ratepayers. The updated strategy supports the existing annual contribution of \$2.8 million to the Landfill Liability Reserve and aligns with the Average Annual Renewal Investment (AARI) concept for capital reserve needs.

Analysis

Base Budget Increases, Pressures and Mitigations

The 2025 operating and multi-year budgets are impacted by a number of operational challenges such as the EPR transition ending in 2025 and external factors, such as escalating fuel prices, CPI rates, and contracted services.

Approximately 80% of the operating-related costs are in the form of outsourced costs and are subject to contract escalations and conditions. The remaining operating-related costs are associated with program-related purchases, budgeted repairs and maintenance, utilities, labour related costs, program support, consulting, and other administration costs. Of the budgeted operating-related expenditures, approximately 3.0% are considered discretionary.

The pressures in operations that contribute to the operating increases are:

- \$0.2 million net increase in contract costs for organics processing, drop-off depots, household hazardous waste, and collections
- \$0.2 million increase in Niagara Road 12 landfill operations services due to award of a tendered contract approved by Regional Council through PW 21-2024
- \$0.2 million increase in labour related costs to support the people strategy
- \$0.2 million increase in corporate support costs
- \$0.2 million net increase in consulting costs to prepare for future collection contract
- \$0.2 million increase in leachate processing costs due to internal rate increases

The pressures noted above have been partially offset by favourable variances which are comprised of the following:

- \$0.7 million net reduction due to inclusion of supplemental taxes revenue
- \$0.1 million net increase in user fees

Program Changes

Included in the above base budget details are the program change requests to support staffing resources for service delivery outlined below. The net financial impact of these changes is fully offsetting and does not contribute to any budget increase. Business cases for these changes can be found in Appendix 5 to Report CSD 44-2024.

- Capital Coordinator required to support GIS database, asset management program, project deliverables, operational support for 12 closed and 2 open landfill sites - this represents an increase of 1 permanent full-time equivalent (FTE) funded 50% by capital.
- Waste Exemptions Representative required permanently to address the sharply increasing volume of waste exemptions applications (e.g. diapers, medical) that continue to grow annually – this represents an increase of 0.7 permanent FTE and decrease of 0.7 temporary FTE resulting in no net overall impact.
- Internal Allocations reduction from customer service division as a result of one less staffing resource required in the call center due to lower call volumes with the elimination of the blue/grey box program.

One-Time Expenditures

The 2025 Waste Management Services operating budget includes \$0.3 million for a one-time consulting engagement to conduct household waste composition studies which are essential for obtaining accurate data on the types and quantities of waste (garbage and green bin organics) being generated to enable informed decision-making regarding waste diversion strategies, program improvements, and the development of new initiatives. This will be funded by the Waste Management Stabilization Reserve and therefore has no overall impact on the proposed 2025 Waste Management Services net requisition for this one-time expenditure.

Reserve Strategy and Forecast

For 2025, the budget recommends maintaining the annual base budget transfers to the Landfill Liability Reserve and Capital Reserve in the amount of \$2.8 million and \$1.8 million, respectively. With the change to ARO and the updated Landfill Liability Reserve strategy, this reserve is now funded to align with the AARI over the contaminating lifespan of each landfill. The Capital Reserve remains funded to align with the 2021 Asset Management Plan with a 10-year AARI strategy.

As part of Niagara Region's Reserve and Reserve Funds Policy (C-F-013), minimum and maximum funding targets have been established for reserves. For stabilization reserves, such as the Waste Management Stabilization Reserve, the funding target is 10% to 15% of operating expenditures not including debt repayments. Based on the forecasted balance at the end of 2024 of \$8.9 million, the reserve balance will be deemed to be adequately funded based on 2024 operating expenditures.

Appendix 4 to Report CSD 44-2024 shows the forecasted Waste Management Reserve balances.

2025 Waste Management Requisition

The net requisition amount will be allocated to the LAMs in accordance with the methodology approved in PWA 55-2011. As such, base WMS costs will be apportioned based on the 2023 percentage of residential units in each municipality, with the enhanced collection of services and associated disposal costs to be apportioned to the requesting municipalities.

The year-over-year increase in requisition amount by municipality before assessment growth equates to a range of a 0.3% decrease to a 2.4% increase with an average

increase of 0.9% as outlined in Appendix 2 to CSD 44-2024. The net requisition change by municipality after the 1.5% forecasted assessment growth (as of October 3, 2024) equates to a range of a 1.6% decrease to a 1.4% increase with an average decrease of 0.6% as outlined in Appendix 2 to CSD 44-2024. The range is the result of the difference in household growth between LAMs as well as net assessment growth. The WMS levy is collected as a special levy with the Region establishing the tax rates for each municipality (with the exception of Niagara-on-the-Lake).

Appendix 3 to Report CSD 44-2024 provides the impacts of the WMS requisition for 2025 in comparison to 2024 on a cost per typical residential unit basis by area municipality. The 0.6% decrease on the budget net of assessment growth of 1.5% will impact the average annual residential property from a decrease of \$3.00 to an increase of \$2.85 depending on the municipality (average decrease of \$0.32 per year).

Multi-Year Forecast

2025 will be the second of the two years representing the transition period of the extended producer responsibility (EPR) which ends on December 31, 2025. The multi-year forecast to 2027 reflects this impact along with inflation, contract pressures, people strategy, and updated reserve strategies. The forecast reflects annual increases of 5.2% for 2026 and 2.8% for 2027. There are many assumptions and unknowns included in these forecasts, and staff will re-evaluate the long-term budget and reserve strategies with the budget cycle each year. Reports will be brought forward in Q4 2024 to the Public Works Committee and Council for consideration and deliberation as to whether recycling collection from non-eligible sources should continue following the end of the transition period. Financial impacts of this decision will be considered for the 2026 WMS operating budget as part of the annual budging process.

The key assumptions affecting the multi-year forecast are as follows:

- 2026
 - Reduced funding of \$0.6 million from Circular Materials Ontario (“CMO”) due to the end of EPR transition period
 - Increased pressures of \$0.7 million for inflation and fuel prices on the collection contract
 - Increased landfill operations contracted service pressures of \$0.5 million
 - Continued investment in the People Strategy of \$0.3 million

- 2027
 - Increased pressures of \$0.7 million for inflation and fuel prices on the collection contract
 - Continued investment in the People Strategy of \$0.2 million

Risk and Opportunities

The proposed budget, like any other budget, has a number of risk and opportunities. However, due to the EPR transition changes, the risks to post 2025 transition have yet to be estimated in the multi-year and will be based on future Council direction. The most significant risk to 2025 is the inflationary pressure of the collection contract, as well as several other contracts managed by WMS containing annual contract cost adjustments related to fuel prices and CPI. If these factors exceed the forecasted amounts, this could result in variances to the proposed budget. However, the adequately funded stabilization reserve would help address any variances that may occur.

Alternatives Reviewed

None.

Relationship to Council Strategic Priorities

The 2025 Waste Management Services proposed budget aligns with Niagara Region's 2023 – 2026 Council Strategic Priorities supporting an Effective Region, a Green and Resilient Region, and an Equitable Region.

Other Pertinent Reports

PWA 55-2011 Waste Management Services Financing Study
(Please contact the Niagara Region if a copy is required)

[PWC-C 24-2021 – Residential Blue Box Program – Final Producer Responsibility Regulation](#)

(<https://pub-niagararegion.escribemeetings.com/Meeting.aspx?Id=9aa51b17-536f-4a78-a67f-8d4065f60dd1&Agenda=Agenda&lang=English>)

Confidential PW 37-2023 Recycling Collection from Non-Eligible Sources under Blue V Box Regulation (O.Reg 391/21)

[PW 21-2024 – Niagara Road 12 Landfill Site Operations Contract](#)

(<https://pub-niagararegion.escribemeetings.com/Meeting.aspx?Id=bb190b0b-08e1-49d3-8ff8-b3c82ae14fe6&Agenda=Merged&lang=English>)

[CSD 29-2024 - 2025 Budget Strategy](#)

(<https://pub-niagararegion.escribemeetings.com/Meeting.aspx?Id=5ea2c44e-e03a-4ef1-91b8-f5f6a188db45&Agenda=Agenda&lang=English>)

Prepared by:

Melanie Steele, MBA, CPA, CA
Associate Director, Reporting & Analysis
Financial Management & Planning

Recommended by:

Dan Carnegie
Commissioner / Treasurer
Corporate Services

Submitted by:

Ron Tripp, P.Eng.
Chief Administrative Officer

This report was prepared in consultation with Mackenzie Glenney, Program Financial Specialist and Renee Muzzell, Manager, Program Financial Support and reviewed by Beth Brens, Associate Director, Budget Planning & Strategy, Catherine Habermebl, Director, Waste Management Services and Terry Ricketts, Commissioner, Public Works.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 2025 Waste Management Schedule of Revenues and Expenditures by Object of Expenditure
- Appendix 2 Proposed 2025 Requisition by Municipality
- Appendix 3 2025 Waste Management Requisition for Typical Residential Property by Municipality
- Appendix 4 2024 to 2027 Forecasted Waste Management Reserve Balances
- Appendix 5 2025 Waste Management Services Operating Business Cases

2025 Waste Management Schedule of Revenues and Expenditures by Object of Expenditure

Object of Expenditure	2024 WMS Budget Total (\$)	2025 WMS Budget Base (\$)	2025 WMS Budget One Time (\$)	2025 WMS Budget Growth/New Programs (\$)	2025 WMS Budget Total (\$)	Total Variance (\$)	Total Variance (%)	Notes
Labour Related Costs	4,314,865	4,485,849	0	56,130	4,541,979	227,114	5.26%	(1)
Administrative	1,043,566	1,155,895	350,000	0	1,505,895	462,329	44.30%	(2)
Operational & Supply	37,810,488	38,228,895	0	0	38,228,895	418,407	1.11%	(3)
Occupancy & Infrastructure	1,038,272	1,133,800	0	0	1,133,800	95,528	9.20%	
Equipment, Vehicles, Technology	349,731	354,680	0	0	354,680	4,948	1.41%	
Partnership, Rebate, Exemption	238,619	235,263	0	0	235,263	(3,356)	-1.41%	
Financial Expenditures	0	153,692	0	0	153,692	153,692	0.00%	(4)
Transfers To Funds	4,581,105	4,602,930	0	0	4,602,930	21,825	0.48%	
Allocation Between Departments	437,590	485,117	0	(73,927)	411,190	(26,399)	-6.03%	
A_60260AC Allocation Within Departments								
Gross Expenditure Subtotal	49,814,236	50,836,121	350,000	(17,797)	51,168,324	1,354,088	2.72%	
Taxation	(45,167,763)	(46,416,394)	0	26	(46,416,368)	(1,248,605)	2.76%	(4)
By-Law Charges and Sales	(5,366,048)	(5,370,931)	0	0	(5,370,931)	(4,883)	0.09%	
Other Revenue	(1,000,561)	(892,418)	0	0	(892,418)	108,143	-10.81%	
Transfer from Funds	0	0	(350,000)	0	(350,000)	(350,000)	0.00%	(2)
Gross Revenue Subtotal	(51,534,372)	(52,679,743)	(350,000)	26	(53,029,717)	(1,495,344)	2.90%	
Net revenue before indirect allocations	(1,720,137)	(1,843,622)	0	(17,771)	(1,861,393)	(141,256)	8.21%	
Indirect Allocations	1,720,137	1,843,622	0	17,771	1,861,393	141,256	8.21%	
Capital Financing Allocation	0	0				0	#DIV/0!	
Allocation Subtotal	1,720,136	1,843,622				141,256	8.21%	
Net revenue after indirect allocations	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.00%	

FTE - Permanent	34.0	34.0	0.0	1.7	35.7	1.7	(1)
FTE - Temporary	0.7	0.7	0.0	(0.7)	0.0	(0.7)	(1)
FTE - Total	34.7	34.7	0.0	1.0	35.7	1.0	
Student	11.7	11.7	0.0	0.0	11.7	0.0	

(1) Increase is due to base annual increases to support the people strategy and program change requests related to support staffing resources for service delivery (addition of Capital Coordinator funded 50% by capital and Waste Exemption Representative required permanently when previously temporary).

(2) Increase is primarily due to a one-time consulting engagement to conduct household waste composition studies which are essential for obtaining accurate data on types and quantities of waste being generated to enable informed decision-making regarding waste strategies. This one-time cost is fully offset by the increase in Transfer from Funds as it will be funded by the Waste Management Stabilization Reserve. The additional increase is due to consulting studies to prepare for the future collection contract.

(3) Increase is largely driven by increases in contract costs for landfill operations, drop-off depots, household hazardous waste, and collection services as well as increases to internal leachate processing costs.

(4) Increase in Financial Expenditures is due to budgeting for Waste Management's portion of tax write-offs which is fully offset by the budget for Waste Management's portion of supplemental taxes revenue included in Taxation of \$831,653 for a total net requisition reduction of \$677,961. The remaining increase in Taxation of \$416,952 equates to the increase in the total net requisition.

Proposed 2025 Requisition by Municipality

Municipality	2024 Requisition (\$000)	2025 Proposed Requisition (\$000)	2024 vs 2025 Increase/(Decrease) (\$000)	2024 vs 2025 Increase/(Decrease) (%)	Taxable Assessment Growth (%) (Note 1)	Net Increase/(Decrease) (%)
Fort Erie	\$ 3,415	\$ 3,435	\$ 20	0.6%	-1.4%	-0.8%
Grimsby	\$ 2,498	\$ 2,542	\$ 44	1.7%	-0.3%	1.4%
Lincoln	\$ 2,224	\$ 2,238	\$ 14	0.6%	-0.2%	0.4%
Niagara Falls	\$ 8,814	\$ 9,024	\$ 211	2.4%	-1.0%	1.4%
Niagara-on-the-Lake	\$ 1,963	\$ 1,959	\$ (4)	-0.2%	-0.7%	-0.9%
Pelham	\$ 1,589	\$ 1,608	\$ 19	1.2%	-1.1%	0.1%
Port Colborne	\$ 2,194	\$ 2,187	\$ (7)	-0.3%	-1.3%	-1.6%
St. Catharines	\$ 13,423	\$ 13,431	\$ 8	0.1%	-0.9%	-0.8%
Thorold	\$ 2,177	\$ 2,229	\$ 52	2.4%	-3.3%	-0.9%
Wainfleet	\$ 668	\$ 668	\$ (0)	0.0%	-0.1%	-0.1%
Welland	\$ 5,062	\$ 5,121	\$ 59	1.2%	-2.0%	-0.8%
West Lincoln	\$ 1,142	\$ 1,144	\$ 2	0.2%	-0.4%	-0.2%
Total	\$ 45,168	\$ 45,585	\$ 417	0.9%	-1.5%	-0.6%

Note 1 - Total taxable assessment growth percentage of 1.50% represents Niagara estimated growth for 2024 as of October 3, 2024.

Change in Residential Units - 2025 Budget over 2024 Budget

Municipality	Residential Units 2024 Budget	Residential Units 2025 Budget	Increase	Increase (%)
Fort Erie	16,545	16,690	145	0.9%
Grimsby	11,969	12,205	236	2.0%
Lincoln	10,592	10,618	26	0.2%
Niagara Falls	40,200	40,379	179	0.4%
Niagara-on-the-Lake	9,132	9,057	(75)	-0.8%
Pelham	7,535	7,657	122	1.6%
Port Colborne	10,450	10,452	2	0.0%
St. Catharines	62,244	61,639	(605)	-1.0%
Thorold	10,293	10,549	256	2.5%
Wainfleet	3,256	3,269	13	0.4%
Welland	24,645	24,918	273	1.1%
West Lincoln	5,680	5,704	24	0.4%
Total	212,541	213,137	596	0.3%

Source: Municipal Property Assessment Corporation (MPAC)

Estimated 2025 Requisition For Typical Residential Property by Municipality

Municipality	2024 Final CVA (Note 1)	2024 Final WM Tax Rate	2024 Final WM Taxes	2025 Draft CVA (Note 1)	2025 Draft WM Tax Rate (Note 2)	Estimated 2025 WM Taxes	Annual Increase/ (Decrease) (\$)	Annual Increase/ (Decrease) (%)	Net Monthly Increase/ (Decrease) (\$)
Fort Erie	234,434	0.00073584	\$ 172.51	234,434	0.00073023	\$ 171.19	\$ (1.32)	-0.8%	\$ (0.11)
Grimsby	449,251	0.00045422	\$ 204.06	449,251	0.00046057	\$ 206.91	\$ 2.85	1.4%	\$ 0.24
Lincoln	403,747	0.00049480	\$ 199.77	403,747	0.00049658	\$ 200.49	\$ 0.72	0.4%	\$ 0.06
Niagara Falls	283,758	0.00058209	\$ 165.17	283,758	0.00059003	\$ 167.43	\$ 2.25	1.4%	\$ 0.19
Niagara-on-the-Lake (Note 3)									
Pelham	400,278	0.00050702	\$ 202.95	400,278	0.00050763	\$ 203.19	\$ 0.24	0.1%	\$ 0.02
Port Colborne	200,914	0.00095517	\$ 191.91	200,914	0.00094025	\$ 188.91	\$ (3.00)	-1.6%	\$ (0.25)
St. Catharines	273,999	0.00073812	\$ 202.24	273,999	0.00073196	\$ 200.56	\$ (1.69)	-0.8%	\$ (0.14)
Thorold	279,950	0.00063876	\$ 178.82	279,950	0.00063349	\$ 177.35	\$ (1.48)	-0.8%	\$ (0.12)
Wainfleet	318,887	0.00061294	\$ 195.46	318,887	0.00061218	\$ 195.22	\$ (0.24)	-0.1%	\$ (0.02)
Welland	229,501	0.00082338	\$ 188.97	229,501	0.00081686	\$ 187.47	\$ (1.50)	-0.8%	\$ (0.12)
West Lincoln	385,958	0.00049959	\$ 192.82	385,958	0.00049849	\$ 192.40	\$ (0.42)	-0.2%	\$ (0.04)

Notes

Note 1 - 2024 and 2025 average CVA for typical household based on average value from 2024 tax policy study.

Note 2 - 2025 draft WM rates based on 2024 tax policy (except discount factors), 2025 draft requisition amounts and 2024 estimated returned roll assessment values.

Note 3 - NOTL charge to residents based on fixed household amount as calculated by NOTL and therefore not included in this analysis.

Forecasted Waste Management Reserve Balances
(in thousands of dollars)

Waste Management Stabilization Reserve	2024	2025	2026	2027
Opening Balance	\$ 7,562	\$ 8,910	\$ 8,738	\$ 8,913
Interest Allocation	189	178	175	178
Forecasted Year-End Surplus Transfe	1,159	-	-	-
One-Time Costs Funded from Reserve (Note 1)	-	(350)	-	-
Closing Balance (Note 2)	\$ 8,910	\$ 8,738	\$ 8,913	\$ 9,092

Funding Targets (Note 3)

Minimum Funding Target	\$ 4,690	\$ 4,837	\$ 4,996	\$ 5,146
Maximum Funding Target	\$ 7,035	\$ 7,256	\$ 7,494	\$ 7,719

Waste Management Capital Reserve	2024	2025	2026	2027
Opening Balance	\$ 24,577	\$ 24,911	\$ 25,659	\$ 27,040
Interest Allocation	439	498	513	541
Base Operating Budget Transfer to Reserve	1,779	1,779	1,779	1,779
Capital Budget Transfer from Reserve (Note 4)	(1,883)	(1,530)	(911)	(8,012)
Closing Balance	\$ 24,911	\$ 25,659	\$ 27,040	\$ 21,348

Funding Target Adequately funded in alignment with 2021 Asset Management Plan

Landfill Liability Reserve	2024	2025	2026	2027
Opening Balance	\$ 5,398	\$ 3,908	\$ 5,370	\$ 8,302
Interest Allocation	108	78	107	166
Base Operating Budget Transfer to Reserve	2,802	2,824	2,824	2,824
Capital Budget Transfer from Reserve (Note 4)	(4,400)	(1,440)	-	(800)
Closing Balance	\$ 3,908	\$ 5,370	\$ 8,302	\$ 10,492

Funding Target Adequately funded in Alignment with Average Annual Renewal Investment over the contaminating lifespan of each landfill

Note 1 - 2025 one-time consulting engagement to conduct household waste composition studies which are essential for obtaining accurate data on the types and quantities of waste being generated to enable informed decision-making regarding waste diversion strategies, program improvements, and the development of new initiatives.

Note 2 - 2024 forecasted balance will be impacted by any surplus/deficit relating to 2024 operations. Any surplus/(deficit) will be recommended to be transferred to/(from) the Waste Management Stabilization Reserve as part of the 2024 Year End Results and Transfer Report to be presented to Corporate Services Committee in Q1 2025.

Note 3 - As per Niagara Region's Reserve and Reserve Funds Policy (C-F-013), the funding target for the Waste Management Stabilization Reserve is 10% to 15% of operating expenditures not including debt repayments.

Note 4 - Budgeted transfer from reserve represents transfers out of the Waste Management Capital Reserve in order to fund capital projects.

BC003 - Growth / New Programs - Waste Exemptions Representative

CSD 44 2024
Appendix 5

FTE Scenario Temp To Perm
Department Waste Management Services
Committee Report #
Case Start Date 1/1/25

Effective Region Equitable Region
Green Resilient Region Prosperous Region



Alignment to Council Strategic Priorities

This business case supports Council's 'Equitable Region' and 'Effective Region' strategic priorities by ensuring the Region is inclusive and free of discrimination to those residents requiring collection of additional garbage based on reasonable eligibility criteria; and ensuring that delivered services reflect the needs of residents in an effective manner.

Description

A temporary part-time (0.7 FTE) Waste Exemptions Representative ("WER") for a two-year contract period ending March, 2025, is currently in place. Reporting to the Waste Management Collection & Diversion Program Manager, this role is responsible for supporting the Waste Management Services division with the administration, operating, processing and maintenance of the Region's waste exemption programs. This includes processing requests and renewals for the collection contract including diaper exemptions; medical waste exemptions; daycare exemptions; group home medical waste exemptions and set-out service exemptions. Further, the WER also maintains the garbage tag program for residents and Niagara Region's retail partners.

Business Reasons

Waste Exemptions:

The demand for waste exemptions which are subject to specific eligibility criteria has substantially increased with the start of every-other-week garbage collection in Oct. 2020.

Prior to the curbside service level changes in 2020, the processing and renewal of waste exemptions were handled by multiple staff over the work-from-home COVID-19 period. As a result of a sharp increase in the volume of applications received after the service level changes, a temporary part time role was approved to handle the workload.

In 2019 and 2020, 1,054 and 4,462 waste exemption applications were processed and/or renewed respectively, which represents a 323% increase in workload. The waste exemption program covers various forms of bag limit exemptions and currently includes over 250 special set out service exemptions.

The number of waste exemption applications received has continued to increase. Between Jan. and Apr. 2024, 1,838 applications have been processed and waste exemption applications and renewals are expected to exceed 5,500 by year end which represents a 423% increase from 2019.

Risk Assessment Description: Priority

The various forms of waste exemption and sale of garbage tags are Council approved initiatives and something that eligible/qualified households with the region have become accustomed to, therefore this dedicated role for processing waste exemptions will continue to be a necessity.

The increased volume of work related to waste exemption processing and renewal, and garbage tag sales has increased significantly since 2019. Exemption services have become increasingly important to Niagara region residents. A reduction in the operational and administrative need to support this work is not expected thus supporting the need for the current temporary part-time position to become a permanent part-time position.

Without a dedicated role to perform this work, the related activities will need to be added to other staff's existing duties. Processing backlogs will arise adversely impacting current level of service and difficulties in managing overall workload which can lead to difficulties for staff in completing their primary duties, a back log of overdue work and will adversely impact team morale. Further, it will result in a loss of the routine maintenance and upkeep of these programs, leading to complaints from the public, or the potential for the illegal dumping of the material.

BC003 - Growth / New Programs - Waste Exemptions Representative

CSD 44 2024
Appendix 5

Financial and Staffing Impacts

Category of Expenditure	2025	2026	2027
Labour Related Costs	-	-	-
Administrative	-	-	-
Operational & Supply	-	-	-
Occupancy & Infrastructure	-	-	-
Equipment	-	-	-
Partnership, Rebate & Exemption	-	-	-
Community Assistance	-	-	-
Financial Expenditures	-	-	-
Transfer To Reserve	-	-	-
Gross Expenditure	-	-	-
Other Revenue	-	-	-
Federal & Provincial Grants	-	-	-
By-Law Charges & Sales	-	-	-
Transfers From Reserves	-	-	-
Gross Revenue	-	-	-
Net Tax Levy Impact	-	-	-
Permanent FTEs	1	-	-
Temporary FTEs	(1)	-	-
Net FTEs	-	-	-

Prepared By: Lucy McGovern
Position: Program Manager, Waste Collection & Diversion

Reviewed By: Andrea Wheaton
Position: Program Financial Specialist

Approved By: Terry Ricketts
Position: Commissioner, Public Works

FTE Scenario New FTE
Department Waste Management Services
Committee Report #
Case Start Date 1/1/25

Effective Region Equitable Region
Green Resilient Region Prosperous Region



Alignment to Council Strategic Priorities

This business case supports Council's strategic priorities of being an 'Effective Region' and 'Green Resilient and Region' by ensuring that the Region strives and implements continuous improvement to Waste Management services and programs. Additionally, it ensures that Waste Management infrastructure is in a good state of repair to maintain resilience to the impacts of climate change, meets customer requirements and remains in complies with relevant regulations.

Description

Reporting to the Waste Management Project Manager, the Project Coordinator ("Coordinator") will be responsible for assisting in various day-to-day activities associated with managing capital projects and supporting waste disposal operations. The Coordinator's time will be evenly divided between capital projects and operations and will include the following responsibilities and tasks:

- Maintenance of the GIS asset management database.
- Assist with budgeting, financial processes and other documentation.
- Coordination of project schedule and managing resources to execute project deliverables.
- Responsible for project financial and administrative support, and project specific communication and collaboration.
- Contract Management – supporting Operations to enhance oversight and ensure contractual obligations are met e.g. administration of operating contract database.
- Due Diligence – coordinate due diligence items such as SOPs and Workplace Health and Safety (H&S) management systems.
- Administration of Waste Disposal Operations Workplace Health and Safety Program. Leads operational health and safety initiatives.
- Develops, implements, maintains and updates Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) as required.
- Manages Tier 3 projects throughout the lifecycle: including initiation, planning, Environmental Assessment, design, construction, commissioning, and close-out.

The Project Coordinator role would be allocated 50% to capital projects and 50% to the operating budget.

Business Reasons

The business reasons for Project Coordinator are as follows:

- Capacity
- GIS/Technology – since 2023 the Waste Management Division has been required to implement and maintain a robust GIS system to track assets; current staff have limited capacity to manage the GIS database, which would be a critical function of the Coordinator.
- Asset Management Office (AMO) – the introduction of a comprehensive corporate asset management program in 2019 / 2020 has significantly added to the workload of the Project Manager. It is estimated that the Project Manager will be required to dedicate approximately 200–250 hours annually (15% of their overall annual work hours) to complete related asset management work. There are on-going long-term deliverables that the Coordinator position would support.
- Projects – Waste Management has one dedicated Project Manager that manages the majority of capital projects, especially projects of a greater complexity and/or value. In 2025, the Project Manager will have 19 active projects that are a mix of tier 2 and 3 projects. As per the Region's Project Management Toolkit, there should be 2 project managers for the number and tier currently being completed by the Project Manager. The addition of the Coordinator will assist the Project Manager to ensure that projects are completed within set timelines and required specifications.
- Site Customers – the number of customers visiting the Region's Residential Drop-off Depots and landfills has increased from 259,000 in 2020 to 324,000 in 2023. The Operations team requires support to assist with the ever-increasing use of the facilities.

Risk Assessment Description: Priority

The potential risks of not having a full-time Project Coordinator include:

- Annual Capital Program – the ability to effectively and efficiently complete the capital program may be compromised
 - o Currently limited to one Project Manager undertaking capital projects which potentially impacts the ability to react to urgent or emergency situations e.g. high voltage line repair
 - o No contingency within capital program e.g. in 2024 hired third party assistance to provide support for an on-going capital project due to workload
- Compliance – potentially lead to issues with both contractual and regulatory compliance
 - o E.g. ensuring corporate H&S policies and regulatory requirements are being met, conduct inspections / monitoring of contracted staff, etc.
- Schedule / Staff Support – project schedules may not be met e.g. capital projects, AMO deliverables, support and workload challenges, etc.
- Capacity – managing the GIS database would be impacted since there is limited capacity within the current Disposal team
 - o There is a developed GIS database however staff resources are required to maintain the database in order to manage assets, provide related deliverables to the AMO and assist with future capital planning
- Lowered Customer Service – inefficiencies and quality issues may result in delays and reduced service quality, negatively impacting customer satisfaction
 - o E.g. will support a good state of repair of sites that the public uses e.g. drop-off depots, naturalization sites

BC004 - Growth / New Programs - Waste Management Capital Coordinator

Financial and Staffing Impacts

CSD 44 2024
Appendix 5

Category of Expenditure	2025	2026	2027
Labour Related Costs	56,130	59,549	62,455
Administrative	-	-	-
Operational & Supply	-	-	-
Occupancy & Infrastructure	-	-	-
Equipment	-	-	-
Partnership, Rebate & Exemption	-	-	-
Community Assistance	-	-	-
Financial Expenditures	-	-	-
Transfer To Reserve	-	-	-
Gross Expenditure	56,130	59,549	62,455
Other Revenue	-	-	-
Federal & Provincial Grants	-	-	-
By-Law Charges & Sales	-	-	-
Transfers From Reserves	-	-	-
Gross Revenue	-	-	-
Net Tax Levy Impact	56,130	59,549	62,455
Permanent FTEs	1	1	1
Temporary FTEs	-	-	-
Net FTEs	1	1	1

Prepared By: Emil Prpic
Position: Associate Director, Waste Disposal Operations & Engineering

Reviewed By: Mackenzie Glenney
Position: Program Financial Specialist

Approved By: Terry Ricketts
Position: Commissioner, Public Works



TOWN OF WASAGA BEACH

30 Lewis Street, Wasaga Beach
Ontario, Canada L9Z 1A1

Tel (705) 429-3844
Fax (705) 429-6732

October 25, 2024

Ministry of the Solicitor General
George Drew Building
18th Floor
25 Grosvenor St.
Toronto, ON M7A 1Y6
Michael.Kerzner@pc.ola.org

BY EMAIL ONLY

Dear Honourable Michael Kerzner,

RE: Resolution from the Town of Wasaga Beach re: OPP Detachment Billing Increases

Please be advised that the Council of the Town of Wasaga Beach, during their October 24, 2024 Council meeting passed the following resolution regarding OPP Detachment Billing Increases.

WHEREAS current police services within the Town of Wasaga Beach (hereinafter referred to as the 'Town') are provided by the Ontario Provincial Police (hereinafter referred to as the 'OPP');

AND WHEREAS the Town and the local OPP detachment have worked in a positive, collaborative and effective manner for decades;

AND WHEREAS historical increases in OPP Annual Billing Statements have trended around 5%;

AND WHEREAS the OPP submitted their 2025 Annual Billing Statement to the Town on October 4, 2024, that identifies an approximate \$1.3M (22.8%) increase from 2024 to 2025 that will translate to an approximate 1.6% tax rate increase, on top of what the Town was contemplating for the residents of Wasaga Beach;

AND WHEREAS the Town was not consulted nor provided any advanced notice from the Commissioner regarding the significant cost increase received for OPP services;

AND WHEREAS the Town cannot afford to absorb this unexpected and entirely preventable increase without causing undo financial strain to our taxpayers;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Town of Wasaga Beach wishes to dispute the 2025 OPP Annual Billing Statement;

AND FURTHER THAT the Town requests that the 2025 OPP Annual Billing Statement be reduced to an approximate 5% increase that is more manageable for the Town and in line with historical trends;

AND FURTHER THAT any increase above 5% be absorbed by the province as the additional costs are directly the result of collective bargaining that was within the control of the OPP and should have been known to be financially unsustainable for the municipalities that now need to pay the bill;

AND FURTHER THAT the Town request that the County of Simcoe undertake a feasibility study for a County Police Force;

AND FURTHER THAT a copy of this Resolution be sent to the Honourable Doug Ford, Premier of Ontario, the Honourable Michael Kerzner, Solicitor General, MPP Brian Saunderson, the County of Simcoe and all 329 municipalities serviced by OPP.

Your favorable consideration of this matter is appreciated.

Should you have any questions, please contact me at mayor@wasagabeach.com or (705) 429-3844 ext. 2225.

Sincerely,



Brian Smith
Mayor, Town of Wasaga Beach

/kf

cc: (via email)

Premier Doug Ford

MPP Brian Saunderson

The County of Simcoe

All municipalities serviced by the OPP

October 25, 2024

SENT ELECTRONICALLY

**City of Hamilton
Haldimand County
Regional Municipality of Niagara
Local Area Municipalities**

Ontario Deposit Return Program Expansion

Please be advised that at the Board of Directors meeting held on October 18, 2024, the following resolution was passed:

Resolution No. FA-106-2024

Moved by: Robert Foster

Seconded by: Brian Grant

WHEREAS NPCA has committed to demonstrating leadership in addressing climate change and sustainable practices through its lands and operations;

WHEREAS NPCA's corporate climate change action plan strives to reduce the NPCA's climate impacts and carbon footprint;

WHEREAS the Ontario Deposit Return Program has successfully incentivized the recycling of alcoholic beverage containers, resulting in the removal of over 204,000 tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions;

WHEREAS the Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks has indicated consideration of adopting a deposit-and-return system for nonalcoholic beverages;

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Correspondence dated September 20, 2024 from the Town of Bradford West Gwillimbury RE: Ontario Deposit Return Program **BE RECEIVED**;

AND THAT the NPCA **ENDORSE** the expansion of the Ontario Deposit Return Program to include nonalcoholic beverage containers;

AND FURTHER THAT the endorsement **BE CIRCULATED** to the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks, and municipalities within the watershed for information.

Sincerely,



Melanie Davis
Manager, Office of the CAO & Board
Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority
905.788.3135 ext. 250

October 25, 2024

SENT ELECTRONICALLY

**City of Hamilton
Haldimand County
Regional Municipality of Niagara
Local Area Municipalities**

Report No. FA-52-24 RE: Draft Watershed-based Resource Management Strategy

At the Board of Directors meeting held on October 18, 2024, the following resolution was passed:

Resolution No. FA-108-2024

Moved by: Patrick O'Neill

Seconded by: Brian Grant

THAT Report No. FA-52-24 RE: Draft Watershed-based Resource Management Strategy **BE RECEIVED**;

AND THAT staff **BE AUTHORIZED** to post the draft Watershed Strategy for public comment for three weeks;

AND THAT the draft Watershed Strategy be circulated to the NPCA partner municipalities;

AND FURTHER THAT the Watershed Strategy be brought forward for Board approval on or before December 13, 2024.

A copy of Report No. FA-52-24 and the draft Watershed Strategy are enclosed for reference. Members of Council, staff, and individuals residing in the Niagara Peninsula watershed are invited to learn more and provide feedback through the [Get Involved portal](#).

Sincerely,



Melanie Davis
Manager, Office of the CAO & Board
Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority
905.788.3135 ext. 250

cc: Leilani Lee-Yates, CAO / Secretary – Treasurer
Geoffrey Verkade, Senior Manager, Integrated Watershed Strategies
Tara Gaade, Program Coordinator, Watershed Strategies and Climate Research

Report To: Board of Directors

Subject: Draft Watershed-based Resource Management Strategy

Report No: FA-52-24

Date: October 18, 2024

Recommendation:

THAT Report No. FA-52-24 RE: Draft Watershed-based Resource Management Strategy BE **RECEIVED**;

AND THAT staff **BE AUTHORIZED** to post the draft Watershed Strategy for public comment for three weeks;

AND THAT the draft Watershed Strategy be circulated to the NPCA partner municipalities;

AND FURTHER THAT the Watershed Strategy be brought forward for Board approval on or before December 13, 2024.

Purpose:

To provide an update to the NPCA Board of Directors regarding the development of the Watershed-based Resources Management Strategy (Watershed Strategy) required under the *Conservation Authorities Act* and recommend that the draft Watershed Strategy be made available to the public and municipal partners for a commencing period of three weeks.

Background:

The Watershed Strategy is being developed in response to Ontario Regulation 686/21: Mandatory Programs and Services, which is made under section 21.1(1)2 of the *Conservation Authorities Act*. This regulation outlines the specific programs and services that all Conservation Authorities must provide within their jurisdiction, including the development of a Watershed-based Resource Management Strategy.

The purpose of the Watershed Strategy is to assist NPCA with evolving or enhancing the delivery of its programs and services and improve efficiencies and their effectiveness in supporting mandatory programs of the *Conservation Authorities Act*. The Watershed Strategy will effectively guide the NPCA in managing watershed resources sustainably. Key objectives include enhancing watershed health through integrated watershed management, promoting climate resilience, and incorporating stakeholder input. The Watershed Strategy supports NPCA's commitment to protecting the Niagara Peninsula's unique watershed and promoting community engagement.

The Watershed Strategy must be completed by December 31, 2024, and must include a consultation process with stakeholders and the public. NPCA is committed to ensuring that the Watershed Strategy is prepared transparently and that it is made publicly available to guide the sustainable management of watershed resources across the Niagara Peninsula.

Discussion:

The Watershed Strategy will incorporate guiding principles and objectives from NPCA's 10-year Strategic Plan that shape the design and delivery of mandatory programs and services. NPCA's inherent Integrated Watershed Management (IWM) approach to conservation that recognizes water is a valuable resource that should be managed sustainably in conjunction with natural resources like fisheries, wildlife, and land, will be preserved throughout the Watershed Strategy. IWM involves managing human activities and natural resources within watershed boundaries through adaptive practices that ensure sustainability. This method enables the NPCA to make informed, science-based resource management decisions to protect watershed health. The Watershed Strategy will also include a comprehensive summary of the data and technical information that NPCA relies on to support its program delivery.

Most significantly, the Watershed Strategy will identify potential issues and risks that could hinder the effective delivery of mandatory programs and services, along with targeted actions to mitigate these challenges. This framework for the Watershed Strategy provides a structured approach for periodically reviewing NPCA's Inventory of Programs and Services, ensuring that program descriptions and language remain consistent across all NPCA initiatives. By doing so, the strategy will help pinpoint opportunities to enhance or sustain watershed health, enabling NPCA to continuously adapt its efforts to meet evolving resource management needs within the Niagara Peninsula.

Engagement Summary

Public input to the Watershed Strategy is critical to shape a resilient and sustainable future for our shared watershed. Watershed resident input on how the community benefits from NPCA's programs and services and what issues or risks they perceive may affect their effectiveness is highly sought. NPCA took a

comprehensive approach to public engagement for the Strategy, which included using a range of tools and methods for engaging with Indigenous communities, members of the public, local area municipalities, as well as a wide range of residents and interested parties. An engagement plan was presented to the Public Advisory Committee (PAC) in May 2024 which outlined a schedule of engagement milestones and primary goals of the engagement process for the Strategy.

Feedback from the public and interested parties was elicited through NPCA's 'Get Involved' public engagement portal wherein an informative discussion paper including an inventory and description of current programs and services, frequently asked questions, related documents, and a short public survey for comment has been published. NPCA hosted a hybrid Public Information Centre (PIC) on September 24 which was live-streamed and saved on our YouTube channel for individuals that could not attend. A total of 24 people registered for the PIC, with six people attending in person and five attending online.

Financial Implications:

The development of the Watershed-based Resource Management Strategy is funded through the Operating Budget.

Links to Policy/Strategic Plan:

Goal 1.1: Support evidence-based decision-making for climate-resilient watersheds and shorelines.

Goal 2.2: Lead an integrated watershed management approach to support planning and policy for protection and enhancing watersheds.

Goal 4.2: Foster relationships with the community, non-government organizations, businesses, agriculture, industry, and academic institutions for collective outcomes and impact.

Related Reports and Appendices:

Appendix 1: Watershed-based Resource Management Strategy (*distributed separately*)

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WATERSHED-BASED RESOURCE MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

DRAFT

October 18, 2024

Land Acknowledgement

The Niagara Peninsula watershed is situated within the traditional territory of the Haudenosaunee, Attiwonderonk (Neutral), and the Anishinaabeg, including the Mississaugas of the Credit—many of whom continue to live and work here today.

The territory is covered by the Upper Canada Treaties (No. 3,4, and 381) and is within the land protected by the Dish with One Spoon Wampum agreement. Today, the watershed is home to many First Nations peoples, Métis citizens, and Inuit.

Through this Watershed Strategy, the NPCA reconfirms its commitment to shared stewardship of natural resources and a deep appreciation of Indigenous culture and history in the watershed.

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 About Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority

The Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority (NPCA) is a community-based natural resource management agency that protects, enhances, and sustains healthy watersheds that was established in 1959 pursuant to the *CA Act*. With 65 years of experience, NPCA offers watershed programs and services that focus on flood and hazard management, source water protection, species protection, ecosystem restoration, community stewardship, and land management.

A watershed is the land that drains into a particular watercourse such as a stream, river, lake. Gravity and the land's topography (the high and low areas) move water, rain, and snowmelt across the landscape from one area to another. Figure 1 below provides a simple illustration showing the different elements within a watershed.

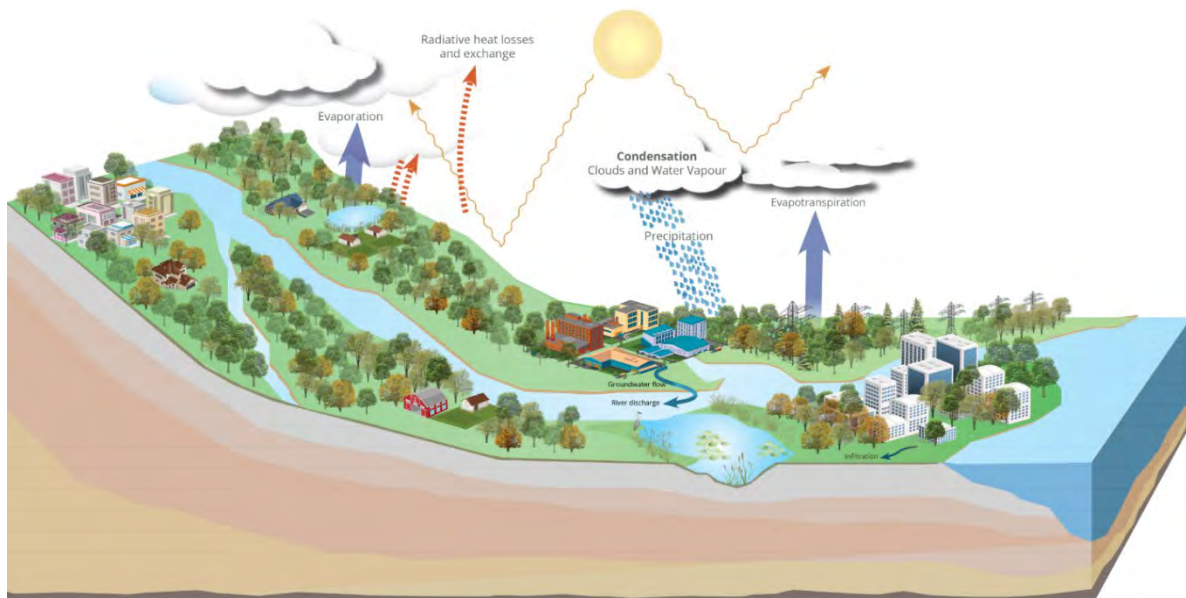


Figure 1 – Watershed Diagram

NPCA's watershed area encompasses 2,424 km², and includes the regional municipality of Niagara, portions of the City of Hamilton (21%), and Haldimand County (25%). Since time immemorial, this area has been the home to Indigenous peoples—a place for sharing, trading, hunting, gathering, stewardship, and friendship. Currently, the watershed supports a population of approximately 520,000 people. Figure 2 shows the limits of the Niagara Peninsula watershed.



Figure 2 – NPCA Watershed

The watershed is uniquely situated between two Great Lakes, with the Niagara River as a boundary shared with the United States of America. As a result, the watershed area includes several notable natural features such as the Niagara Escarpment Biosphere Reserve, the Niagara Falls, Wainfleet Bog, Ball's Falls, Willoughby Marsh, and other significant landforms such as the Fonthill Kame ice contact-delta complex. The unique microclimate created by the Niagara Escarpment and rich soils supports one of Ontario's most productive agriculture systems, including vineyards, tender fruit orchards, livestock, and various specialty crops (greenhouses for flowers, vegetables, sod farms, and mushroom farms). These important watershed features provide life-sustaining benefits for all and many opportunities to discover nature and culture.

1.2 Watershed Characterization

1.2.1 Topography

The Niagara Peninsula watershed is a unique geographic region situated between Lake Ontario to the north, Lake Erie to the south and the Niagara River forming the eastern boundary, flowing from Lake Erie to Lake Ontario. The topography is defined by rolling hills, flat lands toward the lake shores and the dramatic Niagara Escarpment, the most prominent feature, which extends east-west across the peninsula. The escarpment creates cliffs and ridges, most famously forming the backdrop for Niagara Falls where the Niagara River plunges over the edge of the escarpment.

1.2.2 Physiography

The Niagara Peninsula watershed contains several key physiographic areas, including the Iroquois Plain, Haldimand Clay Plain and the aforementioned Niagara Escarpment.

The Iroquois Plain is located between the Niagara Escarpment and Lake Ontario, and consists of lacustrine deposits of sand, silt, and clay associated with the glacial Lake Iroquois. The Iroquois Plain deposits overlie Halton Till.

The Niagara Escarpment contains a relatively hard dolostone bedrock cap, which is underlain by softer shales and sandstones of the Clinton, Cataract and Queenston bedrock groups. The escarpment was formed by erosion of the softer bedrock materials below the dolostone cap.

The relatively flat lands of the Haldimand Clay Plain extend from the Niagara Escarpment to Lake Erie. The Haldimand Clay Plain was submerged by glacial Lake Warren and much of it is covered by lacustrine clay deposits. Key physiographic features located in the Haldimand Clay Plain include the Dunnville Sand Plain, Onondaga Escarpment, Fonthill Kame-Delta Complex, and several moraines.

The Dunnville Sand Plain is a flat, sandy area formed by glacial outwash located in the southwestern region of the peninsula and is characterized by well-drained, sandy soils. The terrain is relatively flat, with few elevation changes, and its porous soil helps with groundwater recharge.

The east-west trending Onondaga Escarpment is of relatively low topographical relief just north of Lake Erie and rises only a few meters above the surrounding lands. Overburden soils overlie portions of the Onondaga Escarpment near NPCA's western boundary.

The steep-sided Fonthill Kame-Delta Complex was formed when sediment was deposited by melting glaciers, leaving behind a prominent hill that rises roughly 80 metres above the surrounding land and

covers an area approximately 6 kilometres in diameter. Groundwater from the Fonthill Kame-Delta Complex discharges to the north into Twelve Mile Creek, to produce the only cold-water stream and cold-water fish habitat in the Niagara Peninsula watershed.

Other landforms and physiographic features found within the watershed include moraines, eskers, and drumlins.

1.2.3 Geology and Groundwater System

The Niagara Peninsula watershed is unique with respect to an abundance of water resource availability being situated between two Great Lakes, having two bedrock escarpments and three overburden deposits. All the municipal drinking water within NPCA's jurisdiction is derived from surface water sources with groundwater mainly making up rural agricultural, commercial and private residential uses.

When it comes to groundwater in the Niagara Peninsula watershed, there are four main aquifer types that are typically drawn from, these include the surficial overburden, the Guelph/Lockport formations, the Onondaga/Bois Blanc formations, and the "Contact-Zone" aquifer.

The surficial overburden aquifers consist of coarse-grained deposits of sediments classified as unconfined aquifers and are known as the Fonthill Kame-Delta Complex, the Dunnville Sand Plain and the Iroquois Sand Plain.

The Guelph/Lockport formations refer to the bedrock formations consisting mainly of dolostone with some limestone that form the prominent features of the Niagara Escarpment, running the width of the northern portion of the Niagara Peninsula. These formations can be heavily fractured/weathered and can be considered unconfined/confined depending on the abundance of overlying material.

The Onondaga/Bois Blanc formations refer to the bedrock formations consisting mainly of dolostone and limestone that form the prominent features of the Onondaga Escarpment, running the width of the southern portion of the Niagara Peninsula. These formations can also be heavily fractured/weathered and can be considered unconfined/confined depending on the abundance of overlying material.

The "Contact-Zone" aquifer is an overburden/bedrock aquifer that covers over 60 per cent of the NPCA jurisdiction. The term "Contact-Zone" refers to the bedrock-overburden contact where granular overburden material is overlying fractured bedrock. This aquifer is usually overlain by thick deposits of clay from the Haldimand Clay Plain and is generally considered confined.

With respect to groundwater movement across the NPCA, generally groundwater movement is from the west to the east interior and then to either of the Great Lakes, the Niagara River or the Welland River, with

localized areas of groundwater discharge along the escarpments and wetlands. There is also large-scale permanent dewatering activities associated with the Welland Canal tunnels that have an impact on the movement of groundwater within the NPCA.

1.2.4 Surface Water System

Nearly 5,000 km of watercourses in NPCA's watershed jurisdiction encompasses a rich variety of surface water features that are part of three major drainage basins: Lake Ontario, Lake Erie, and the Niagara River. Numerous streams, rivers, and creeks, such as 12 Mile Creek and 20 Mile Creek, flow into Lake Ontario, while the Welland River and other tributaries drain into the Niagara River, a critical waterway connecting the two Great Lakes. The Lake Erie basin includes the southern portion of the watershed, with its own network of smaller streams and wetlands. These surface water features, including significant wetlands, play a key role in maintaining and supporting biodiversity, mitigating flooding, and providing water resources for both human use and natural habitats. Together, these interconnected water systems form the hydrological foundation of the NPCA's jurisdiction.

1.2.5 Natural Heritage System

The Niagara Peninsula is located within the northern most range of the deciduous forest region in North America, also referred to as the Carolinian Life Zone. It has the warmest average annual temperatures, the longest frost-free growing season and the mildest winters in Canada. This zone represents 1% of Canada's land area and it has more species of plants and animals than any other ecosystem in Canada (Carolinian Canada website).

The Niagara Peninsula watershed includes nearly 68,000 hectares of natural features such as wetlands, forests and meadows covering almost 30% of its land base, providing habitats for over 2,200 species of plants and animals highlighting its ecological diversity; unfortunately, nearly 10% of these species are considered to be rare or at risk due to habitat loss, urban sprawl, invasive species competition, pollution, and climate change.

The Niagara Escarpment, a UNESCO World Biosphere Reserve, features dramatic cliffs, forests, and rare species while offering stunning views and geological formations. The Niagara Glen Nature Reserve along the Niagara River is a lush, forested area with deep ravines, limestone outcrops, and unique Carolinian forests.

Other key areas include the Wainfleet Bog, one of the largest remaining bogs in southern Ontario, and Short Hills Provincial Park, which preserves forested valleys and rolling hills. These areas are vital for supporting conservation efforts while providing habitats for species at risk and offering recreational

opportunities like hiking and wildlife observation, enhancing Niagara's appeal as a destination for nature enthusiasts.

1.2.6 NPCA Conservation Area System

NPCA owns nearly 3,000 hectares of land within our watershed across forty-one (41) conservation areas held in public trust for recreation, heritage preservation, conservation, and education. These areas represent a wide range of ecosystem types and protect some of the most significant ecological features in the watershed. NPCA stewards important sections of shoreline along Lake Erie and Lake Ontario, migratory bird habitat, provincially significant wetlands (PSW), Areas of Natural and Scientific Interest (ANSI), important cultural heritage sites, and large sections of the Niagara Escarpment, a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve. Together these conservation areas represent an essential part of the natural treasures and significant ecosystems in the Carolinian Life Zone. In southern Ontario, and especially in the Niagara Peninsula watershed, growing pressures on the landscape are due to increased urbanization, land use changes, and changing climatic conditions. In addition, there is a well-documented increasing demand for access to greenspace for the health and well-being of the growing population. NPCA conservation areas support and enhance local communities, agriculture, recreation, health, tourism, and natural heritage, and are indispensable outdoor recreation areas for over half a million people in the watershed, and our visitors.

1.2.7 Climate

The climate of the Niagara Peninsula is influenced heavily by its proximity to Lake Ontario and Lake Erie, resulting in a moderate humid continental climate. The lakes act as natural temperature buffers, making winters milder and summers cooler than more inland regions creating a longer growing season, crucial for the region's renowned vineyards and orchards. Precipitation is evenly distributed throughout the year, with moderate rainfall and occasional lake-effect snow in the winter. The Niagara Escarpment and the Great Lakes contribute to microclimates that vary across the peninsula, supporting diverse agricultural activities, including the production of tender fruits and wine.

The Niagara peninsula is projected to experience significant warming over the next 30 years, with average air temperatures rising by 2°C. Winter and fall will see the largest increases in daily mean temperatures (2.4°C and 2.2°C), while summer and spring will rise by 2°C and 1.6°C respectively. Winter minimum temperatures are expected to rise from -7.1°C to around -5°C, reducing the number of days below 0°C from 125 to 105.7 days annually. Warmer winters will likely shift precipitation from snow to rain, increasing flood risks and impacting winter tourism.

Heat-related impacts are also expected, with the number of days above 30°C projected to more than double from 10.4 to 23.9 days annually. Days exceeding 25°C will increase by 24.2, and tropical nights (minimum temperatures above 20°C) will rise dramatically from 9.4 to 46.2 days, increasing cooling demands. Conversely, extreme cold days (below -20°C and -15°C) will decrease.

Total annual precipitation is projected to rise by 5%, with the largest seasonal increases in winter and spring. Extreme precipitation events, such as heavy one-day rainfall, are also expected to increase. However, there is variability in model projections, highlighting the need for adaptive strategies. Freeze-thaw cycles will decrease, reflecting milder winters, while dry conditions remain stable.

The growing season is expected to lengthen by eight days on average, due to earlier growing season start days and later end dates, though temperature fluctuations may affect crop hardiness. Warmer conditions will support both plant growth and the lifecycle of pests.

1.2.8 Land Use

Land use on the Niagara Peninsula watershed is diverse, shaped by its fertile soils, unique microclimate, its proximity to the Great Lakes, and its strategic position as an industrial centre and border region, leads to the demands of competing land uses. The Welland Canal, which connects Lake Ontario and Lake Erie, is a major infrastructure feature in the watershed, facilitating shipping and influencing land use along its route.

The combination of climate, physiography, soils and location make the area one of the most productive agricultural areas in Canada. The physical distinctiveness of the region is what has enabled a unique agricultural industry to develop. The wine industry is particularly prominent, with many vineyards and wineries scattered throughout the watershed.

Urban development on the Niagara Peninsula is ongoing with key cities such as City of Hamilton, St. Catharines, Niagara Falls, and Welland, where residential, commercial, and industrial growth is ongoing. These urban centers have expanded significantly due to their strategic location near the U.S. border, the Great Lakes, and major transportation routes like the Queen Elizabeth Way (QEW) highway and the Welland Canal. Smaller, but substantially growing urban areas of Binbrook, Smithville, Grimsby, Thorold, Port Colborne, Fort Erie and Niagara-on-the-Lake residential, commercial, and industrial developments continue to expand. Suburban expansion is also growing as population increases and demands for housing rise.

Efforts to balance agricultural productivity, urban growth, and environmental protection are key in managing land use within the Niagara Peninsula watershed. This balance is critical to protecting water

resources, preserving biodiversity, and ensuring the long-term sustainability of the region's terrestrial and aquatic systems.

1.3 Integrated Watershed Management

The NPCA has adopted an Integrated Watershed Management (IWM) approach to watershed planning. The IWM approach recognizes that water is a valuable resource which should be managed in a sustainable manner in perspective with the balance of natural resources (fisheries, wildlife and lands).

IWM is the process of managing human activities and natural resources in an area defined by watershed boundaries. It is an evolving and continuous process through which decisions are made for the sustainable use, development, restoration and protection of ecosystem features, functions and linkages. IWM serves to assess watershed functions and the potential impacts from change to ensure sustainability. Through adaptive management practices the watershed unit provides ideal context with which we can understand how impacts are felt and how they can accumulate.

For the NPCA, this means adopting the IWM lens when carrying out its programs and services. IWM helps us to focus on priorities and link strategies and actions leading to smarter, science-based decisions that ensure a long and healthy future.

1.4 Purpose and Regulatory Framework

1.4.1 Purpose of the Watershed Strategy

The purpose of the Watershed Strategy is to assist NPCA with evolving or enhancing the delivery of our programs and services and improve efficiency and their effectiveness in supporting mandatory Category 1 programs.

Figure 3 illustrates the framework that has been utilized for developing the Watershed Strategy. As part of this Strategy, the NPCA will integrate guiding principles and objectives from the 10-year Strategic Plan that inform the design of our programs and services, summarize information the NPCA relies on to directly inform and support program and service delivery, and identify any issues and risks which may limit effective delivery of Category 1 programs and services, including actions to address such risks. It provides a mechanism to update the NPCA's programs and services inventory and will help identify where opportunities exist for improving and/or maintaining watershed health.

The NPCA's Watershed Strategy has been developed in accordance with the NPCA's Inventory of Programs and Services for consistent language/program descriptions.

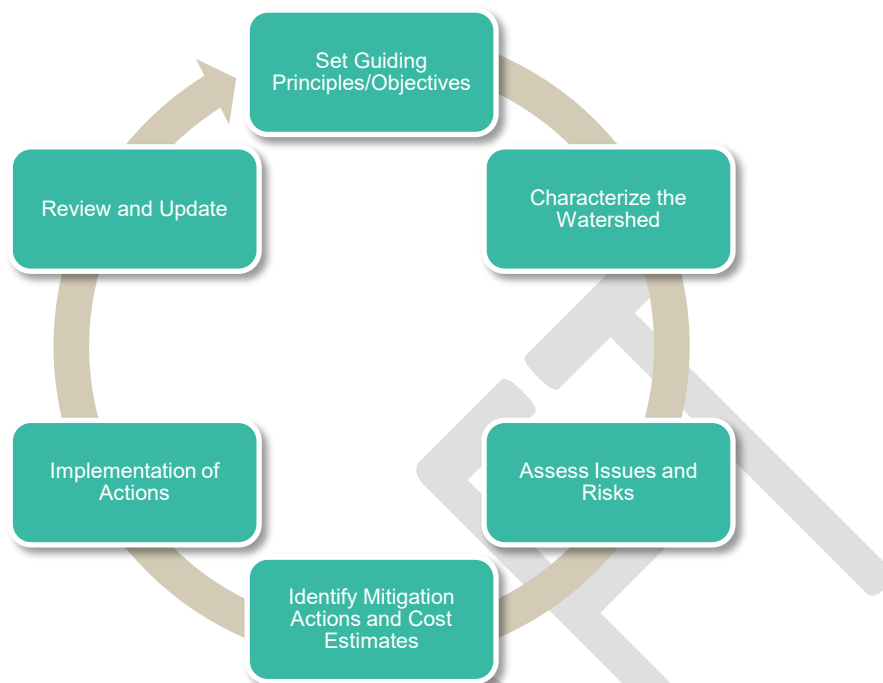


Figure 3 – Watershed-based Resource Management Strategy Framework

1.4.2 Legislative Context

Ontario Regulation. (O. Reg.) 686/21: Mandatory Programs and Services, is a regulation made under s. 21.1(1)2 of the Conservation Authorities Act that prescribes programs and services that a Conservation Authority must provide within its area of jurisdiction.

Conservation Authorities are required to prepare an Inventory of Programs and Services to identify:

- **Category 1:** Mandatory Programs and Services, such as natural hazard management;
- **Category 2:** Municipal Programs and Services at the request of a Municipality, such as tree planting services, and technical research to help inform decision-making; and
- **Category 3:** Other Programs and Services determined by the Conservation Authority to further the purposes of the *Conservation Authorities Act*, such as restoration and stewardship, and watershed monitoring.

NPCA’s programs and services are funded either through municipal levies, municipal cost apportionments requiring agreements for service, service fees, or external funding such as grants.

Table 1: Conservation Authorities Act Funding Mechanisms for NPCA’s Programs and Services

Category 1 Mandatory Programs and Services (O.Reg.686/21)	Category 2 Municipal Programs and Services	Category 3 Other Programs and Services
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programs and services which all CAs must provide in their jurisdiction • Eligible for costs to be apportioned to participating municipalities (levy) without an agreement • Funded through municipal levy, user fees, and/or grants 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programs and services which a CAs agrees to provide on behalf of municipality • Eligible for costs to be apportioned to participating municipalities if there is an MOU or other agreement • Funded through municipal levy, user fees, and/or grants; MOU/service agreement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programs and services which a CA determines are advisable to further the purpose of the Act • Eligible to be apportioned wholly or partially to municipalities through a cost apportioning agreement • Funded through municipal levy, user fees, and/or grants; MOU/service agreement required for use of municipal funding

O. Reg. 686/21: Mandatory Programs and Services also requires Conservation Authorities to prepare a “Watershed-based Resource Management Strategy”.

The Watershed-based Resource Management Strategy must include the following components:

- Guiding principles and objectives that inform the design and delivery of the programs and services that the Conservation Authority is required to provide under section 21.1 of the Conservation Authorities Act (i.e. mandatory programs and services).
- A summary of existing technical studies, monitoring programs and other information on the natural resources the Authority relies on within its area of jurisdiction or in specific watersheds that directly informs and supports the delivery of programs and services under section 21.1 of the Act.
- A review of the Authority’s programs and services provided under section 21.1 of the Act for the purposes of:

- Determining if the programs and services comply with the regulations made under clause 40 (1) (b) of the Act (e.g. mandatory programs and services, and review of applications under prescribed Acts);
 - Identifying and analyzing issues and risks that limit the effectiveness of the delivery of these programs and services; and
 - Identifying actions to address the issues and mitigate the risks identified by the review and providing a cost estimate for the implementation of those actions.
- A process for the periodic review and updating of the Watershed-based Resource Management Strategy by the Authority that includes procedures to ensure stakeholders, and the public are consulted during the review and update process.

2.0 STRATEGIC DIRECTION

2.1 NPCA Strategic Plan: Nature for All

The 2021-2031 NPCA Strategic Plan: Nature for All, is a guiding document that reaffirms our commitment to the mandate of conservation authorities and charts the course for the next generation of work to address the evolving issues of climate change, growth, and the need for green infrastructure. The Strategic Plan is guided by principles based on a conservation-first and ecosystem philosophy, collaboration ethics, and an importance of innovation rooted in science

VISION: Nature for all

We envision a healthy and vibrant environment with shared greenspace and clean water that sustains life for future generations.

MISSION

To create common ground for conservation-inspired action and accountability to nature.

2.2 Watershed-based Resource Management Guiding Principles

The NPCA Strategic Plan: Nature for All, establishes four Guiding Principles that guide the delivery of NPCA's programs and services.

2.2.1 Watersheds transcend municipal boundaries

We are committed to working with the watershed community to support and create climate-resilient and connected natural systems. Integrated watershed management is our approach to managing local natural resources in partnership with our member municipalities.

2.2.2 Natural green infrastructure is critical to life

Our day-to-day work conserves and restores our communities' integral ecological, socio-economic, public safety, and health services. Watershed resources are green infrastructure and natural assets.

2.2.3 Diverse experiences and ideas lead to better and stronger collective impact and outcomes

We seek to exemplify inclusion and equity through meaningful engagement and collaboration.

2.2.4 Innovation requires learning from each other and the past

As a result, we are progressive, resilient, adaptable, and strive for continuous improvement to remain a trusted and valued partner.

2.3 Watershed-based Resource Management Guiding Goals and Actions

Collectively, the **Strategic Priorities** identified in the NPCA Strategic Plan: Nature for All, guide our actions toward a vision of the Niagara Peninsula watershed with robust nature, thriving agriculture, and resilient urban areas vital to the health and well-being of our residents. Each Strategic Priority includes specific goals and actions for the NPCA to undertake with its partners and communities to achieve a thriving environment that sustains life for future generations. The Strategic Priorities, and the specific goals and actions taken from the NPCA's 10-year Strategic Plan that guide the design and delivery of NPCA's Category 1 Mandatory Programs and Services provided under s. 21.1 of the *Conservation Authorities Act* are summarized below. The Goal numbering shown below is as listed in the Strategic Plan

2.3.1 Healthy and Climate Resilient Watersheds

Improving nature for the betterment of all life across the watershed.

- Goal 1.1 Support evidence-based decision-making for climate-resilient watersheds and shorelines
 - Expand and enhance monitoring and associated tools to fill information gaps and research needs

- Lead water quality (e.g., surface and groundwater) and quantity monitoring throughout the NPCA jurisdiction
- Support municipal partners with watershed data collection and analysis to understand cumulative impacts
- Develop a solid understanding of climate impacts and risks on NPCA watersheds
- Implement the Source Protection Program as mandated by the *Conservation Authorities Act* and *Clean Water Act*
- Goal 1.2 Protect people and properties from natural hazards and climate impacts
 - Implement permitting and regulations under section 28 of the *Conservation Authorities Act*
 - Deliver accurate, real-time information for flood forecasting, messaging, and warning using state-of-the-art technology and communication tools
 - Complete and maintain updated floodplain and regulation mapping within the watershed
 - Develop a watershed-based resource management strategy as mandated by the *Conservation Authorities Act*.
 - Update shoreline management plans with a climate resilience lens
- Goal 1.4 Manage NPCA lands to increase biodiversity, habitat connectivity, and natural cover
 - Develop and update management plans for NPCA properties
 - Develop plans to manage invasive species and enhance biodiversity at NPCA properties (e.g., forest management plan)
 - Complete and implement the NPCA land acquisition strategy
 - Implement regulations under section 29 of the *Conservation Authorities Act*

2.3.2 Supporting Sustainable Growth

Helping to create resilient communities through land-use planning and the use of sustainable technologies to prepare for a changing climate and related environmental challenges.

- Goal 2.1 Maintain a high standard of client services, tools, and procedures for planning review and permits
 - Continuously improve implementing NPCA Client Services Standard for Plan and Permit Review protocol to support streamlining, efficiency, and transparency
 - Refine decision-support tools for efficient application management and review
 - Enhance customer service feedback mechanisms to support performance evaluation and reporting
 - Communicate the role and responsibilities of NPCA in plan review and permitting

- Goal 2.2 Lead an integrated watershed management approach to support planning and policy for protecting and enhancing watersheds
 - Implement a proactive sub-watershed work program to complement and inform the quaternary and sub-watershed planning for growth areas within the NPCA jurisdiction within Niagara Region
 - Lead a proactive research agenda to determine cumulative watershed impacts and applied solutions from extreme weather and land-use changes
- Goal 2.3 Lead the implementation of sustainable technologies and green infrastructure best practices for climate resilience and sustainability
 - Advance the implementation of green infrastructure best practices in future development proposals and through NPCA's demonstration projects to minimize impacts to the watershed
 - Engage municipalities, the development community, and other private landowners in implementing green infrastructure and sustainability best practices and actions
 - Identify opportunities for brownfields to enhance green infrastructure or innovative planning for in-fill development
 - Develop education materials/programs to inform the public about sustainable best practices

2.3.3 Connecting People to Nature

Creating equitable access to greenspace for the health and well-being of people.

- Goal 3.1 Create equitable access to greenspace for the health and well-being of people
 - Identify and remove socio-economic barriers to accessing NPCA properties and programs
 - Proactively seek opportunities to enhance trail connections with active transportation routes
 - Highlight and promote recreation (e.g., cycling, hiking, walking, birdwatching) opportunities at NPCA properties
 - Improve services and visitor experiences at NPCA properties (e.g., buildings, trail maps, wayfinding, and accessibility, where possible)
- Goal 3.3 Improve cultural connections and heritage appreciation
 - Maintain and honour heritage buildings at NPCA properties, including St. John's, Cave Springs, Ball's Falls, and Rockway Conservation Areas
 - Examine opportunities to expand cultural connections and heritage programming at all conservation areas

- Work with municipalities on heritage listing and designation of NPCA buildings and properties

2.3.4 Partner of Choice

Strengthening our relationships with stakeholders, partners, the watershed community, and Indigenous peoples.

- Goal 4.1 Strengthen government relations toward collective outcomes and impact
 - Develop a government relations strategy
 - Execute Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) and Service-Level Agreements (SLAs) with Niagara's lower-tier municipalities
 - Establish the NPCA as an environmental service provider to municipals partners with co-management and delivery of programs and projects of mutual interest
 - Partner with government agencies to advance mutual goals
- Goal 4.2 Foster relationships with the community, non-government organizations, businesses, agriculture, industry, and academic institutions for collective outcomes and impact
 - Provide technical expertise to support our partners and their work through agreements

2.3.5 Organizational Excellence

Striving for excellence through high service delivery standards and accountability to the environment and its people.

- Goal 5.1 Attract, retain, and invest in high caliber, diverse talent to deliver superior outcomes
 - Ensure adequate staff capacity and resources required to deliver on superior outcomes
 - Implement health and safety and corporate wellness programs for staff well-being
 - Modernize human resource policies and practices to encourage a healthy work environment
- Goal 5.2 Improve internal operations and processes
 - Enhance tools and procedures for program and project management, planning, reporting
 - Modernize and invest in digital technology to enhance internal processes (e.g., administrative record management, customer relationship management system)
 - Deploy tools for efficient internal and external information sharing (e.g., online open data hub)
 - Provide staff training on new technologies as they are deployed
- Goal 5.3 Provide high standards of customer service

- Develop customer service guidelines and improve customer service feedback mechanisms
- Implement a client management system that facilitates overall governance and relevant information sharing
- Provide equitable access to information (e.g., AODA standards)
- Utilize various communication tools & tactics to facilitate engagement

2.3.6 Financial Sustainability

Ensuring a financially stable and sustainable organization and continued service-delivery through innovative business models, diverse funding sources, and best practices.

- Goal 6.1 Ensure responsible, sustainable, and sound fiscal practices
 - Consistently review and update fee schedules to retain accurate cost of services
 - Demonstrate the value of NPCA programs and services to stakeholders and municipal partners
- Goal 6.2 Optimize self-generating revenue using innovative approaches
 - Broaden opportunities for potential revenue streams at conservation parks taking a balanced approach
 - Explore varied funding sources and innovative partnerships to diversify funding

3.0 MANDATORY PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

As required by O. Reg. 687/21: Transition Plans and Agreements for Programs and Services under Section 21.1.2 of the Act, the NPCA has prepared an Inventory of Programs and Services that lists all the programs and services provides that it provides under each category (i.e., Category 1, 2, and 3)

The NPCA Inventory of Programs and Services identifies five Key Service Areas:

- Natural Hazard Management
- Watershed Resource Management and Climate Change
- Other Watershed-Related Programs
- Conservation Authority Lands and Conservation Areas
- Enabling Services

3.1 Natural Hazard Management

NPCA provides programs and services that protect people and properties from flood, erosion, and other natural hazards. Ontario's long-term prosperity, environmental health and social well-being depend on reducing the potential for public cost or risk to Ontario's residents from natural hazards. Natural hazards include dynamic beach hazard, erosion hazard, flooding hazard, hazardous lands, hazardous sites and low water or drought conditions. The NPCA provides mandatory natural hazard management programs and services to develop an awareness of the areas that are important for the management of natural hazards, such as wetlands and river valleys, understand the risks related to natural hazards and how these risks may be affected by climate change, manage risks including preventing or mitigating those risks, and promote public awareness of the risks related to natural hazards.

Natural Hazard Management Programs and Services include:

- Flood and Erosion Management
- Flood Forecast and Warning
- Water Resources Engineering
- Shoreline Hazard Management
- Environmental Planning and Policy
- Planning and Permitting
- Compliance and Enforcement
- Planning Ecology

3.2 Watershed Resource Management and Climate Change, and Other Programs

The NPCA provides programs and services that applies research and science to understand the current watershed conditions, cumulative impacts, and risks to watershed. This evidence-based science is used for developing strategies and measures to protect, enhance, and restore watersheds toward creating healthy and climate-resilient watersheds.

Watershed Resource Management and Climate Change Programs and Services include:

- Integrated Watershed Monitoring and Reporting (Water and Terrestrial Monitoring)
- Community Engagement and Ecological Restoration
- Technical Studies to inform Regulatory Mapping Updates

- Natural Asset Management
- Special Projects (e.g., groundwater monitoring)
- Climate Change Resilience
- Watershed and Sub-watershed Resources Planning
- Other Watershed Related Programs (e.g., Drinking Source Water Protection, and the Niagara River Remedial Action Plan)
- Other Projects/Programs (supported by partnerships and external funding)

3.3 Conservation Authority Lands and Conservation Areas

The NPCA is responsible for the management of approximately 3,000 hectares of land, including 41 conservation areas essential to watershed management, environmental protection, cultural heritage and recreation.

Conservation Authority Lands and Conservation Areas Programs and Services include:

- Land Acquisition and Disposition
- Land Management Planning
- Active Recreation Programs
- Camping
- Weddings, Facility Rentals and Special Events
- Education Programs
- Day Camps
- Nature School
- Heritage Programs
- Education Events
- Land Care Program (management of conservation areas)
- Section 29 Enforcement and Compliance
- Land Lease and Agreement Management

3.4 Enabling Services

Various Enabling Services are critical for supporting NPCA programs, the Board of Directors, member municipalities, and the public to enable NPCA to operate in an accountable, transparent, efficient and effective manner.

Enabling Services include:

- Corporate Services (e.g., Finance and Accounting, Facilities' Management, Risk Management and Administrative Support)
- Financial Services (e.g., Capital Budgeting, Capital Asset Management, Financing Planning and Forecasting, Reporting and Analysis)
- People and Performance (e.g., Talent Acquisition, Employee and Labour Relations, Training and Development, Health and Safety)
- Information Management and Technology and GIS
- Communications, Marketing and Public Relations
- Corporate Administration and Governance
- Corporate Support (e.g., Procurement, Contract Management)
- Asset Management, Capital Projects and Land Asset Coordinator
- Vehicles and Equipment

Appendix 1 includes a summary of technical studies, monitoring programs and other information on the natural resources of the NPCA relies on within its area of jurisdiction or in specific watersheds that directly informs and supports the delivery of Category 1 Mandatory Programs and Services under s. 21.1 of the *Conservation Authorities Act*.

4.0 WATERSHED ISSUES AND CHALLENGES

4.1 Issues and Challenges

A component of assessing the effectiveness of the delivery of Category 1 Programs and Services requires the NPCA to identify issues/risks/gaps that limit the effectiveness of program delivery. Issues and risks can be assessed both at the watershed and program scales. This assessment provides an opportunity for the NPCA to evaluate the need for additional actions and/or support to strengthen the delivery of Category 1 Programs and Services.

4.1.1 Climate Variability and Change

Climate change refers to changes in long-term weather patterns caused by natural phenomena and human activities that alter the chemical composition of the atmosphere through the build-up of greenhouse gases which trap heat and reflect it back to the earth's surface. Climate change impacts have the potential to be wide-reaching, affecting ecosystems, agriculture, infrastructure, water supply,

energy, transportation systems, tourism and recreation, human health and well-being, and ultimately the economy.

Adaptation efforts minimize the level of damage, hazard and risks associated with climate change, while also recognizing new opportunities presented with our changing climate. Such adaptation efforts include: flood management programs, ecosystem enhancements, water quality and quantity, municipal plan review/input, local climate change monitoring and modelling, information management, and green infrastructure/stormwater management.

Mitigation efforts are focused on reducing greenhouse gas emissions and other causes that adversely and rapidly influence weather patterns and climatic conditions. They include: green building technologies and retrofits (e.g., LEED), energy conservation, renewable energy, reforestation, carbon sequestration (e.g., wetlands), and low impact development.

A number of the NPCA's current policies and programs help to mitigate the impacts of climate change and assist with adaptation. The NPCA will continue to undertake programs and initiatives which assist with adaptation and mitigation, and participate, coordinate and collaborate with municipal partners and other agencies in addressing the impacts of climate change

4.1.2 Increasing Growth Pressures on Watersheds

As communities grow and change, and as the need for housing increases, more and more marginal land may be considered for development. Areas susceptible to erosion and/or flooding may be identified to accommodate innovative forms of infill development and face greater development pressure. NPCA has an important role to play not only in supporting its watershed municipalities to uphold key provincial interests but will have a vital role in assessing plan review and permit applications for development in areas that are subject to natural hazards and hazardous lands. Maintaining up-to-date and accessible planning and permitting policies and regulation mapping will also assist municipalities and development proponents in understanding where development may be prohibited or limited, and therefore, direct development away from those areas.

4.1.3 Loss of biodiversity, Species at Risk, Habitat and Natural Cover

Watershed residents understand conservation as the intentional preservation of sufficient flora and fauna to ensure the longevity of our environmental systems and associated services. The loss of habitat, increased numbers of species at risk and ongoing decrease in biodiversity remains a major threat to the function and health of Niagara Watershed natural areas and a healthy local ecosystem.

Forests and wetlands in the watershed help to clean the air and water, store and release water, and provide habitat for a wide variety of plants and animals. However, the watershed has changed dramatically over the past 200 years and most of the forests and wetlands have been cleared. Forest cover in the Niagara Peninsula watershed as evident by the current watershed report card (2023) is generally poor, especially in urban areas and productive farmlands. Many wetlands and woodlots are small and isolated but remain important for wildlife, water storage, and nutrient removal. Smaller natural areas may be more vulnerable to adjacent land practices and development pressure. Habitat loss and fragmentation prevents the movement of animals and plants, which become less abundant and more geographically restricted.

The Niagara Watershed is highly representative of the Carolinian Life Zone, the most biodiverse and threatened ecoregion in all of Canada. Research has suggested to at least double the existing natural infrastructure in this landscape through the restoration of natural cover and increased protection of land through securement to guard over 40% of Canada's species and stabilize over 150 species at risk. The NPCA's jurisdiction contains globally significant ecosystems.

The NPCA has a legacy of applying systematic conservation planning and assessment techniques as part of its Integrated Watershed Management approach that determined the Niagara Watershed contributes only 56% percent towards what science and conservation literature recommend at minimum to be considered a somewhat healthy and sustainable landscape. The NPCA has partnered in the past with Niagara Region, City of Hamilton and Haldimand County to conduct a Natural Areas Inventory; however, it is aging and needs to be updated from a temporal perspective but also from a technology perspective in terms of data structure and accessibility. Most concerning, the identification of a reserve system to objectively orient and coordinate protection, restoration and enhancement resource management tools, has yet to be envisioned for the Niagara Peninsula and those that share responsibility in managing this landscape.

Much work has yet to be considered with respect to fine scale habitat considerations for multiple species, whether at risk or not, throughout the watershed as well. There is no better demonstration of this need than the example of the Brook Trout in peril within the declining cold water reaches of the upper Twelve Mile Creek Subwatershed.

NPCA strives to strengthen its role as a trusted science broker role through the ongoing transformation of its programs and services to meet its current Strategic Plan goals associated with healthy and climate resilient watersheds and being a partner of choice. Watershed- based resource management recommendations that are readily available for the Niagara Watershed determined through robust inventory and assessment cycles (adaptive integrate watershed management) should be proactively

available to support partners who have specific management responsibilities (i.e. natural heritage protection, stormwater management) with highly credible scientific environmental data, analysis and strategies to inform tool development (i.e. environmental policy, stormwater specifications) and updates.

4.1.4 Invasive Species

Invasive species are a major threat within Ontario and the NPCA's watershed as they become more abundant and widespread. These species outcompete native species and impact our watershed's existing natural heritage system and features. Devastation of local woodlots and forest patches from the emerald ash borer are readily evident throughout the NPCA jurisdiction. Phragmites invade the Niagara Watershed as well, while many other invasive species are present in our natural areas, and new invasive species are reported ever more frequently.

The NPCA watershed currently does not have an Invasive Species Strategy despite regularly encountering invasive species issues. A strategy would provide guidance regarding management of invasive species within the context of managing watershed-based resources holistically through adaptive integrated watershed management. The identification and validation of service gaps to address invasive species systematically and identify cross-functional dependencies and capacity opportunities within existing NPCA programs and services, and partner initiatives, would be a key outcome and recommendations of an Invasive Species Strategy and programming.

4.1.5 Impacts on Water Quality

There is an adage that proclaims what we do on the land is reflected in the water. Watershed health is strongly influenced overall by water quality indicators. Impacts are well known in the Niagara Watershed as documents through NPCA's ambient Water Quality Monitoring Program. Annual Results continue to indicate that many of the NPCA's watersheds have marginal to poor water quality. Agricultural non-point sources continue to be the predominant cause of impairment, however, point sources related to urban stormwater management contribute increasingly as well. These are compounding in that nutrients and chlorides can concentrate through capture and temporary containment in facilities, but so can their outflow rates under poor designs and increasingly intense weather conditions that can harmfully impact the flow regimes of surface water systems in turn creating increased erosion and suspended solids in our local creeks.

Groundwater quality regularly exceeds aesthetic objectives within the Ontario Drinking Water Standards. Aquifer vulnerabilities due to land-based activities, including urban development, and management practices do persist in parts of the watershed as well.

NPCA's inherent Integrated Watershed Management (IWM) approach to conservation, managing human activities and natural resources within watershed boundaries through adaptive practices, lends itself ideally to addressing water quality issues. Many of the NPCA's current programs and services such as the Enhanced Watershed Monitoring and Reporting Program and Enhanced Watershed Restoration and Stewardship services are being objectively redesigned through the current Strategic Plan implementation to proactively and increasingly in effect, mitigate water quality impacts. The NPCA will continue to undertake programs and initiatives that focus specifically on systematically addressing the persistent water quality concerns within the Niagara Watershed until improvements are realized.

4.2 Actions to Mitigate Issues and Challenges

Through NPCA's Integrated Watershed Management approach, our foundational watershed management activities readily support our mandatory programs and services and those complementary to them. Significant investment in this approach is the primary vehicle with which to mitigate issues and challenges faced by the Niagara Watershed.

These management activities fundamentally include:

- Watershed scale monitoring, data collection and management as well as modelling;
- Watershed scale studies, plans, assessments and/or strategies;
- And watershed wide actions including stewardship, communication, outreach and education.

Watershed management also plays a crucial role in addressing the impacts of climate change, and NPCA is committed to integrating climate action into its approach. A key strategy is flood mitigation, where NPCA uses natural infrastructure, such as wetlands, to absorb stormwater and reduce the risk of flooding. Carbon sequestration is a critical focus, with efforts centered on protecting and restoring forests that capture and store carbon, thereby mitigating greenhouse gas emissions. Enhancing ecosystem resilience is a priority; by improving habitat connectivity and biodiversity, NPCA helps natural systems adapt to the variability brought by changing climate conditions.

Being able to continue to advance NPCA's programs and services forward will require the Authority to continue to broaden the sources of financial support to mitigate the risks associated with reliance on the municipal levy. NPCA continues to find success in seeking external funding sources to support the

implementation of the Strategic Plan and programs and services. While opportunities to contend for available government grants are plentiful at present, the NPCA continues to nurture a diversity of funding strategies that includes working closely with the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Foundation (NPCF) to empower its abilities to draw donations in support of Authority programs and services. Other strategies include revenue generating corporate stewardship programming, conservation impact bonds, or participating in the emergence of bioregional funding ecosystems such as that for the Greater Toronto Bioregion wherein NPCA finds itself.

Enhancement of existing programs and services to assist with delivery of the Watershed Strategy has already begun through implementation of the preceding Strategic Plan. Restoration and Stewardship, Monitoring and Reporting, Education and Outreach are all transitioning towards a refreshed suite of emerging programming strongly steeped in Integrated Watershed Management principles and practices in support of, and complementary to mandatory programs and services. Rebooting formal watershed Planning programming is of utmost importance to officially facilitate the adaptive management cycle on the watershed scale and recurrently derive and track progress towards specific watershed and sub watershed management recommendations.

Restoration programming is being reoriented to be more objective instead of a broad-brush approach to proactively address known issues systematically through the adaptive management process. A target of planting 1 million trees by 2031 has been set to aggressively restore forested habitat, increase canopy cover, enhance water quality, improve biodiversity and build climate resilience across the watershed. Re-emphasis on specific restoration strategies and solutions for the Twelve Mile Creek and Four Mile Creek watershed demonstrate prioritizing sensitive watersheds with varying resource management concerns and ideally these would eventually flow from needs identified in the actions recommended in updated watershed plans. NPCA remains committed to reintroducing cost sharing services and partnerships to assist the agricultural community to put nature back on marginal and environmentally sensitive arable lands. Addressing invasive species, as well as addressing species at risk and other specific habitat requirements are also future program considerations under the intentional approach of the modern and Enhanced NPCA Watershed Restoration and Stewardship services.

The NPCA will actively pursue new and strengthen existing partnerships within the communities that we serve to ensure the preservation, maintenance, sustainability, restoration, and enhancement of the natural environment. These partnerships include those with the Federal and Provincial governments, municipalities, conservation clubs, service groups, private property owners, conservation area neighbours, adjacent Conservation Authorities, the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Foundation, as well

as the NPCA Board of Directors, our staff, and Indigenous communities and individuals. We will develop new approaches to improve conservation efforts and streamline program delivery with these partners.

In the past partnerships such as the one between NPCA, the Niagara Region and provincial Ministry of the Environment behind the former Niagara Water Strategy (initially known as the Niagara Waters Quality Protection Strategy) that was born locally in response to the Walkerton tragedy tremendously advanced the integrated watershed management approach within the Niagara Watershed.

As required by O. Reg. 686/21, costs related to NPCA's enhanced restoration and stewardship, enhanced integrated watershed monitoring, watershed planning and studies, and education and outreach that compliment and support our natural hazard management mandate, as identified through the 2024 NPCA budget are shown in Appendix II. Prioritization of operating and capital costs to continue to support these programs and services are determined through annual budget processes.

5.0 IMPLEMENTATION AND REVIEW

Under O. Reg. 686/21: Mandatory Programs and Services, the NPCA is required to identify a process for the periodic review and updating of the Watershed Strategy, including procedures to ensure stakeholders and the public are consulted during the review and update process. Given the integrated nature of the Watershed Strategy with the Strategic Plan, the Watershed Strategy should be updated within one year of the update to the Strategic Plan. Should there be an exceptional circumstance that would warrant an earlier update to the Watershed Strategy (e.g., legislation changes), then staff could initiative an update outside of the Strategic Plan update cycle and should seek direction from the Board of Directors.

An Engagement Plan will be developed for each update to the Watershed Strategy to ensure NPCA's watershed partners, communities, indigenous communities and interested parties are appropriately consulted. Further, a Workplan identifying key tasks and general timelines will be presented to the NPCA Board upon initiation of an update to the Watershed Strategy.

6.0 PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

A comprehensive communications and engagement strategy was developed in the early stages of the project, outlining a multi-channel approach and combination of traditional and digital tools and methods for informing and engaging a wide range of internal and external audiences.

NPCA sought to engage Indigenous partners and peoples, partner municipalities, residents, local interest groups, environmental groups and NGOs, technical experts like engineers and consultants, members of the agriculture, environment, planning, development, tourism, and education sectors, and the public within the Niagara Region, Haldimand County, and the City of Hamilton.

Communication and engagement tactics were tailored to these audiences and for each of the three phases of the Watershed Strategy project:

- Phase One (September): Initiate Process & Collect Feedback
- Phase Two (October-November): Check-in & Validate
- Phase Three (December): Launch & Release

Guided by the 2021-2031 Strategic Plan, NPCA staff collaborated on a discussion paper outlining the vision for the continued protection of natural systems and mitigation of natural hazards in the communities we serve, as well as the process for drafting the strategy. The discussion paper was shared on the Get Involved NPCA portal, which served as the central hub offering supporting materials and resources available for review and download, and several online engagement tools.

- Survey Tool: A 10-minute survey was designed to gather input on how the community benefits from NPCA's programs and services, and what risks they perceive may affect their effectiveness.
- FAQ Tool: Identified nine questions and provided clear and concise answers to these common inquiries and concerns from the community.
- Questions: This tool provided a space for community members to ask questions for staff response.

Key outreach efforts included a Public Information Centre (PIC), stakeholder meetings, direct emails, and targeted social media campaigns. The use of both in-person and online engagement opportunities helped ensure accessibility for diverse audiences and broad participation.

A strong focus was also placed on proactive communication, using media releases, social media, and print advertising to keep the public informed of the many opportunities for engagement. NPCA was

successful in obtaining earned media exposure from key media partners such as Niagara Dailies, Village Media, and YourTV Niagara.

Key Tools & Tactics	Results (Ongoing until November 1)
Get Involved NPCA – online engagement portal	793 web visits
On-line Survey	18 responses
Hybrid Public Information Centre + video	27 registrations 6 attended virtually 4 attended in-person 42 video views

NPCA staff, the Board of Directors, and the Public Advisory Committee (PAC) played an essential role in shaping the Watershed Strategy. Staff, as the experts on the ground, had opportunities to share their insights and feedback through virtual meetings, emails, and discussions. Their daily experience and expertise served as a vital sounding board for the project. The Board and PAC were updated regularly, and they provided valuable input, with PAC members also helping to share information and encourage feedback within their communities and networks.

6.1 Survey and Results

The survey launched on September 6 to encourage the public, partners, staff, and any other interested parties to provide feedback and comments on the Watershed Strategy. The main goal of the survey was to obtain feedback on how the community benefits from NPCA’s programs and services, and what issues or risks they perceive may affect their effectiveness. This process provided a mechanism to update NPCA’s programs and services inventory and identify where opportunities exist for improving or maintaining watershed health.

Survey results show participant’s strong familiarity with NPCA programs and services, with most respondents having engaged with flood and erosion management programs, followed by natural asset management, camping, facility rentals and special events.

Participants were provided with 10 issues or risks that could impact the effectiveness of NPCA's program and service delivery as identified by staff experts. They were asked to select the level of impact that each could have—high impact, moderate impact, slight impact, or no impact.

High Impact

- Increased growth pressures on the watersheds
- Securing additional funding sources
- Impacts on water quality
- Loss of natural vegetation cover
- Potential changes to legislation affecting Conservation Authorities
- Climate variability and change

Moderate Impact

- Invasive species
- Increasing use of NPCA conservation areas
- Public accessibility to NPCA conservation areas

Slight Impact

- Increasing demand for environmental education

While some respondents selected 'no impact' for certain risks, they were outweighed by most participants selecting that they would in fact highly impact the delivery of NPCA's programs and services.

Survey participants offered additional input pertaining to other issues or risks that NPCA should consider. Upon analysis of this feedback, most of them had already been identified, however this served as confirmation that NPCA's Watershed Strategy will align with the needs of the community it serves.

- **Biodiversity Loss and Misuse of Natural Areas:** Respondents expressed concerns about the overuse of natural areas by new users, including overfishing, unsustainable foraging (e.g., mushrooms), and the loss of protected wetlands due to policy changes and landowner actions.
- **Legislative and Policy Concerns:** Respondents suggested stricter laws to protect creeks, waterways, and natural forests, as well as measures to limit industrial access to rural lands and ensure that new developments prioritize green spaces, trees, and natural ecosystems.
- **Development Pressures:** The expansion of buildings and development in response to community growth was raised as a concern, particularly regarding its impact on natural habitats and agricultural land.

Lastly, participants provided positive and constructive feedback on how NPCA programs and services could be enhanced. These are summarized in the following reoccurring themes:

- **NPCA Leadership and Collaboration:** Several respondents praised the improvements in NPCA's programs and services, citing strong leadership, collaboration with municipalities, and the positive working relationships fostered by NPCA's senior management.
- **Conservation and Land Protection:** Many emphasized the need for NPCA to prioritize acquiring and protecting vulnerable lands, particularly wetlands and biodiversity-rich areas within urban boundaries. Some also raised concerns about the impact of quarry developments on creeks, streams, and the surrounding ecosystems.
- **Addressing Local Environmental Issues:** Some respondents highlighted specific areas of concern, such as Two-Mile Creek in Niagara-on-the-Lake and Beaverdams Creek in Niagara Falls, encouraging a focus on these as well as increased restoration efforts, and recognition of these areas as important environmental assets.

6.2 Indigenous Engagement

Information about the Watershed Strategy was shared with local First Nations, Indigenous partners and community through email. The list of contacts included local First Nations whose Traditional Territory and/or Treaty Lands are within the NPCA watershed jurisdiction, as well as the Niagara Region Métis Council, Friendship Centres, Indigenous representatives on NPCA's Public Advisory Committee, and local Indigenous businesses and organizations.

6.3 Public Information Centre

NPCA hosted a hybrid Public Information Centre (PIC) on September 24, which was live-streamed and shared on the YouTube channel for individuals who were not able to attend. A presentation on the Watershed Strategy was delivered focused on the process, requirements from the *Conservation Authorities Act*, timelines, and a breakdown of programs and services. A question-and-answer period followed, and in-person and online attendees posed questions to NPCA staff. Attendees were encouraged to visit the Get Involved NPCA portal to fill out the survey and provide additional feedback after the meeting. A total of 27 people registered for the PIC, with four people attending in person and six attending online. The YouTube live stream received 42 views to date.

6.4 Draft Watershed Strategy

Moving forward into Phase Three, the plan emphasizes a consistent feedback loop, with opportunities for a 3-week commenting period for the draft strategy, as well as involvement from NPCA's board and staff. The timeline culminates in a final strategy release, ensuring the community has been engaged and informed at each stage of the project.

Following the initial round of public engagement, NPCA analyzed and incorporated community feedback received through the survey, PAC member comments, and the PIC to refine key areas of most concern and proceed to developing a draft. The draft Watershed Strategy will be posted online for a 3-week commenting period. Additionally, the draft Watershed Strategy will be presented to the NPCA Board of Directors meeting in October for feedback from board members.

[This section to be completed after the draft Strategy has been posted and comments received]

APPENDIX 1: CATEGORY 1 MANDATORY PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

A summary of existing technical studies, monitoring programs and other information that guide NPCA's Mandatory Programs and Services

Category 1 Program or Service	Description	Program Guidance	Strategic Plan Goals
Natural Hazard Management			
Protecting people and properties from flood, erosion, and other natural hazards.			
Flood Forecast and Warning	<p>Delivery of accurate, real-time information for flood forecasting, warning, and messaging. Issue flood warnings.</p> <p>Water quantity monitoring specific to flood forecasting and warning: Collect and maintain data from dams, streamflow gauges, rainfall gauges, and snow courses, as well as collect weather forecasts from various sources.</p> <p>Climate Monitoring</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data on precipitation, river flows, reservoir, and Great Lake water levels taken from 21 rain gauge stations, 15 stream gauge stations, 3 Great Lakes gauge stations, and 7 snow course stations. Observed flood elevations and data gathered in the field. Flood messages issued by the Alertable mobile app system. 	1.2, 2.2, 2.3, 4.2
Flood and Erosion Management	<p>Management and monitoring of riverine erosion across the watershed jurisdiction.</p> <p>Ice management</p> <p>Floodplain mapping</p> <p>Flood and erosion risk and mitigation studies</p> <p>Operation and maintenance of NPCA flood and erosion control</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Digital elevation models and other geospatial data. Watercourse floodplain mapping. Hydrologic and hydraulic models. Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources Flooding Hazard Technical Guidelines Natural Hazard Infrastructure Operational Plans. Natural Hazard Infrastructure Asset Management Plans. 	1.2, 2.2, 2.3, 4.2

Category 1 Program or Service	Description	Program Guidance	Strategic Plan Goals
	<p>Infrastructures</p> <p>Flood and erosion hazard mitigation projects</p>		
Shoreline Hazard Management	<p>Shoreline management plans</p> <p>Integration of natural hazard management with overall shoreline climate resiliency and watershed resource management to respond to climate change risk and vulnerability</p> <p>Flood and erosion hazard mitigation projects</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NPCA Lake Erie and Lake Ontario Shoreline Management Plans • Digital elevation models and other geospatial data. • Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources Great Lakes Hazards Technical Guidelines 	1.2, 2.2
Environmental Planning and Policy	<p>Review and commenting on proposals, applications, or other matters under the Federal and Provincial Environmental Assessment Acts related to s. 28 and natural hazards</p> <p>Review and process s. 28 permit applications related to public infrastructure (e.g. Hydro One, Enbridge, Bell, municipal, DART protocol)</p> <p>Review and comment on municipal Official Plan Reviews and Updates as</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conservation Authorities Act and related regulations, including O. Reg. 41/24 • Ontario Environmental Assessment Act • Municipal Class Environmental Assessment • Drainage Act; DART Protocol • 2021 MOU between Conservation Ontario and Hydro One Networks Inc. • Planning Act • NPCA Policy Document: Policies for Planning and Development in the Watershed of the NPCA 	1.2, 2.1, 5.3

Category 1 Program or Service	Description	Program Guidance	Strategic Plan Goals
	<p>well as supporting technical studies relating to natural hazards</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NPCA Procedural Manual • Mapping of natural hazards (e.g., watercourses, wetlands, unstable soil or bedrock, shoreline areas affected by flooding, erosion of dynamic beach hazards) and regulated areas and other geospatial data • Various MNR Technical Guidelines for Natural Hazards e.g. Erosion and Flooding • Recent and historical orthoimagery 	
<p>Planning and Permitting</p>	<p>Review and commenting on proposals, applications, or other matters under the Planning Act, Niagara Escarpment Act, and Aggregates Resources Act related to s. 28 and natural hazards</p> <p>Review and process s. 28 permits (not related to public infrastructure)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conservation Authorities Act • Ontario Regulation 41/24 • Niagara Escarpment Planning and Development Act • The Planning Act • NPCA Policy Document: Policies for Planning and Development in the Watershed of the NPCA • NPCA Planning and Procedural Manual • Shoreline Management Plans for Lake Erie and Lake Ontario • Twelve Mile Creek Slope Stability Study • MNRF Technical Guide-River and Streams Systems: Erosion Hazard Limit and Flood Hazard Limit 	<p>1.2, 2.1, 5.3</p>

Category 1 Program or Service	Description	Program Guidance	Strategic Plan Goals
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mapping of natural hazards (e.g., watercourses, wetlands, unstable soil or bedrock, shoreline areas affected by flooding, erosion of dynamic beach hazards) and regulated areas and other geospatial data • Recent and historical orthoimagery 	
Section 28 Compliance and Enforcement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investigate complaints and contraventions of Section 28 of the CA Act. • Conduct compliance inspections of issued NPCA Section 28 permits • Gain compliance with the CA Act and associated regulations for contraventions and violations • Initiate and support court proceedings where compliance is unsuccessful • Enforce court orders and settlements as required. • Provide client and public education on compliance and enforcement role of the NPCA 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conservation Authorities Act • Ontario Regulation 41/24 • Provincial Offences Act and associated Regulations • NPCA Section 28 Compliance and Enforcement Procedural Manual, 2022 • Conservation Ontario/NPCA Section 28 Enforcement Guidelines, 2011 • NPCA Internal Standard Operating Procedures for Compliance and Enforcement • NPCA Policies for Planning and Development in the Watershed, 2022 • NPCA Planning and Permitting Procedure Manual, 2022 • Digital elevation models and other geospatial data • Recent and historical orthoimagery 	1.2, 2.1, 2.2, 4.1, 5.2, 5.3

Category 1 Program or Service	Description	Program Guidance	Strategic Plan Goals
Watershed Management and Climate Change			
Programs and services to understand the current conditions, cumulative impacts, and risks to watersheds. Strategies and measures to protect, enhance, and restore watersheds toward creating healthy and climate-resilient watersheds.			
Watershed-based Resource Management Strategy	Implementation, review and update to the strategy, including compiling existing resource, management, plans, watershed plans, studies and data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Digital elevation models and other geospatial data Recent and historical orthoimagery 	1.1, 1.2, 2.2, 4.1, 4.2
Watershed and Sub-watershed Planning	<p>Updates to NPCA watershed plans</p> <p>Sub-watershed-level assessments and analyses (e.g., water budgets, catchment assessment, non-point source modelling, groundwater modelling, and systematic conservation monitoring)</p> <p>Determine the cumulative watershed impacts from natural resource inventory and resource assessment studies</p> <p>Develop and maintain recommendations and guidelines to assist in the management of watershed natural resources</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> O. Reg 686/21 Data collected under the Provincial Water Quality Monitoring Network and the Provincial Groundwater Monitoring Network and associated reporting Planning applications SWAT non-point source modelling for the Welland River watershed Source Water Protection Assessment and related reports Natural Areas Inventory geospatial data and reports NPCA Watershed Natural Asset Analysis and Valuation study Floodplain Mapping and hydrologic modelling output and associated reports Geospatial data such as Natural Areas Inventory, Hydrography, etc. Digital elevation models, recent and historical orthoimagery 	1.1, 2.2, 4.1

Category 1 Program or Service	Description	Program Guidance	Strategic Plan Goals
Water Monitoring (surface and groundwater)	Complete field sampling and maintenance of program infrastructure in support of the Provincial Water Quality Monitoring Network (PWQMN) and Provincial Groundwater Monitoring Network (PGMN).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ontario Regulation 686/21- Other Program and Services PWQMN and the PGMN Watershed-based Resource Management Strategy NPCA Enhanced Integrated Watershed Monitoring Program 	1.1, 1.4, 2.2
Ecological Monitoring	Ecological monitoring on NPCA-owned lands in support of land management plans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conservation Areas Strategy NPCA Enhanced Integrated Watershed Monitoring Program 	1.1, 1.4, 2.2
Ecological Restoration	<p>Internal restoration services related to conservation area land management plans</p> <p>Internal restoration services to support NPCA programs and services (e.g. review of s. 28 permit applications and compliance and enforcement, informing land securement strategy implementation)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Natural Areas Inventory geospatial data and reports NPCA Watershed Natural Asset Analysis and Valuation study Floodplain Mapping and hydrologic modelling output and associated reports Geospatial data such as Natural Areas Inventory, Hydrography, etc. Digital elevation models, recent and historical orthoimagery Various MNR Technical Guidelines for Natural Hazards e.g. Erosion and Flooding 	1.3, 1.4, 4.1, 4.2
Section 28 Regulatory Mapping Technical Studies	Technical studies to support NPCA hazard management functions (e.g. Ecological land classification mapping; S.28 regulation mapping of wetlands,	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Various MNR Technical Guidelines for Natural Hazards e.g. Erosion and Flooding Conservation Ontario/MNR Guidelines for Developing 	1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 2.2, 5.2

Category 1 Program or Service	Description	Program Guidance	Strategic Plan Goals
	watercourses, and karst; Digital terrain elevation model)	Schedules of Regulated Areas (October 2005) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conservation Ontario Procedure for Updating Section 28 Mapping (2018) • MNR Ecological Land Classification for Southern Ontario (Lee et al. 1998) • Geospatial data, DEM, and orthoimagery 	
Climate Change Resilience	Climate change research to support climate change forecasting, watershed vulnerability and risk assessments, and watershed impact assessment and mitigation strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Climate Projections for Niagara Region (TRCA, December 2021) • Niagara Peninsula Watershed Natural Asset Analysis and Valuation Report (Green Analytics, 2024) 	1.1, 1.2, 2.3
Drinking Water Source Protection	Acts as the local watershed-level agency, known as the legislated role of Source Protection Authority (SPA) under the Clean Water Act, 2006, and are required to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish and maintain the Source Protection Committee (SPC) • Provide program, administrative, technical, and scientific support to the SPC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clean Water Act, 2006 and associated regulations • Safe Drinking Water Act, 2002 and associated regulations • 2021 technical rules under the Clean Water Act, 2006 • Niagara Peninsula Assessment Report • Niagara Peninsula Source Protection Plan • Niagara Peninsula Explanatory Document 	1.1, 4.1

Category 1 Program or Service	Description	Program Guidance	Strategic Plan Goals
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Carry out locally initiated amendments to the Assessment Report and Source Protection Plan for the inclusion of new or changing municipal residential drinking water systems Maintain and make accessible source protection program data to inform local decision making Monitor Source Protection Plan implementation Prepare annual progress reports to report on local progress. Support municipalities and local implementors in fulfilling their Source Protection Plan implementation responsibilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Geospatial Data, DEM, and orthoimagery 	
<p>Conservation Authority Lands and Conservation Areas Manage 2,982 ha of lands, including 41 conservation areas essential to watershed management, environmental protection, cultural heritage, and recreation.</p>			
Section 29 Compliance and Enforcement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct compliance inspections for issued NPCA Section 29 permits and/or associated works Investigate complaints and contraventions of Section 29 of the CA Act Conduct routine enforcement inspections of NPCA owned 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conservation Authorities Act Ontario Regulation 688/21 Provincial Offences Act and associated Regulations NPCA Internal Standard Operating Procedures for Compliance and Enforcement Geospatial Data, DEM, and orthoimagery 	1.2, 1.4, 2.1, 5.2, 5.3

Category 1 Program or Service	Description	Program Guidance	Strategic Plan Goals
	<p>properties for unauthorized use, hunting, trespass and/or encroachment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initiate and support enforcements actions (notices and tickets), and court proceedings where compliance is unsuccessful • Enforce court orders and settlements as required • Provide client and public education on compliance and enforcement role on CA owned lands 		
<p>Land Care Program (conservation areas)</p>	<p>Management and maintenance of conservation areas (e.g., gates, fencing, signage, landscaping, pedestrian bridges, trails, parking lots, and roadways)</p> <p>Passive recreation</p> <p>Risk Management</p> <p>Hazard tree management</p> <p>Maintenance of heritage buildings</p> <p>Forest Management</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conservation Areas Strategy • NPCA management and master plans • NPCA Internal Standard Operating Procedure • Geospatial Data, DEM, and orthoimagery 	<p>1.4, 3.1, 3.3</p>

Category 1 Program or Service	Description	Program Guidance	Strategic Plan Goals
Land Acquisition and Disposition	Strategic acquisition of properties related to mitigating the risk of natural hazards in accordance with NPCA Land Securement Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Geospatial Data, DEM, and orthoimagery 	1.4, 3.1
Land Management Planning	Conservation Area Land Inventory and Conservation Area Strategy Conservation Area Management Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Geospatial Data, DEM, and orthoimagery 	1.4
Enabling Services Support for all CA departments, the Board of Directors, member municipalities and the general public enables NPCA to operate in an accountable, transparent, efficient and effective manner.			
Corporate Services	Administrative support Human resources (incl health and safety) Property taxes and occupancy costs Oversight of programs and policies Operating costs not directly related to any specific program or service (e.g., overhead) Records management Grant management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CPA Canada Standards and Guidance Collection CPA Canada Standards and Guidance Collection CPA Canada Standards and Guidance Collection 	5.1, 5.2, 5.3, 6.1, 6.2

Category 1 Program or Service	Description	Program Guidance	Strategic Plan Goals
Financial Services	Annual budget Accounts payable and receivable Procurement Payroll Financial analytics and reporting Audit Administration of reserves and investments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Budget Assumptions & Timetable • CPA Canada Standards and Guidance Collection • Employment Standards Act • Collective Agreement - OPSEU L212 • CPA Canada Standards and Guidance Collection • NPCA – Reserves Policy • NPCA – Investment Policy 	5.2, 5.3, 6.1, 6.2
Information Management and Technology	Digital technology, licensing fees, data/voice services Management and integration of data for geographic information system (GIS) Support open data portal and science Mapping and GIS support for watershed resources planning and natural hazards management Support development and implementation of watershed-based resource management strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GO-ITS 43 Web Metadata Standard • GO-ITS 46 Common Metadata Elements Standard • Data Capture Specifications for Medium-Scale Hydrographic Features • NPCA’s Digital Transformation Strategy • Bill 194 - Enhancing Digital Security and Trust Act • CA Act • Clean Water Act 	1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 2.2, 5.2, 5.3

Category 1 Program or Service	Description	Program Guidance	Strategic Plan Goals
Governance and Corporate Administration	Support to governance and corporate administration Board governance Public Advisory Committee and ad-hoc committees Strategic planning/ reporting and CAO oversight	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conservation Authorities Act • Municipal Conflict of Interest Act • Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act and R.R.O 1990, Regulation 823 under the Act • NPCA 2021-31 Strategic Plan 	5.2, 5.3
Asset Management	Capital costs for flood infrastructure Capital costs for conservation land infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CPA Canada Standards and Guidance Collection • NPCA – TCA Policy • CPA Canada Standards and Guidance Collection • NPCA – TCA Policy 	1.2, 1.4, 6.3

APPENDIX 2: 2024 NPCA BUDGET – INVENTORY OF PROGRAMS AND SERVICES FORMAT

Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority										
2024 Budgets and Municipal Levies (Budget by Programs and Services)										
Appendix 4 - Report No. FA-41-23			Levy				Non-Levy			TOTAL
Dept	Description	Category	Niagara	Hamilton	Haldimand	Total Levy	Provincial	Federal	Self-Generated	BUDGET
General Levy - Category 1 and 2										
Natural Hazard Management										
301	Flood Forecasting and Warning	1	177,431	48,729	4,378	230,538	31,000			261,538
157	Flood and Erosion Management	1	43,554	11,961	1,075	56,590	5,200			61,790
323	Water Resources	1	79,522	21,840	1,962	103,324				103,324
329	Shoreline Hazard Management	1	18,772	5,155	463	24,390				24,390
345	Environmental Planning and Policy	1 & 2	210,237	57,738	5,187	273,162			153,000	426,162
361	Planning and Permitting	1 & 2	262,711	72,149	6,482	341,342	38,600		576,000	955,942
371	Compliance and Enforcement	1	450,929	123,841	11,126	585,895			40,800	626,695
391	Planning Ecology	1 & 2	80,852	22,205	1,995	105,052				105,052
TOTAL			1,324,008	363,618	32,667	1,720,293	74,800	-	769,800	2,564,893
Watershed Resource Management and Climate Change										
New	Watershed-based Resource Management Strategy	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
265	Watershed Monitoring and Reporting	1	251,576	69,091	6,207	326,874			12,000	338,874
217	Special Projects (groundwater sampling)	1	12,699	3,488	313	16,500				16,500
125	Regulatory Mapping Technical Studies	1	43,820	12,035	1,081	56,936				56,936
303	Climate Change Resilience	1	94,555	25,968	2,333	122,856		29,323		152,179
TOTAL			402,650	110,582	9,934	523,166	-	29,323	12,000	564,489
Other Watershed Related Programs										
205	Drinking Source Water Protection	1					155,909			155,909
TOTAL			-	-	-	-	155,909	-	-	155,909
Conservation Authority Lands and Conservation Areas										
489	Section 29 Enforcement and Compliance	1	52,418	14,396	1,293	68,107				68,107
427	Land Care Program	1	98,333	27,006	2,426	127,765			862,306	990,071
357	Land Management Planning	1	205,205	56,356	5,063	266,624			85,000	351,624
119	Ecology	1	108,058	29,676	2,666	140,400				140,400
TOTAL			464,013	127,434	11,448	602,896	-	-	947,306	1,550,202
Enabling Services										
101/107/127	Corporate Services (incl HR, Corp Sup, AM)	1	820,734	225,402	20,250	1,066,386	27,646	25,000	665,144	1,784,176
105	Financial Services	1	243,464	66,864	6,007	316,334				316,334
109/131	Information Management and Technology	1	584,157	160,430	14,413	758,999	9,900			768,899
103/150	Governance and Corporate Administration	1	412,284	113,228	10,172	535,684	32,377			568,061
111	Communications, Marketing and Public Relations	1	265,876	73,019	6,560	345,455				345,455
801	Vehicles and Equipment	1	201,338	55,294	4,968	261,600				261,600
153/155	Asset Management	1	15,544	4,269	384	20,197			189,966	210,163
TOTAL			2,543,398	698,505	62,752	3,304,655	69,923	25,000	855,110	4,254,688
TOTAL GENERAL LEVY			4,734,069	1,300,139	116,802	6,151,010	300,632	54,323	2,584,216	9,090,181

Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority										
2024 Budgets and Municipal Levies (Budget by Programs and Services)										
Appendix 4 - Report No. FA-41-23			Levy				Non-Levy			TOTAL
Dept	Description	Category	Niagara	Hamilton	Haldimand	Total Levy	Provincial	Federal	Self-Generated	BUDGET
General Levy - Category 3 - Cost Apportionment MOU										
Watershed Resource Management and Climate Change										
227	Restoration	3	258,495	70,992	6,378	335,864			202,553	538,417
123	Community Engagement and Stewardship	3	224,042	61,530	5,528	291,100				291,100
343	Integrated Watershed Planning	3	202,348	55,572	4,992	262,912				262,912
TOTAL			684,885	188,093	16,898	889,876	-	-	202,553	1,092,429
TOTAL GENERAL LEVY - CATEGORY 3			684,885	188,093	16,898	889,876	-	-	202,553	1,092,429
Special Levy										
TDB	Capital and Special Projects	1	1,601,271	263,309	14,679	1,879,259			425,952	2,305,211
TDB	Land Securement	2	250,000	148,039	13,252	411,291				411,291
TOTAL SPECIAL LEVY			1,851,271	411,348	27,931	2,290,550	-	-	425,952	2,716,502
Fee for Service - Schedule A										
265	Watershed Monitoring and Reporting								178,500	178,500
TOTAL FEE FOR SERVICE - SCHEDULE A			-	-	-	-	-	-	178,500	178,500
Provincial, Federal, Authority Generated										
Other Watershed Related Programs										
241	Niagara River Remedial Action Plan	3					240,028	158,000		398,028
TBD	Other (new projects/programs - i.e. 2BT)	3					-	-		-
TOTAL							240,028	158,000	-	398,028
Conservation Authority Lands and Conservation Areas										
395/401/403/405	Active Recreation Programs	3							2,104,031	2,104,031
407/411										
413	Educational Programming	3							440,000	440,000
New	Land Management, Other Agencies	3								
TOTAL							-	-	2,544,031	2,544,031
TOTAL PROVINCIAL, FEDERAL, AUTHORITY GENERATED							240,028	158,000	2,544,031	2,942,059
GRAND TOTAL			7,270,226	1,899,580	161,630	9,331,436	540,660	212,323	5,935,252	16,019,671

SUMMARY									
Operating	5,418,955	1,488,232	133,699	7,040,886	540,660	212,323	5,509,300	13,303,169	
Capital	1,601,271	263,309	14,679	1,879,259	-	-	425,952	2,305,211	
Land Securement	250,000	148,039	13,252	411,291	-	-	-	411,291	
TOTAL	7,270,226	1,899,580	161,630	9,331,436	540,660	212,323	5,935,252	16,019,671	

October 25, 2024

SENT ELECTRONICALLY

**City of Hamilton
Haldimand County
Regional Municipality of Niagara
Local Area Municipalities**

Report No. FA-51-24 RE: Draft Conservation Area Strategy

At the Board of Directors meeting held on October 18, 2024, the following resolution was passed:

Resolution No. FA-109-2024

Moved by: Stew Beattie

Seconded by: Donna Cridland

THAT Report No. FA-51-24 RE: Draft Conservation Area Strategy **BE RECEIVED**;

AND THAT staff **BE AUTHORIZED** to post the draft Conservation Area Strategy for public comment for three weeks;

AND THAT the draft Conservation Area Strategy be circulated to the NPCA partner municipalities;

AND FURTHER THAT the Conservation Area Strategy be brought forward for Board approval on or before December 13, 2024;

A copy of Report No. FA-51-24 and the draft Conservation Area Strategy are enclosed for reference. Members of Council, staff, and individuals residing in the Niagara Peninsula watershed are invited to learn more and provide feedback through the [Get Involved portal](#).

Sincerely,



Melanie Davis
Manager, Office of the CAO & Board
Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority
905.788.3135 ext. 250

cc: Leilani Lee-Yates, CAO / Secretary – Treasurer
Eric Baldin, Manager, Land Planning
Kerry Royer, Specialist, Conservation Area Land Planning

Report To: Board of Directors

Subject: Draft Conservation Area Strategy

Report No: FA-51-24

Date: October 18, 2024

Recommendation:

THAT Report No. FA-51-24 RE: Draft Conservation Area Strategy BE **RECEIVED**;

AND THAT staff **BE AUTHORIZED** to post the draft Conservation Area Strategy for public comment for three weeks;

AND THAT the draft Conservation Area Strategy be circulated to the NPCA partner municipalities;

AND FURTHER THAT the Conservation Area Strategy be brought forward for Board approval on or before December 13, 2024;

Purpose:

To provide an update to the NPCA Board of Directors regarding the development of the Conservation Area Strategy required under the *Conservation Authorities Act* and recommend the Draft Conservation Area Strategy be made available to the public and municipal partners for a commenting period of three weeks.

Background:

Ontario Regulation (O. Reg.) 686/21: Mandatory Programs and Services requires all conservation authorities to complete a Land Inventory and Conservation Area Strategy by December 31, 2024.

The Land Inventory and Conservation Area Strategy specifically address NPCA land holdings. NPCA has been working with Conservation Ontario and fellow Conservation Authorities to develop a consistent approach to Strategy development based on local customized needs of each conservation authority. O. Reg. 686/21 sets out specific requirements for the Strategy such as:

- Objectives established by the authority that will inform the authority’s decision-making related to the lands it owns and controls, including decisions related to policies governing the acquisition and disposition of such lands.
- Identification of the mandatory and non-mandatory programs and services that are provided on land owned and controlled by the authority, including the sources of financing for these programs and services.
- Where the authority considers it advisable to achieve the objectives, an assessment of how the lands owned and controlled by the authority may,
 - Augment any natural heritage located within the authority’s area of jurisdiction; and
 - Integrate with other provincially or municipally owned lands or other publicly accessible lands and trails within the authority’s area of jurisdiction.
- The establishment of land use categories for the purpose of classifying lands in the NPCA’s land inventory based on the types of activities on each parcel of land or other matters of significance related to the parcel.
- A process for the periodic review and updating of the conservation area strategy by the authority, including procedures to ensure stakeholders and the public are consulted during the review and update process.

The regulation also stipulates that the conservation authority shall ensure stakeholders and the public are consulted during the preparation of the Strategy and that the Strategy be made publicly available.

Discussion:

The draft Strategy is designed to provide high level guidance and direction for planning and management of NPCA conservation areas. Specific goals and objectives will provide direction for management and long-term planning for our conservation areas. Details on programs and services and the land use classifications will inform the general purpose for each conservation area. The Strategy explores how NPCA’s system of conservation areas augments local or regional natural heritage features and how they connect to local public lands.

The Strategy is not intended to provide specific direction for daily management or planning of conservation areas. Addressing priorities such as invasive species management, greenspace accessibility, or capital development will come through action plans to be developed in conjunction with annual work plans and Board priorities starting in 2025. Budgeting for capital projects will be informed by the Asset Management Plan.

Much of the site-specific priority work will be addressed in management plans that will be developed for each NPCA conservation area. These plans may include projects such as trail development, restoration projects, invasive species removal, and capital development. Examples of other watershed-wide actionable priorities

could include an Invasive Species Strategy, Indigenous Placemaking Strategy, Watershed Trail Strategy, or a Greenspace Accessibility Plan.

Each management plan or watershed-wide strategy or plan will be supported with additional, extensive engagement activities including Board review and approval. Key components of the Conservation Area Strategy are summarized below with the full draft Strategy included as Appendix 1.

Goals and Objectives

The draft Strategy includes a series of five Goals with each one created to support priorities identified in the NPCA Strategic Plan 2021-2031. Each of the Goals are also aligned with NPCA's inventory of Programs and Services such that our focus will be on Category 1 mandatory services while also providing justification and support for potential Category 2 and 3 programs and services at our conservation areas. The five Goals are as follows:

1. Protection and Management
2. Greenspace Access and Connectivity
3. Sustainability and Enhancement
4. Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation
5. Engagement and Collaboration

Supporting objectives are designed to inform an action plan that will identify current and future priorities that are easily actionable and measurable for specific NPCA conservation areas or for watershed-wide performance indicators.

Conservation Area Classification

Through the draft Strategy, NPCA staff have also classified each conservation area into one of four land use categories as informed with expertise from a Conservation Ontario working group. The four categories are:

1. Conservation Area – Active Recreation
2. Conservation Area – Passive Recreation
3. Natural Heritage
4. Administration Area

These broad categories are meant to identify the general purpose of each conservation area, not specific programs or activities for a conservation area. Conservation area management plans will provide opportunities to further refine these classifications to allocate programs and activities to specific zones within the property as well as options to prioritize certain conservation areas over others to focus allocation of staff and budgetary resources.

Four (4) conservation areas are classified as Active; eight (8) as Passive; twenty-seven (27) as Natural Heritage; and two (2) as Administration Area.

Based on these results, NPCA has 1842 hectares or 61% of our conservation areas classified as Natural Heritage. This is a healthy balance between more accessible conservation areas and those that have a greater focus on protection with limited facilities and is consistent with other Conservation Authorities.

Augmenting Natural Heritage

The Strategy assesses how NPCA conservation areas augment natural heritage and integrate with other Provincially or municipally owned lands and other publicly accessible lands and trails in the watershed.

Throughout this section, the NPCA demonstrates how our conservation areas fit within the significant natural heritage features, including the Niagara Escarpment Parks and Open Spaces System (NEPOSS), and local and Provincial natural heritage systems. Further to this, the assessment noted that NPCA conservation areas are important natural areas for residents and visitors that could be better connected to local parks, and other conserved areas through strategic land acquisitions and collaboration. The Strategy assessment indicates that there are many opportunities for connections between NPCA conservation areas and local trails and parks and these opportunities are supported by the goals and objectives of the Strategy, the Land Securement Strategy, and the NPCA's Strategic Plan.

Engagement Summary

NPCA took a comprehensive approach to public engagement for the Strategy, which included using a range of tools and methods for engaging with Indigenous communities, members of the public, local area municipalities, as well as a wide range of residents and interested parties. An engagement plan was presented to the Public Advisory Committee (PAC) in May 2024 which outlined a schedule of engagement milestones and primary goals of the engagement process for the Strategy including: gathering input on goals and objectives for managing conservation areas; identifying priorities for land use and conservation activities; and, ensuring public and stakeholder feedback on the classification and use of conservation lands.

The [Get Involved](#) portal was used as the main landing page for the project which included a survey and Discussion Paper to provide background information about the CA Strategy. NPCA hosted a hybrid Public Information Centre (PIC) on September 24 which was live-streamed and saved on our YouTube channel for individuals that could not attend. A total of 23 people registered for the PIC, with four people attending in person and nine attending online.

Financial Implications:

The development of the Conservation Area Strategy is funded through the Operating Budget.

Links to Policy/Strategic Plan:

- Goal 1.1: Support evidence-based decision-making for climate-resilient watersheds and shorelines.
- Goal 1.3: Restore and enhance natural habitat, water resources, and forest cover.
- Goal 1.4: Manage NPCA lands to increase biodiversity, habitat connectivity, and natural cover.
- Goal 3.1: Create equitable access to greenspace for the health and well-being of people
- Goal 3.2: Lead nature education, environmental stewardship, and volunteerism.
- Goal 3.3: Improve cultural connections and heritage appreciation.
- Goal 4.1: Strengthen government relations toward collective outcomes and impact.
- Goal 4.2: Foster relationships with the community, non-government organizations, businesses, agriculture, industry, and academic institutions for collective outcomes and impact.
- Goal 4.3: Improve engagement with local First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples that supports shared stewardship.
- Goal 5.4 Demonstrate leadership in addressing climate change and sustainable practices through NPCA lands and operations

Related Reports and Appendices:

Appendix 1: Draft Conservation Area Strategy (*distributed separately*)

Authored by:

Original Signed by:

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Chief Administrative Officer/Secretary-Treasurer
Interim Director, Watershed Strategies and Climate Change



CONSERVATION AREA STRATEGY

DRAFT

October 18, 2024

Land Acknowledgement

The Niagara Peninsula watershed is situated within the traditional territory of the Haudenosaunee, Attiwonderonk (Neutral), and the Anishinaabeg, including the Mississaugas of the Credit—many of whom continue to live and work here today.

The territory is covered by the Upper Canada Treaties (No. 3,4, and 381) and is within the land protected by the Dish with One Spoon Wampum agreement. Today, the watershed is home to many First Nations peoples, Métis citizens, and Inuit.

Through this Conservation Area Strategy, the NPCA reconfirms its commitment to shared stewardship of natural resources and a deep appreciation of Indigenous culture and history in the watershed.

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 About Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority

The Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority (NPCA) is a community-based natural resource management agency that protects, enhances, and sustains healthy watersheds that was established in 1959 pursuant to the *CA Act*. With 65 years of experience, NPCA offers watershed programs and services that focus on flood and hazard management, source water protection, species protection, ecosystem restoration, community stewardship, and land management.

NPCA’s watershed area encompasses 2,424 km², and includes the regional municipality of Niagara, portions of the City of Hamilton (21%), and Haldimand County (25%) (Map 1). Since time immemorial, this area has been the home to Indigenous peoples—a place for sharing, trading, hunting, gathering, stewardship, and friendship. Currently, the watershed supports a population of approximately 520,000 people.



Figure 1: Watershed diagram

A watershed is the land that drains into a particular watercourse such as a stream, river, or lake. Gravity and the land’s topography (the high and low areas) move water, rain, and snowmelt across the landscape from one area to another.

Situated between two Great Lakes, with the Niagara River as a boundary shared with the United States of America, the Niagara Peninsula watershed is a natural treasure of distinct cultural, geological, hydrological, and biological aspects not found elsewhere in North America. It is part of the Carolinian life zone—Canada’s most biodiverse and threatened ecoregion. The Niagara Peninsula watershed boasts approximately 30 per cent natural cover that provides critical habitat such as forested woodlots, slough forests, alvars, and coastal wetlands that support rich biodiversity, including rare plants and animals. The watershed also includes several other notable natural features such as the Niagara Escarpment Biosphere Reserve, Niagara Falls, the Wainfleet Bog, Ball’s Falls, Willoughby Marsh, and landforms such as the Fonthill Kame ice-contact delta complex.

1.2 Conservation Area System

NPCA owns over 3,000 hectares of land within its watershed across 41 conservation areas held in public trust for recreation, heritage preservation, conservation, and education. These areas represent a wide range of ecosystem types and protect some of the most significant ecological features in the watershed.

Map 1: NPCA watershed jurisdiction



NPCA stewards important sections of shoreline along Lake Erie and Lake Ontario, migratory bird habitat, Provincially Significant Wetlands (PSW), Areas of Natural and Scientific Interest (ANSI), important cultural heritage sites, and large sections of the Niagara Escarpment, a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve. Together these conservation areas represent an essential part of the natural treasures and significant ecosystems in the Carolinian Life Zone. In southern Ontario, and especially in the Niagara Peninsula watershed, growing pressures on the landscape are due to increased urbanization, land use changes, and changing climatic conditions. In addition, there is a well-documented increasing demand for access to greenspace for the health and well-being of the growing population. NPCA conservation areas support and enhance local communities, agriculture, recreation, health, tourism, and natural heritage, and are indispensable outdoor recreation areas for more than half a million people in the watershed and its visitors.

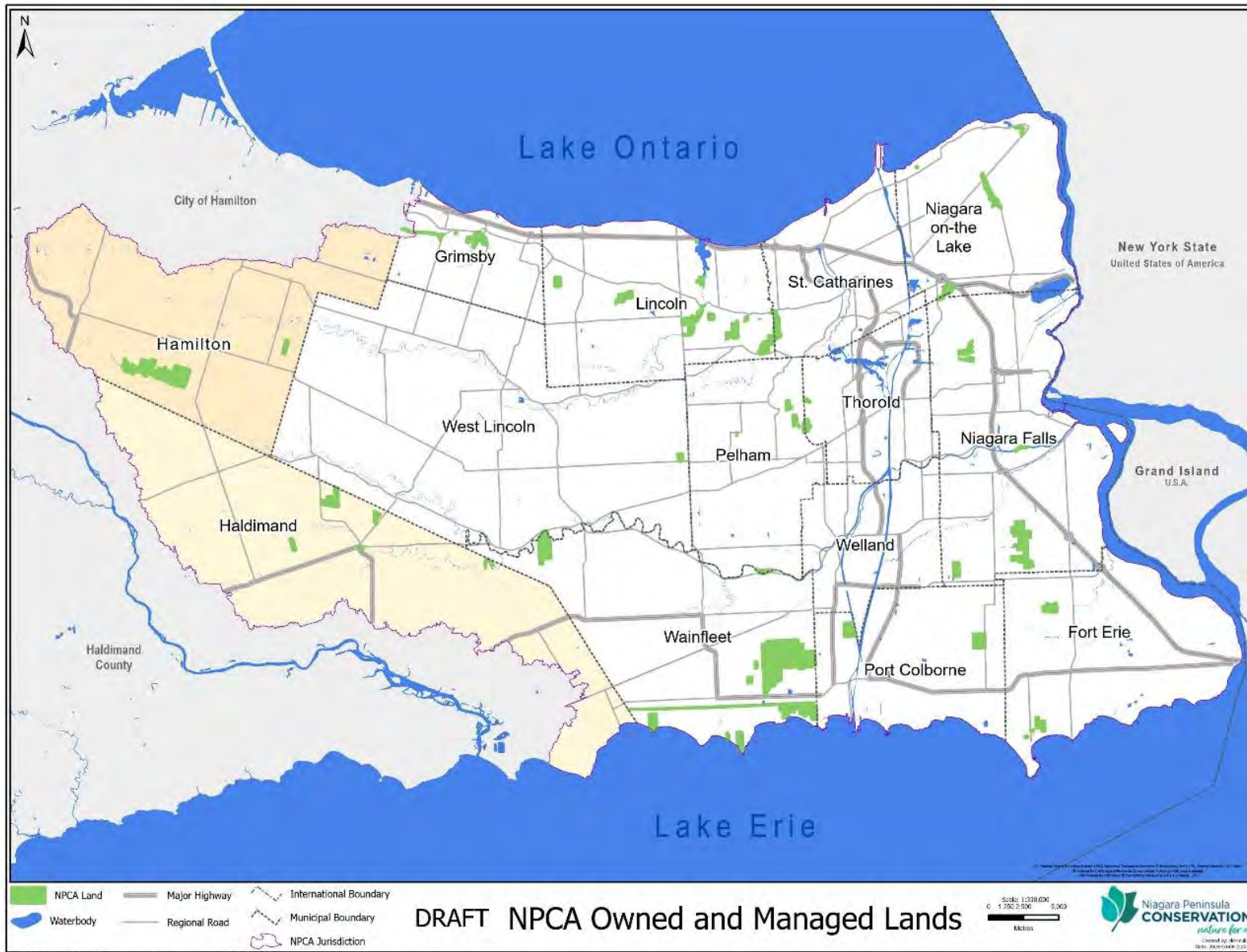
In 2023, NPCA saw a 45 per cent increase in visitors at its four most popular conservation areas, Ball's Falls, Binbrook, Chippawa, and Long Beach, with 160,000 paid day-use visitors, and more than 500,000 visitors to the other 37 conservation areas. The increase in visitation aligns with similar increases seen at other conservation areas in the Greater Golden Horseshoe area. NPCA also attracted 30,000 visitors to its signature events, hosted 32 seasonal campers, and engaged 11,300 students in outdoor education camps and programming. While the increase in paid use supports programs and services as self-generated revenue, they are not without consequences. Consequences of increased use on sensitive environments, trails, and other infrastructure include compaction of soil, erosion susceptibility, increased invasive species, destruction of areas outside of trails, non-permitted uses, littering and dumping, and impacts on native species and biodiversity. Careful consideration through a management plan process can help ensure that proper programs, maintenance, infrastructure, and signage are in place to reduce or mitigate negative impacts as a result of increased use.

1.3 Purpose and Regulatory Framework

NPCA is developing a Conservation Area Strategy (CA Strategy) to outline broad objectives for conservation areas and related programs and services as outlined in the *Conservation Authorities Act (CA Act)* and Ontario Regulation 686/21: *Mandatory Programs and Services* (O. Reg. 686/21). The CA Strategy will guide the management and operation of NPCA's conservation areas. The Regulation requires that the CA Strategy contain the following:

1. Objectives established by the Conservation Authority that will inform the Authority's decision-making related to the lands it owns and controls, including decisions related to policies governing the acquisition and disposition of such lands.
2. Identification of the mandatory and non-mandatory programs and services that are provided on land owned and controlled by the Conservation Authority, including the sources of financing for these programs and services.

Map 2: NPCA conservation areas



3. Where the Conservation Authority considers it advisable to achieve the objectives referred to in paragraph 1 above, an assessment of how the lands owned and controlled by the Authority may:
 - i. Augment any natural heritage located within the Conservation Authority's area of jurisdiction; and
 - ii. Integrate with other provincially or municipally owned lands or other publicly accessible lands and trails within the Authority's area of jurisdiction.
4. The establishment of land use categories for the purpose of classifying lands in NPCA's land inventory based on the types of activities on each parcel of land or other matters of significance related to the parcel.
5. A process for the periodic review and updating of the CA Strategy by the Authority, including procedures to ensure stakeholders and the public are consulted during the review and update.

In addition to these provincial requirements, it is important to note that while the CA Strategy is an overarching and guiding document applicable to *all* conservation areas owned by NPCA, plans and details that are specific to any one conservation area will not be of focus. Property-specific directions or watershed-level details and priorities will be developed through other strategies, actions, and/or management plans that represent the importance of specific conservation areas or watershed priorities of NPCA, member municipalities, partners, and interested parties. Examples of items that will **not** be represented in the CA Strategy include:

- Invasive species management plan
- Permitted uses for individual conservation areas
- Programs and services for individual conservation areas
- Access points, gates, parking lots
- Restoration plans
- Climate action plan
- Trail management/standards plan
- Wayfinding/signage plan

2.0 GUIDING PRINCIPLES AND GOALS

A CA Strategy is developed within the context of NPCA's Strategic Plan which sets the overall vision, mission, and goals for the Authority from 2021-2031. Nested underneath is, or will be, several supporting strategies and plans developed to help achieve the Strategic Plan and a thriving environment that will sustain life within the watershed for future generations. A CA Strategy will build on NPCA's overall vision

and mission to establish goals, objectives and actions designed to deliver the programs and services our residents and visitors expect from conservation areas.

2.1 Strategic Plan

The 2021-2031 NPCA Strategic Plan: Nature for All, is a guiding document that reaffirms NPCA's commitment to the mandate of conservation authorities and charts the course for the next generation of conservation work to address the evolving issues of climate change, growth, and the need for green infrastructure. This plan is guided by principles based on a conservation-first and ecosystem philosophy, collaboration ethics, and the importance of innovation rooted in science. NPCA consulted broadly with its Board of Directors, Public Advisory Committee, staff, Indigenous groups, partners, members of the public, and other local stakeholders to develop the strategic plan. Collectively, the six overarching priorities outlined below guide our actions toward a vision of the Niagara Peninsula watershed with robust nature, thriving agriculture, and resilient urban areas vital to the health and well-being of those who call it home or visit.

VISION: Nature for all

We envision a healthy and vibrant environment with shared greenspace and clean water that sustains life for future generations.

MISSION

To create common ground for conservation-inspired action and accountability to nature.

NPCA Strategic Priorities:

- 1. Healthy and Climate Resilient Watersheds:** Improving nature for the betterment of all life across the watershed.
- 2. Supporting Sustainable Growth:** Helping to create resilient communities through land-use planning and the use of sustainable technologies to prepare for a changing climate and related environmental challenges.
- 3. Connecting People to Nature:** Creating equitable access to greenspace for the health and well-being of people.
- 4. Partner of Choice:** Strengthening our relationships with stakeholders, partners, the watershed community, and Indigenous peoples.
- 5. Organizational Excellence:** Striving for excellence through high service delivery standards and accountability to the environment and its people.

6. Financial Sustainability: Ensuring a financially stable and sustainable organization and continued service-delivery through innovative business models, diverse funding sources, and best practices.

Core Values: Integrity, Respect, Customer Service, and Conservation Leadership



Figure 2: Strategy Priorities, NPCA Strategic Plan 2021-2031

2.2 Goals and Objectives

The goals and objectives proposed for the CA Strategy are consistent with NPCA’s mandate as defined in the CA Act, the Strategic Plan (Figure 3), and Land Securement Strategy. They inform land acquisition, land planning and management, as well as programs and services offered at NPCA conservation areas. Further, more detailed implementation plans to support these goals and objectives will be developed for property-specific management plans or watershed-based initiatives.

Goal #1: Protection & Management

Examples of objectives that support, and when implemented through specific, measurable actions, will help achieve this goal:

- Steward conservation areas to enhance biodiversity, habitat connectivity, and natural cover, ensuring the watershed's long-term health and sustainability.
- Increase protected greenspace through land acquisition and securement.
- Develop management plans that prioritize accountability to the environment and future generations.
- Enforce conservation area rules to safeguard these spaces from non-permitted uses that threaten safety and sustainability.

Goal #2: Greenspace Access & Connectivity

Examples of objectives that support, and when implemented through specific, measurable actions, will help achieve this goal:

- Improve accessibility at conservation areas to ensure all individuals can experience the mental, spiritual, and physical benefits of nature.
- Ensure conservation areas are safe, accessible, and welcoming, preserving natural and cultural features.
- Collaborate with partners to enhance connectivity between publicly accessible greenspaces, transportation routes, and trail systems.
- Implement innovative land management approaches to improve access and inclusivity.

Goal #3: Sustainability & Enhancement

Examples of objectives that support, and when implemented through specific, measurable actions, will help achieve this goal:

- Increase restoration and enhancement projects to boost biodiversity, improve water quality, and support native species.
- Use sustainable technologies, infrastructure design, and practices to ensure the safety and sustainability of conservation areas.
- Enhance visitor safety with wayfinding systems, signage, and accessibility information.
- Lead in demonstrating green infrastructure and sustainable technologies in conservation area planning.
- Seek new and innovative opportunities to improve financial sustainability and be more cost-effective.

Goal #4: Climate Change Adaptation & Mitigation

Examples of objectives that support, and when implemented through specific, measurable actions, will help achieve this goal:

- Adapt conservation area programs, services, and asset management to address changing climate conditions.
- Identify and improve climate resilience and adaptation measures in conservation areas.
- Pursue opportunities to mitigate climate change impacts through strategic land acquisition, restoration, and planning.

Goal #5: Engagement & Collaboration

Examples of objectives that support, and when implemented through specific, measurable actions, will help achieve this goal:

- Collaborate with community groups on outreach and environmental initiatives to foster stewardship and create conservation champions.
- Deliver experiential education programs that connect future conservation leaders to nature and promote responsible engagement.
- Expand Indigenous programming, place-making, and recognition of Indigenous heritage.

2.3 Land Securement Strategy

Natural heritage and natural green infrastructure such as forests, wetlands, rain gardens, bioswales, provide critical services and benefits that sustain life for people and wildlife—clean air and water, protection from flooding and erosion, and a source of food and habitats for wildlife species. In the Niagara Peninsula watershed, there are growing pressures on the landscape due to increased urbanization, land use changes, and changing climatic conditions that continue to threaten and impact the integrity of these natural features. In addition, there is an increasing demand for access to green space for the health and well-being of people. NPCA's Natural Areas Inventory and Nature for Niagara's Future projects found that the Niagara Peninsula watershed achieves 56 per cent of what science suggests is needed on the landscape for healthy and sustainable watersheds and habitats. Together, these issues have highlighted the critical need to secure more natural areas to improve the environment, mitigate the impacts of climate change, and provide more opportunities for people to enjoy the outdoors.

NPCA has an increasingly important role in land securement for conservation and restoration of natural areas. The CA Act provides guidance on the governance and purpose of conservation authorities, including

the powers to “acquire by purchase, lease or otherwise any land that it may require, and, subject to subsection (2), to sell, lease or otherwise dispose of land so acquired” (Sec. 21 (1)(c)). As part of the CA Act Regulation O. Reg 686/21, there are only certain types of mandatory programs and services that can be provided in relation to the conservation and management of lands including (but not limited to) the development of one or more policies governing land acquisitions and land dispositions (Sec. 9 (2)(vi)).

As noted in Section 2.1, NPCA’s Strategic Plan aims to achieve its vision of ‘Nature for all’ to ensure a healthy and vibrant environment with shared greenspace and clean water that sustains life for future generations. Notably, the plan called for the development and implementation of a land acquisition strategy to achieve Goal 1.4: *“Manage lands to increase biodiversity, habitat connectivity, and natural cover.”* Implementing the land securement strategy will also directly support achieving Goal 3.1 *“Create equitable access to greenspace for the health and well-being of people”* as well as several other NPCA strategic goals and performance measures related to natural hazard protection, ecosystem improvements, and building relationships with partners, stakeholders, and Indigenous peoples.

With the changes to the CA Act and a new strategic plan, updates to NPCA’s land securement efforts were necessary. NPCA undertook a comprehensive process that resulted in the 2022-2032 Land Securement Strategy. This document would guide the securement of lands within the Niagara Peninsula watershed for environmental, natural hazard protection, and societal (recreation, culture, health) benefits.

To achieve NPCA’s strategic goals, the Land Securement Strategy focuses on the following objectives:

- Secure public greenspace in the NPCA watershed using clear and concise decision-making;
- Collaborate with municipal partners, land trusts, stakeholders, and Indigenous communities on mutual land securement goals;
- Implement sustainable and innovative financial models that support land securement and stewardship

2.4 Inventory of Programs and Services

Conservation Authorities are required by regulation to prepare an Inventory of Programs and Services to identify:

- **Category 1:** Mandatory Programs and Services, such as natural hazard management;
- **Category 2:** Municipal Programs and Services at the request of a Municipality, such as tree planting services, and technical research to help inform decision-making; and

- **Category 3:** Other Programs and Services determined by the Conservation Authority to further the purposes of the *Conservation Authorities Act*, such as restoration and stewardship, and watershed monitoring.

NPCA’s programs and services are funded either through municipal levies, municipal cost apportionments requiring agreements for service, service fees, or external funding such as grants.

Table 1: Conservation Authorities Act Funding Mechanisms for NPCA’s Programs and Services

Category 1 Mandatory Programs and Services (O.Reg.686/21)	Category 2 Municipal Programs and Services	Category 3 Other Programs and Services
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programs and services which a CAs agrees to 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programs and services which a CA determines are <p style="text-align: right;">funding</p>

The NPCA has prepared an Inventory of Programs and Services that lists all the programs and services that it provides under each category (i.e., Category 1, 2, and 3). Drawing from the Inventory of Programs and Services, NPCA must also provide the identification of mandatory and non-mandatory programs and services that are provided on land owned and controlled by the authority, including the sources of financing for these programs and services. The following Section 3.1 provides a more focused description of program areas and services related to NPCA conservation areas.

3.0 CONSERVATION AREAS

3.1 Service Areas and Programs

NPCA conservation areas encompass a diverse range of ecosystem types and protect some of the most critical ecological features within the Niagara Peninsula watershed. These areas include important shoreline properties along Lake Erie and Lake Ontario (e.g., Morgan’s Point, Long Beach, Lakewood), migratory bird habitats (e.g., Point Abino, Jordan Harbour, Beamer), PSWs such as Willoughby Marsh, Wainfleet Bog, and Humberstone Marsh, and ANSIs like Ruigrok, and Eight Mile Creek. NPCA also manages sites of significant cultural heritage (e.g., Ball’s Falls, St. John’s Centre) and large parcels of the Niagara Escarpment (e.g., Rockway, Woodend, Louth, Cave Springs, Mountainview).

Together, these conservation areas capture the unique natural treasures and ecosystems characteristic of the Carolinian life zone found in the Niagara Peninsula. They play a vital role in supporting local communities, agriculture, recreation, health, tourism, and natural heritage. With more than a half million residents and visitors in the watershed, these areas provide vital opportunities to connect with nature and a wide range of ecosystem services that benefit everyone.

Conservation area programs and services are primarily categorized as mandatory (Category 1 services), with some activities such as education and recreation programs classified under Category 2 or 3 services. These programs are integral to NPCA’s operations and align with its strategic goals. Table 2 shows the NPCA program areas related to conservation areas and their respective CA Act categories.

Table 2: NPCA Conservation area programs and services with funding CA Act funding category.

Program or Service	Description	Category
Section 29 Enforcement and Compliance	Conservation areas regulations enforcement and compliance	1
Active recreation programs (conservation areas)	Day use and other services (wedding, event, facility rentals)	3
Education programs	Education programs and camps, heritage programs	2,3
Land Management—other agencies	Land and facilities management, maintenance, and operations for other agencies (Fed, Prov, Region, local)	2,3
Land Care Program (conservation areas)	Management and maintenance of NPCA conservation area—passive recreation, heritage buildings, tree management, hazard, and risk management	1
Land acquisition and disposition	Acquisition to mitigate natural hazard risk	1

	Acquisition cost-shared with municipal partners or agencies	2
	Acquisition in accordance with NPCA land securement strategy	3
Land Management Planning	Conservation Area Land Inventory	1
	Conservation Area Strategy	1
	Conservation Area Management Planning	1

3.1.1 Conservation Area Operations and Programming

The NPCA manages 41 conservation areas, with active recreation services currently offered at four sites: Ball’s Falls, Binbrook, Chippawa Creek, and Long Beach. Active recreation services vary by location and include:

- Camping - Both seasonal and transient options.
- Weddings, Facility Rentals, and Special Events - Available at pavilions, picnic areas, and indoor and outdoor spaces.
- Education Programs - Field trips and overnight programs designed to engage students and visitors.
- Heritage Programs - Featuring field trips, special events, and demonstration days that celebrate cultural heritage.
- Nature School - A BSID-designated (Board School Identification Database) part-time school program focusing on outdoor education.
- Day Camps - Outdoor adventure camps tailored for youth.
- Volunteering – opportunities available for people of all ages to support the delivery of heritage, education, events, and day camps.

All conservation areas are maintained by NPCA’s Land Care Program, which focuses on preserving, enhancing, and sustaining the natural beauty, recreational opportunities, and overall usability of these sites. Maintenance activities include:

- Horticulture, forestry, and grass cutting.
- Trail maintenance and hazard removal.
- Inspection and repair of park amenities.
- Signage installation and maintenance of washroom facilities and heritage buildings.

In addition to ongoing maintenance, NPCA enforces regulations under Section 29 of the CA Act to ensure environmental protection and visitor safety. Key areas of focus include:

- Enforcement of open fire rules.
- Regulation of access times.
- Prohibition of non-permitted uses, such as ATV activities.
- Enforcement against littering and improper waste disposal.

3.1.2 Land Acquisition and Securement

NPCA plays a crucial role in acquiring and securing land to protect and restore natural areas and greenspaces for future generations. Since the late 1950s, NPCA has acquired 41 properties encompassing more than 3,000 hectares. These lands contribute to natural heritage conservation and provide essential services, such as access to greenspace, clean air and water, and protection from natural hazards like flooding and erosion. NPCA's Land Securement Strategy sets a target to secure 180 hectares of land by 2031, and to date NPCA has achieved 30% of this target.

3.1.3 Land Planning & Management

NPCA's 41 conservation areas are made up of diverse ecosystem and vegetative community types, including forests, PSWs, ANSIs, recreational lands, cultural sites, and areas designated for flood and erosion control. Each property requires a tailored management plan to guide permitted uses, access levels, enhancements, programs, services, and risk management to ensure visitor safety.

Land planning directs the overall design of each conservation area, while land management focuses on the sustainable use and enjoyment of these areas by the public. All NPCA current and future management plans are guided by the CA Strategy, which establishes goals and objectives that align with NPCA's vision, mission, and priorities for the conservation area system that are consistent with the Strategic Plan. Conservation area management plans will aim to increase access to greenspace where appropriate, connect people to nature, and ensure the long-term sustainability of the watershed.

The NPCA's land planning program collaborates with other NPCA programs and departments, including planning and development, land care, restoration, and capital projects, through coordinated internal working groups and teams, enhancing overall program effectiveness and alignment.

For properties located within the Niagara Escarpment Plan Area, the NPCA consults with the Niagara Escarpment Commission. The Niagara Escarpment Planning and Development Act (NEPDA) provides for

the maintenance and protection of the Niagara Escarpment and ensures all development that occurs is compatible with the environment. The NEPDA also provides the Niagara Escarpment Parks and Open Space System Planning (NEPOSS) framework, which outlines the process for developing management or master plans as well as guidelines for Escarpment properties.

4.0 CONSERVATION AREA ASSESSMENT

O. Reg. 686/21 notes that a conservation authority may include within their Conservation Area Strategy an assessment of how the lands owned and controlled by the authority:

- i. may augment any natural heritage located within the authority's area of jurisdiction;
- ii. integrate with other provincially or municipally owned lands or other publicly accessible lands and trails within the authority's area of jurisdiction.

Section 4.1 below outlines how NPCA conservation areas augment natural heritage within the watershed context while Section 4.2 outlines how the lands are integrated with other provincially, municipally owned lands or other publicly accessible lands and trails within the Niagara peninsula watershed.

4.1 Augmenting Natural Heritage

The Niagara Peninsula watershed is a natural treasure of distinct cultural, geological, hydrological, and biological aspects not found elsewhere in North America. It boasts approximately 30 per cent natural cover that provides critical habitat such as forested woodlots, slough forests, alvars, and coastal wetlands that support rich biodiversity, including rare plants and animals. The watershed is uniquely situated between two Great Lakes, with the Niagara River as a boundary shared with the United States of America. The landscape in the Niagara peninsula watershed today “is the result of numerous depositional and erosional events and processes spanning over 500 million years, resting on a foundation established much, much earlier” (Niagara Geology, Niagara Geopark). As a result of these processes, the watershed includes several notable natural features including the Niagara Escarpment, Horseshoe Falls and Niagara Glen, Wainfleet Bog, Ball's Falls, Willoughby Marsh, and other significant landforms such as the Fonthill Delta-Kame complex, large parcels of slough forest, and PSWs. Unique microclimates created by the Niagara Escarpment and rich soils support one of Ontario's most productive agriculture systems, including vineyards, tender fruit orchards, livestock, and various specialty crops. The geology of this area includes a sequence of shales, sandstones, limestones, and dolostones. These important features provide life-sustaining benefits for all and many opportunities to discover nature and culture.

Over a decade ago, NPCA worked with several municipal and community partners to undertake the Natural Areas Inventory (NAI) project. The purpose of this project was to identify, classify, and map natural areas in the Niagara Peninsula watershed. The goal of the project was to use industry standard, scientifically defensible protocols to inventory the natural areas in the jurisdiction. Following the work of the NAI, the Nature for Niagara's Future (NFNF) study assessed the natural features identified during the NAI and their contributions towards a healthy and sustainable system. This study found the watershed's natural cover is approximately 30 per cent, two thirds of which is mature forest, with nearly half of the forests being swamp-type wetland communities. Additionally, the NFNF study found that the Niagara Peninsula watershed currently achieves only 56 per cent of what science suggests is needed on the landscape for healthy and sustainable ecosystem functions, habitats and natural resilience. Planning for natural heritage is necessary for the maintenance and enhancement of biodiversity, protection of species at risk, mitigation of climate change, protection and improvement of water quality, and the fulfillment of public values. A healthy natural environment is important for a thriving economy and rich cultural heritage. NPCA used a consolidated layer of the Niagara Region Natural Environment System and Provincial Natural Heritage System (NHS) layers from the Greenbelt and Growth plans to assess how NPCA conservation areas augment or enhance the natural heritage in our watershed. For Haldimand and Hamilton, a similar consolidated layer was used based on the most recent information available.

Map 3 shows NPCA's conservation areas and how these lands fit within the natural heritage features and areas in the watershed. Nearly all NPCA's conservation areas are located within natural heritage system boundaries and represent significant parcels of land that enhance the ecosystem services, biodiversity, and overall connectivity of a variety of habitat types thus playing a critical role in creating a healthy natural environment landscape in the Niagara Peninsula watershed. Even the few conservation areas partially or wholly outside natural heritage features augment the system simply by virtual of being protected greenspace and offering opportunities to improve features through restoration and enhancement.

4.1.1 Greenbelt and Niagara Escarpment

Within the Niagara Peninsula watershed, 11 conservation areas can be found along the Niagara Escarpment, which holds local and international significance as a United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) designated Biosphere Reserve. The Niagara Escarpment extends from Queenston, a small hamlet in the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake, to Tobermory in the Bruce Peninsula and represents the largest continuous forested area in south-central Ontario. All conservation areas and parks within the Niagara Escarpment are connected by the Niagara Escarpment Parks and Open Space System (NEPOSS), and the Bruce Trail, a natural hiking trail managed and stewarded by the Bruce Trail Conservancy. As required in Part 3 of the Niagara Escarpment Plan (NEP), each conservation area within

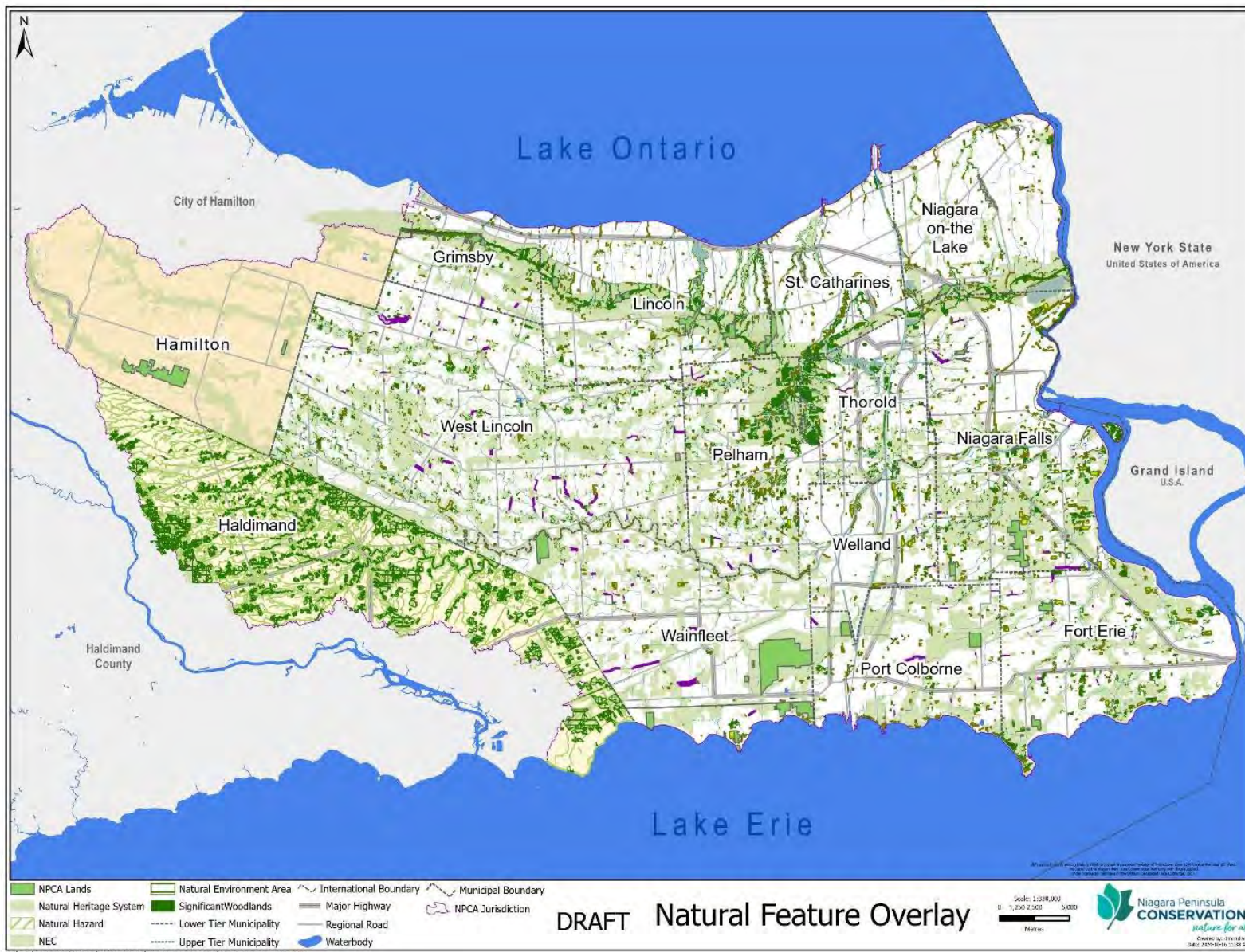
the NEPOSS must create a management plan to guide permitted activities and identify “zones” within the conservation area using the NEPOSS classification system, underlying NEP land use designations, and identifying the cultural, natural, and recreational features of the site. NPCA will develop management plans for all conservation areas within the NEPOSS and seek approval and endorsement from the NEC and the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry (MNR) to ensure compatibility and collaborative protection of this important natural heritage area.

The 11 conservation areas in NEPOSS (Map 4) augment and enhance the network of protected areas along the Niagara Escarpment owned by other conservation authorities, municipalities, Bruce Trail Conservancy, Escarpment Biosphere Conservancy, land trusts, and private landowners. This connected fabric of protected lands helps to mitigate and improve resilience to climate change, support green infrastructure, capture and store carbon, recharge aquifers, and protect biodiversity and sensitive areas to achieve the shared goal of beautiful, sustainable, and healthy landscapes in Ontario. NPCA conservation areas not only offer endless environmental benefits, but they also support culture, recreation, and tourism goals of the Greenbelt Plan.

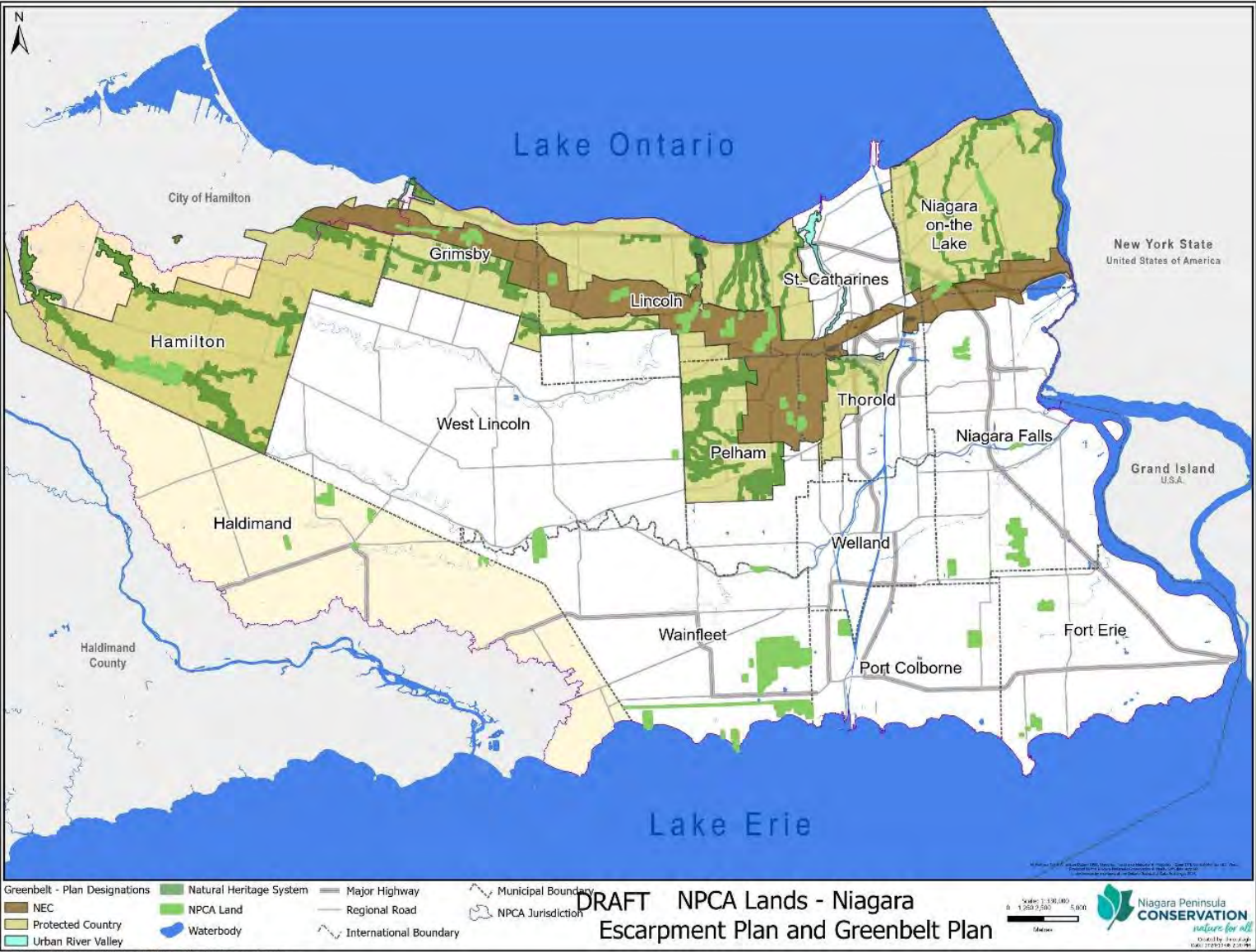
All NPCA conservation areas within the NEPOSS support the culture, recreation, tourism, climate change, natural resources, and environmental protection goals of the Greenbelt Plan, NEPOSS council, and the Niagara Escarpment Biosphere Network. They include:

1. Ball’s Falls
2. Beamer Memorial
3. Cave Springs
4. Lathrop
5. Louth
6. Mountainview
7. Rockway
8. St. John’s Centre
9. St. John’s
10. Woodend
11. Woolverton

Map 3: NPCA conservation areas and the natural heritage of the watershed



Map 4: NPCA conservation areas in the context of the Greenbelt Plan natural heritage system



4.1.1.1 Niagara (Aspiring UNESCO Global) Geopark

Cultural and heritage connections are strengthened through collaboration and partnerships with multiple organizations and levels of government. NPCA is a partner of the Niagara Geopark, and a member of their Board of Directors. The Niagara Geopark is an organization that aims to achieve the UNESCO Global Geopark designation for the entire Niagara Region using a sustainable tourism-oriented model and building on the rich geological foundation of more than 500 million years. Most recently, Plenty Canada, an Indigenous non-government organization devoted to the protection of Mother Earth, partnered with the Niagara Escarpment Biosphere Network (NEBN) and the Niagara Geopark to support the integration of Indigenous linguistic, artistic, cultural, and historical elements within the Niagara Geopark Trail Network and Plenty Canada's Great Niagara Escarpment Indigenous Cultural Map, further demonstrating that NPCA conservation areas support culture, recreation, Indigenous leadership, and tourism in addition to environmental protection. The Niagara Geopark Geosite Map highlights at least 11 NPCA conservation areas that contribute to this designation due to their significance as both cultural and natural heritage locations:

1. Ball's Falls
2. Beamer Memorial
3. Cave Springs
4. Louth
5. Morgan's Point
6. Mountainview
7. Rockway
8. St. John's
9. Wainfleet Bog
10. Wainfleet Wetlands
11. Woodend

4.1.2 Wetlands

Wetland ecosystems are a very important part of the natural landscape and historically dominated a significant percentage of the Niagara Peninsula watershed, particularly in the southern portion. This once dominant ecosystem type is evident when studying local geology, hydrogeology, soils, and aerial photography where remnants of these wetlands can still be seen in present-day agricultural fields as darker sinuous lines representing the former sloughs. Less than 30 per cent of the original wetlands remain in Ontario, in the Niagara Peninsula watershed that number may be as low as 10 per cent. The creation of a series of Welland Shipping Canals beginning in the mid-19th century significantly altered the drainage patterns of the landscape, lowering the water table in some areas and draining some of these wetland ecosystems in the process. Other wetlands were drained to support development and the creation of a fabric of agricultural lands in this area.

A large portion of the forest cover in the Niagara Peninsula watershed is mature swamp forest, sometimes called slough forest which is a swamp, or tree-dominated wetland, with rolling topography that features linear shallow channels and narrow upland ridges between them. Sloughs are easily seen in air photos as darker features between more upland sections of the swamp. The channels, or sloughs, will have water seasonally (ephemeral) and will be dry during the summer months, thus this area contains both upland and wetland species. Slough forests are unique and diverse landscapes that are part of a healthy ecosystem, typically home to high biodiversity and unique species. They are very important for food, shelter, and habitat for various wildlife and the general hydrologic function of the surrounding ecosystem. The sloughs can hold and slowly release water during rain events, an important feature of wetlands, especially in urban areas which typically have a large amount of hard or impervious surfaces where water cannot seep into the ground. Even small isolated seasonal pools which contain standing water for only a short period in the spring and summer can provide vital habitat for rare and specialized species such as frogs, toads and salamanders which rely on fish-free sources of water to survive and are not typically found in other wetland types. NPCA conservation areas that are dominated by swamp slough forest include Willoughby Marsh, Humberstone Marsh, Point Abino, and Smith Ness Forest.

The Niagara Peninsula watershed includes a lesser-known escarpment feature, the Onondaga Escarpment, one of the most noticeable geologic features in the southern portion of the watershed that forms a discontinuous ridge a few metres in height from Fort Erie to beyond Dunnville. In the area immediately north of the Onondaga Escarpment, the remnants of glacial retreat became an extensive bog ecosystem now known as the Wainfleet Bog and Humberstone Marsh, large sections of which are owned by NPCA, the Nature Conservancy of Canada and the Province of Ontario, in addition to many sections that are still privately owned. The Wainfleet Bog conservation area is federally, provincially, regionally, and locally significant as the largest remaining bog in southern Ontario, and the only bog in the Niagara Peninsula watershed. It has been identified as a Key Biodiversity Area (KBA) by Birds Canada, recognizing it as one of the most important remaining places for biodiversity. The Wainfleet Bog is one of the six Landowner Outreach Areas (LOA) established in the Land Securement Strategy for more concentrated effort in the next 10 years to expand the conservation area and protect additional lands in that community.

Of the 41 NPCA conservation areas, 30 represent one of the three different wetland types found in the Niagara Peninsula watershed—swamp, marsh, bog—making these areas significantly important to the natural heritage, the flood storage capacity, groundwater recharge and watercourse baseflows in the watershed. While a few have small pockets or pieces that are wetland, many have significant sections of the conservation area in swamp, marsh, or bog.

The following are examples of NPCA conservation areas dominated by wetlands:

1. Baird Estate
2. Chippawa Creek
3. E.C. Brown
4. Eight Mile Creek
5. Gainsborough
6. Hedley Forest
7. Humberstone Marsh
8. Lathrop
9. Long Beach
10. OPG
11. Oswego Creek
12. Point Abino
13. Ruigrok Tract
14. Shriners Creek
15. Smith-Ness Forest
16. Two Mile Creek
17. Wainfleet Bog
18. Wainfleet Wetlands
19. Willoughby Marsh

4.1.3 Watercourses

There are several significant water courses in the Niagara Peninsula watershed, including the bi-national Niagara River, the Welland River, and Twelve Mile Creek—the only cold-water stream in the watershed. Niagara Parks owns and maintains over 1300 hectares of parkland along the entire length of the Niagara River from Fort Erie to Niagara-on-the-Lake, including lands along the Horseshoe Falls and the Niagara Gorge, therefore the NPCA does not own any lands on this important stretch of land. NPCA owns parcels along the Welland River, Black Creek, Twenty Mile Creek, Four Mile Creek, Twelve Mile Creek, and many other watercourses which help to conserve the floodplain functions, reduce erosion, improve water quality, mitigate flooding, protect headwaters, and contribute to habitat for local species. Twelve Mile Creek is the only cold-water stream in the Niagara Peninsula watershed and the only one capable of supporting a population of native Brook Trout. Conservation areas that contain or are adjacent to and supporting the function of local watercourses include:

1. Ball's Falls
2. Canborough
3. Chippawa Creek
4. E.C Brown

5. Eight Mile Creek
6. Jordan Harbour
7. Lathrop
8. Louth
9. Oswego Creek
10. Port Davidson
11. Rockway
12. St. John's Centre
13. St. John's
14. Stevensville
15. Two Mile Creek
16. Virgil Dam and Reservoir

4.1.4 Great Lakes Shoreline

The shorelines along Lake Ontario and Lake Erie are dynamic places, as they are in a state of constant flux. Shoreline areas are made up of an accumulation of detritus material such as sediment that is continually being transported and deposited by wave action, currents and wind. The composition of sediments varies from clay and silt to sand and gravel, to cobbles or even boulders. As a result, shorelines are constantly being shaped and re-shaped. These changes can range from a period of a few hours to days or even years and decades in response to the changes in waves, winds, water levels currents and the movement and accumulation of ice.

The Lake Erie and Lake Ontario shorelines are both important linkages to the Great Lakes watershed, invaluable as the source of drinking water for millions of people and home to a large variety of wildlife, plants, and insects. NPCA owns multiple conservation areas along the north shore of Lake Erie, and one along the south shore of Lake Ontario. Conservation areas along the Great Lakes include important ecosystem types that are regionally and provincially rare—including sand dunes, beach/bar, alvar, and tallgrass prairie, each of these home to significant flora and fauna species. Most of the Lake Ontario shoreline in the NPCA's watershed has been identified as a Key Biodiversity Area (KBA) by Birds Canada, further establishing the importance of this area to local biodiversity and vulnerable species. Several NPCA conservation areas have Great Lakes shorelines in their boundaries and further support and enhance these sensitive ecosystems. These include:

1. Jordan Harbour (Lake Ontario)
2. Lakewood (Lake Erie)
3. Long Beach (Lake Erie)
4. Morgan's Point (Lake Erie)

Further, NPCA conservation areas within 2 kilometres of Great Lakes shorelines include:

1. Baird Estate (Lake Erie)
2. Beamer Memorial (Lake Ontario)
3. Eight Mile Creek (Lake Ontario)
4. Point Abino (Lake Erie)
5. Two Mile Creek (Lake Ontario)
6. Wainfleet Bog (Lake Erie)
7. Wainfleet Wetlands (Lake Erie)

4.1.5 Carolinian life zone

The far south portion of Ontario is known as the Carolinian life zone, stretching from Toronto to Windsor and widely believed to be one of the most biodiverse and threatened ecosystems in Canada. The entire Niagara Peninsula watershed is within this zone. According to Carolinian Canada Coalition, this zone is home to one-quarter of Canadians but represents only 0.25 per cent of the landmass.

Due to the increasing growth pressures in the zone, it also has more rare and endangered wildlife than any other life zone in Canada. Starting in 1984 and culminating in 2005 with the Carolinian Canada Signature Sites guide, Carolinian Canada worked with leading ecologists in Ontario as well as local organizations, landowners, and community groups to identify the most critical unprotected natural areas in the Carolinian life zone. Today, many of the 38 Signature Sites identified are protected, or partially protected. NPCA owns 11 conservation areas that help protect all six Carolinian Canada Signature Sites found within our watershed (name of signature site is in brackets):

1. Baird Estate (Point Abino Peninsula Sandland Forest)
2. Ball's Falls (Jordan Escarpment Valley)
3. Beamer Memorial (Grimsby-Winona Escarpment and Beamer Valley)
4. Canborough (Caistor Canborough Slough Forest)
5. Jordan Harbour (Jordan Escarpment Valley)
6. Lathrop (Fonthill Sandhill Valley)
7. Point Abino (Point Abino Peninsula Sandland Forest)
8. Ruigrok Tract (Caistor Canborough Slough Forest)
9. St. John's Centre (Fonthill Sandhill Valley)
10. St. Johns (Fonthill Sandhill Valley)
11. Willoughby Marsh (Willoughby Clay Plain)

4.1.6 Federal 30x30 target

In 2022, the Federal government set the goal of conserving 30 per cent of Canada’s land and water by 2030 to tackle biodiversity loss and climate change, alongside more than 190 countries at the United Nations Conference of the Parties (COP15) to the Convention on Biological Diversity becoming a target of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework and marking the biggest international conservation commitment to date. The Federal Department of Environment and Climate Change Canada has been tracking progress to meet this target and in July 2024 they released Canada’s 2030 Nature Strategy to “establish a shared vision and roadmap for halting and reversing biodiversity loss in Canada” to meet the goals and targets established by the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework.

The third target (T3) within this strategy—Canadian Protected and Conserved Lands 30 x 30—specifically outlines the status and next steps to achieve the 30 per cent protection goal, noting that this will be tracked by the Canadian Protected and Conserved Areas Database (CPCAD) and submitted to the World Database of Protected Areas annually. They note that the Federal government only manages about six per cent of the lands and freshwater in the country. Canada acknowledges that to meet T3, they will need to collaborate with many organizations and levels of government. To date, 12 NPCA conservation areas have met the required criteria to be counted towards T3 for a total of 1,622 hectares, and 16 additional conservation areas have been assessed and submitted for consideration. The 12 approved properties, evaluated in partnership with Ontario Nature, are all accessible to the public, except for Lathrop, and were assessed for their unique ecological characteristics and diverse ecosystems and determined to meet the strict national standards for biodiversity protection, qualifying them as Protected Areas. Not only do these areas contribute to local and provincial natural heritage and biodiversity conservation, but they are recognized as federally important for climate change mitigation and protection of species, habitats, ecosystem services, and people. Internationally, these lands also represent a collective effort towards global biodiversity conservation and a shared goal to combat the impacts of climate change.

As seen through the unique landscape in the Niagara Peninsula watershed—its important natural and cultural heritage areas, the Niagara and Onondaga Escarpments, several watercourses, wetlands, the bi-national Niagara River, and the shorelines for two Great Lakes— that NPCA conservation areas augment and protect natural heritage within the Niagara Peninsula watershed jurisdiction while contributing to provincial, federal and international conservation goals and targets.

4.2 Making Connections

NPCA is committed to making connections and integrating conservation areas with provincial, municipal, and other publicly accessible lands located within the Niagara Peninsula watershed. Map 5 provides an overview of lands owned by the province, local municipalities, and all publicly accessible lands within NPCA's jurisdiction to demonstrate how NPCA lands integrate and connect with these areas to support conservation and trail systems. It should be noted that the St. Lawrence Seaway lands (Federally owned), as well as Ontario Power Generation lands (Provincially owned) are not mapped for security and safety reasons though they are included in the write-up below because they are often connected natural corridors or contribute to natural heritage but not to public access.

4.2.1 Municipal Lands

There are 2 single-tier, 1 upper-tier and 12 lower-tier municipalities in the Niagara Peninsula watershed that own or manage publicly accessible lands. Most city-owned lands are open park areas with fewer natural features compared to NPCA Conservation areas but provide accessible greenspace for residents and sometimes act as linkages between natural areas and active transportation routes.

Some notable lands owned by local municipalities in the Niagara Peninsula watershed include Decew Falls and Morningstar Mill, Malcolmson Eco-Park, Fireman's Park, Fairview Cemetery, Port Robinson Eco-Park, Burgoyne Woods, and many more. Burgoyne Woods is an example of a larger municipal park, approximately 50 hectares, that includes both open space for picnics and activities, natural forested areas with walking trails, and a leash-free dog park.

In recent years, NPCA has launched the Trees for All program aimed at increasing the canopy cover in the Niagara Peninsula watershed through tree planting efforts with local municipalities and private landowners. Through this program, NPCA has collaborated with interested municipalities to identify significant sections of their lands that have the potential for restoration and naturalization efforts to work towards collective efforts and shared goals for increasing biodiversity, mitigating the impacts of climate change, reducing urban heat island effects, increasing natural cover, and overall improving the health of the watershed. This program exemplifies NPCA's commitment to working with other levels of government for the shared stewardship of the watershed ecosystem.

Based on the information in NPCA's Land Securement Strategy, the above-noted programs, and the map of municipal lands in the Niagara Peninsula watershed jurisdiction, there is a clear desire for municipal

partners and NPCA to work together to secure and protect additional lands that support the area's natural heritage system.

4.2.2 Provincial Lands

Within NPCA's jurisdiction, there are two provincially protected properties—Short Hills Provincial Park and Wainfleet Bog Conservation Reserve—in addition to lands owned by Ontario Power Generation and Niagara Parks. The Ontario Heritage Trust (OHT) has conserved several natural heritage properties within the Niagara Peninsula watershed.

4.2.2.1 Short Hills Provincial Park

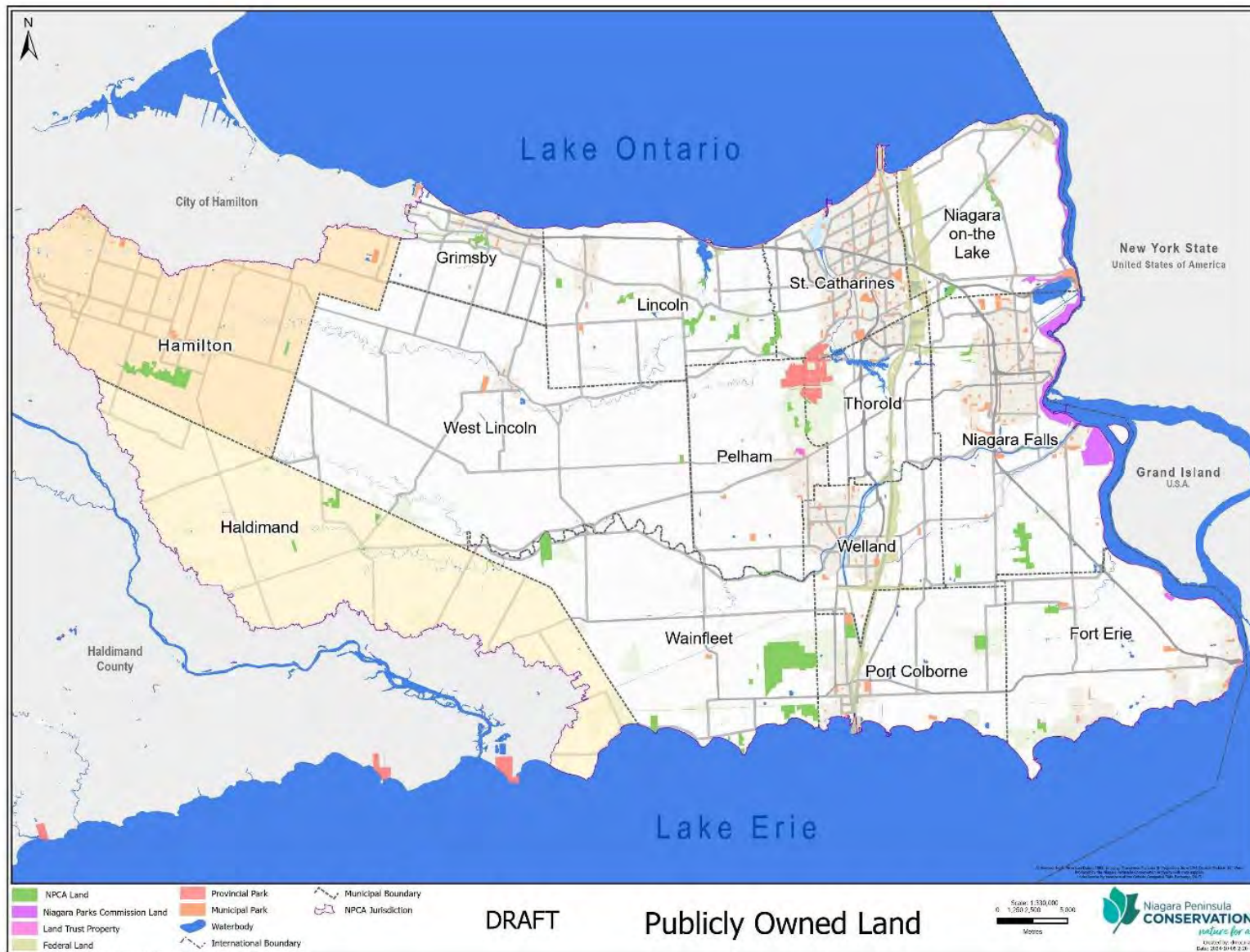
Short Hills Provincial Park is a 688-hectare natural environment class park on the southwest edge of St. Catharines, in the Regional Municipality of Niagara. The park provides protection for provincially significant life science and earth science features, notably Niagara Escarpment features and Carolinian forests. Short Hills is a Nodal Park in the NEPOSS. Nodal parks are intended to serve as key staging areas, interpretive centres for each section of the escarpment and major starting places for exploring other nearby parks.

Short Hills currently provides five scenic nature trails that are accessible to the public for the enjoyment of this park. It is designated as a non-operating park due to the limited amenities available to visitors. Short Hills is directly adjacent to the 34-hectare Camp Wetaskiwin which is owned and operated by Scouts Canada, and near another 20-hectare parcel owned by Hamilton Naturalists' Club known as the Short Hills Nature Sanctuary. It is further augmented by NPCA's St. John's Centre and connected through forested natural features to Lathrop and St. John's conservation area. NPCA conservation areas augments this Provincial Park by increasing the amount of protected area, widening the buffer and interior habitats, preserving important headwaters of Twelve Mile Creek, and maintaining forest cover to prevent erosion in this unique cold-water sub-watershed.

4.2.2.2 Wainfleet Bog Conservation Reserve

The Wainfleet Bog Conservation Reserve is a 230-hectare property that makes up part of the larger Wainfleet Bog PSW complex, the largest peatland area remaining within the Carolinian region of Ontario. "The ANSI portion of the reserve provides habitat for approximately 283 species of vascular plants. A total of 52 species of birds have been observed recently within the reserve or in the immediate vicinity, of which 30 species are believed to be breeding. Among the vascular plants, 11 species are provincially significant.

Map 5: Map of publicly-owned lands



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It is also habitat for three provincially significant species of reptiles (eastern massasauga rattlesnake, spotted turtle, and black rat snake) and five provincially significant birds (yellow-breasted chat, least bittern, tufted titmouse, short-eared owl, and white-eyed vireo).” (Ontario website: <https://www.ontario.ca/page/wainfleet-bog-conservation-reserve-management-statement>)

The Wainfleet Bog Conservation Reserve is an integral part of the larger Wainfleet bog protected area owned and managed by the NPCA and the Nature Conservancy of Canada. Together these lands protect and manage a very important natural feature that holds provincial, federal and local significance and supports the international biodiversity and climate change goals agreed to at COP15.

4.2.2.3 Niagara Parks

Niagara Parks (formerly known as Niagara Parks Commission) is a self-financed agency of the Provincial Ministry of Tourism, Culture, and Gaming. They own a total of 1325 hectares of land along an important stretch of the Niagara River, including the Niagara Gorge, the Horseshoe Falls, and Dufferin Islands, for 56 kilometres between Lake Erie and Lake Ontario with at least one third maintained and managed as natural area. In recent years, Niagara Parks has committed to increasing the native shoreline vegetation from 35 per cent cover to over 75 per cent cover and setting a goal to increase canopy cover to 35 per cent to further protect the shoreline and improve biodiversity on their lands. The Niagara River area has been identified as an Important Bird Biodiversity Area by Birds Canada, and represents important migratory, seasonal, and permanent habitat for many native species. The NPCA has worked in collaboration with Niagara Parks for many years to improve habitat and shoreline ecosystems along the Niagara River as part of the Niagara River Remedial Action Plan. The efforts by Niagara Parks and their partners, including NPCA, are complimentary to the restoration and management efforts for the Niagara River through the Remedial Action Plan, a bi-national agreement between Canada and the United States. Creating linkages or enhancing existing ones between NPCA and Niagara Parks greenspace, especially through opportunities like the Niagara Geopark, are excellent examples of the benefits of connecting public greenspace.

4.2.2.4 Ontario Power Generation

Ontario Power Generation (OPG) is wholly owned by the Province of Ontario. OPG lands are important natural areas, often along watercourses or canals, and OPG has worked with NPCA and other partners to restore and manage some sections for habitat and biodiversity improvements though most are not accessible to the public for safety and security reasons. One property is adjacent to Decew Falls—Morningstar Mill which is owned by the City of St. Catharines and adjacent to Short Hills Provincial Park. OPG lands, though they do not typically augment public access to natural areas, may offer opportunities for land transfers or management agreements that enhance greenspace access managed by NPCA. Even those completely inaccessible spaces still contribute to the natural cover, habitat value, and biodiversity goals of other organizations and agencies.

4.2.3 Federal Lands

There are a few parcels of federally owned land in NPCA's jurisdiction, most notable from a natural heritage perspective are lands known as Lakeshore properties or Niagara Shores, along the shoreline of Lake Ontario east of Four Mile Pond, in the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake administered by Parks Canada. This area is accessible to the public for natural and heritage appreciation and is designated a National Historic Site. There are small parcels of land that are federally owned in the watershed, mostly historic heritage sites related to the War of 1812 (e.g. Fort George National Historic Site). Additionally, there are federal lands owned by the St. Lawrence Seaway Authority that are contributing to natural heritage, biodiversity, and habitat locally, but most are not publicly accessible for safety and security reasons with the exception of sanctioned trails and walking paths. Federal sites also present opportunities for joint management or cooperative efforts to generate greater access to greenspace. Some sites may also present opportunities to augment natural heritage features through management or restoration of critical shoreline habitats like bluffs and Carolinian forests.

4.2.4 Land Trusts

The Nature Conservancy of Canada (NCC) owns one parcel of land called the Lathrop Nature Preserve, located in the Town of Pelham at the headwaters of Twelve Mile Creek, the only cold-water stream in the Niagara Peninsula watershed, and home to the only self-sustaining population of Brook Trout in Niagara. More than 100 years ago, a railway bisected the property creating a dam in Twelve Mile Creek and creating two artificial ponds on the property. Today, the former railway berm is a publicly accessible trail connecting the Lathrop property to Marlene Stewart Streit Park (municipally owned by the Town of Pelham), and the downtown core of Fonthill. The NCC Lathrop property is less than two kilometres from NPCA's St. John's Conservation Area and one of the two parcels that make up NPCA's Lathrop Conservation Area. There are many opportunities in this area to connect and create linkages between the NCC Lathrop property, NPCA's Lathrop parcels, Short Hills Provincial Park, and two other NPCA conservation areas—St. John's and St. John's Valley Centre.

Most land trusts are primarily focused on securing natural heritage lands to protect significant ecological features; therefore, it is important for NPCA to continue collaboration with land trusts to further its conservation goals through land securement. Several land trusts operate within the watershed jurisdiction of the NPCA including the Bruce Trail Conservancy (BTC), Niagara Land Trust (NLT), NCC, Ontario Heritage Trust (OHT), Head-of-the-Lake Land Trust (HLLT), managed by Hamilton Naturalists' Club, and Ontario Nature. Other land trusts that NPCA could work with to further augment protected areas in the watershed include Ducks Unlimited Canada, Niagara Escarpment Biosphere Conservancy, and Ontario Farmland

Trust. To date, land trusts have secured more than 240 hectares in NPCA's jurisdiction. This number is expected to rise but most land trusts are not actively securing more land in the watershed.

4.2.5 Trail Systems

Trails have been a defining feature of the Niagara Peninsula landscape since time immemorial and there is a significant network of trails throughout NPCA's jurisdiction that are owned and managed by municipalities, regional government, Bruce Trail Conservancy, or other organizations and agencies. National trends overwhelmingly indicate a growing demand for trails and in addition to the large network of sanctioned trails, there is likely a sizeable network of unsanctioned and unmanaged trails made by people who want additional opportunities to walk, hike, or bike in their community or neighbourhood.

The Bruce Trail is more than 890 kilometres long, with an additional 400 kilometres of side trails, that runs along the Niagara Escarpment from the Niagara River to Tobermory, managed and protected by the Bruce Trail Conservancy (BTC). There are two sections of their extensive trail network in the Niagara Peninsula watershed - the Niagara Section and the Iroquoia Section. The very first blaze of what was to become the Bruce Trail was placed on the farm of Derby Bucknall by members of the Niagara Escarpment Trail Council in 1962, which is now part of NPCA's Cave Springs Conservation Area. Many sections of the Bruce Trail run through NPCA conservation areas, or connect to NPCA hiking trails, while others are on private land or part of other protected areas like Short Hills Provincial Park. Since 2017, Plenty Canada, along with a network of allies, has been working on the Great Niagara Escarpment Indigenous Cultural Map to document, celebrate, and safeguard important Indigenous heritage resources along the Bruce Trail, and on the Greenbelt Indigenous Botanical Survey which both include NPCA conservation areas within the Niagara Escarpment.

Other significant trails in the Niagara Peninsula watershed include the Niagara River Recreational Trail owned and managed by Niagara Parks, the Great Lakes Waterfront Trail (Waterfront Trail), Trans Canada Trail, Welland Canals Parkway, the Friendship Trail, the Greenbelt Loop, Laura Secord Legacy Trail, Upper Canada Heritage Trail, and the Short Hills Provincial Park trail system. The Chippawa Trail—part of Trans Canada Trail, connects Niagara to Haldimand, Hamilton, and beyond.

The Welland Canals Parkway is an important connecting route between the south and north ends of the Niagara Peninsula running between Port Colborne and St. Catharines, with the Friendship Trail connecting the Welland Canals Trail to the Niagara River Recreational Trail.

Several important local trails are managed and maintained by local municipalities and provide important recreational opportunities for local community members and visitors to enjoy. Some are shorter local trails

while others are important arteries to larger trail networks like Bruce Trail or the Waterfront Trail or can be connections between neighbouring municipalities like the Friendship Trail between Fort Erie and Port Colborne, or the Steve Bauer Trail between Welland and Pelham.

Based on the assessment, and as demonstrated in Map 6 it is evident that there is an extensive network of trails in the Niagara Peninsula watershed, with potential for additional connections and linkages that could be supported by NPCA's Land Securement Strategy, Strategic Plan, CA Strategy goals, and partnerships with local municipalities, land trusts, conservation groups, and the Bruce Trail Conservancy. There is interest from several parties, including the Niagara Geopark, in establishing one map or source of information for all the trails in the Niagara Peninsula watershed and looking for opportunities to enhance and create connectivity.

4.2.6 NPCA Trails

TNPCA owns and manages more than 200 kilometres of trails on 24 properties. These trails are one of the most important ways NPCA connects the community to natural and cultural heritage—providing opportunities for recreation, active transportation, healthy living, education, community science, and nature appreciation.

Some of NPCA's conservation areas provide direct connections to other existing trail networks in the watershed. For example, the Trans Canada Trail includes a section of NPCA's Gord Harry Trail which connects to Wainfleet Wetlands Conservation Area, and overlaps with the Laura Secord Legacy Trail, Friendship Trail, and the Niagara River Recreational Trail. The Waterfront Trail section in NPCA's jurisdiction runs along the north shore of Lake Erie, up the Niagara River via the Niagara River Recreational Trail, and across the southern shore of Lake Ontario including a loop through Jordan Harbour and Ball's Falls conservation areas. The Waterfront Trail maps note important NPCA conservation areas that are near or along the trail including Wainfleet Wetlands, Morgan's Point, Gord Harry Trail, Long Beach, and the Wainfleet Bog.

Additionally, the Bruce Trail links several NPCA trails along the Niagara Escarpment and connects NPCA conservation areas to other notable trails in Short Hills Provincial Park, as well as Decew Falls—Morningstar Mill, and Mel Swart Park in Thorold.

From the CA Strategy trail connection and potential linkages assessment, it is clear that there are many opportunities for further connections between NPCA conservation areas and local trails and parks and these opportunities are supported by the goals and objectives of the CA Strategy, the Land Securement Strategy, and NPCA's Strategic Plan.

Map 6: Trail network in NPCA watershed



5.0 CONSERVATION AREA LAND USE CATEGORIES

Section 10 (1) 4. Of O. Reg 686/21 requires all Conservation Authorities to establish land use categories to classify lands in the land inventory based on the types of activities that are engaged in on each parcel of land or other matters of significance related to the lands.

To guide the management and use of all conservation areas, NPCA has adopted four land use categories for the CA Strategy, developed with guidance from Conservation Ontario and the Conservation Authorities Act. A primary land use category has been applied to each NPCA conservation area, and where necessary, subsequent secondary or tertiary categories will be added through management plans. It should be noted that while there are different land use categories, the overall goal for all NPCA conservation areas is protection and management, other uses such as active or passive recreation should be considered complementary to this overarching purpose and should not negatively impact that natural functions, biodiversity, or protection of these areas.

1. Conservation Area – Active Recreation

These conservation areas may contain facilities, infrastructure, specialized equipment, and staff support for activities and programs available to the public.

2. Conservation Area – Passive Recreation

These conservation areas may contain facilities and infrastructure that support passive recreation activities for an individual or group that only require minimal equipment and do not require staff support.

3. Natural Heritage

The primary land use is natural heritage protection or natural hazard conservation. These are conservation areas with limited facilities and access but may have hiking trails and small parking lots.

4. Administration Area

These conservation areas contain administration buildings for NPCA staff for land management, programs, and services but are not generally accessible or used by the public.

An overview of how the land use categories were applied in the NPCA Land Inventory, the number of properties owned by the NPCA, and examples of permitted uses or programs is provided below.

As noted in previous sections of the CA Strategy, the NPCA is committed to updating or creating management plans for all its conservation areas, as identified in NPCA's Strategic Plan. Following the approval of the CA Strategy, NPCA will continue the process of updating management plans for the management and operation of conservation areas based on the identified goals and objectives to ensure that tasks, budgets, projects and workplans are aligned with the guidance and framework of the CA Strategy.

Table 3: NPCA Conservation Area Land Use Categories

LAND USE CATEGORY	# OWNED	EXAMPLES OF PROGRAMS OR PERMITTED ACTIVITIES	NPCA CONSERVATION AREAS IN THIS CATEGORY
Conservation Area - Active Recreation	4	Education programs Camping Tree-top Trekking	Ball's Falls Binbrook Chippawa Creek Long Beach
Conservation Area - Passive Recreation	8	Hiking Birdwatching Nature observation Walking	Beamer Cave Springs Gord Harry Trail Morgan's Point Rockway Ruigrok Tract St. John's Woodend
Natural Heritage	27	Hiking Birdwatching Nature observation Walking	Baird Estate Binbrook Tract Canborough Comfort Maple E.C. Brown Eight Mile Creek Hedley Forest Humberstone Marsh Jordan Harbour Lakewood Lathrop Louth Mountainview Mud Lake OPG Oswego Creek Point Abino-McGowan Point Abino-Philips Port Davidson Shriner's Creek Smith-Ness Forest Stevensville Two Mile Creek

Administration Area	2	Land Care team HQ Education programs	Gainsborough St. Johns Centre

6.0 PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

A comprehensive communications and engagement strategy was developed in the early stages of the project, outlining a multi-channel approach and combination of traditional and digital tools and methods for informing and engaging a wide range of internal and external audiences.

NPCA sought to engage Indigenous partners and peoples, partner municipalities, residents, local interest groups, conservation area users, business owners, members of the agriculture, environment, planning, development, tourism, and education sectors, and the public within the Niagara Region, Haldimand County, and the City of Hamilton.

Communication and engagement tactics were tailored to these audiences and for each of the three phases of the CA Strategy project:

- Phase One (September): Initiate Process & Collect Feedback
- Phase Two (October-November): Check-in & Validate
- Phase Three (December): Launch & Release

Guided by the Strategic Plan, NPCA staff collaborated on a discussion paper that outlined the vision for the operation and maintenance of conservation areas and lands, as well as the process for drafting the strategy. The discussion paper was shared on the Get Involved NPCA portal, which served as the central hub offering supporting materials and resources available for review and download, and several online engagement tools.

- Survey Tool: A 10-minute survey was designed to gather community input on the proposed goals and objectives developed by NPCA staff.

- **FAQ Tool:** Identified 13 questions and provided clear and concise answers to these common inquiries and concerns from the community.
- **Questions:** This tool provided a space for community members to ask questions for staff response.

Key outreach efforts included a Public Information Centre (PIC), stakeholder meetings, direct emails, and targeted social media campaigns. The use of both in-person and online engagement opportunities helped ensure accessibility for diverse audiences and broad participation.

A strong focus was also placed on proactive communication, using media releases, social media, and print advertising to keep the public informed of the many opportunities for engagement. NPCA was successful in obtaining earned media exposure from key media partners such as Niagara Dailies, Village Media, and YourTV Niagara.

Key Tools & Tactics	Results (Ongoing until November 1)
Get Involved NPCA – online engagement portal	971 web visits
On-line Survey	54 responses
Hybrid Public Information Centre + video	23 registrations 9 attended virtually 4 attended in-person 57 video views

NPCA staff, the Board of Directors, and the Public Advisory Committee (PAC) played an essential role in shaping the Conservation Area Strategy. Staff, as the experts on the ground, had opportunities to share their insights and feedback through virtual meetings, emails, and discussions. Their daily experience and expertise served as a vital sounding board for the project. The Board and PAC were updated regularly, and they provided valuable input, with PAC members also helping to share information and encourage feedback within their communities and networks.

Survey & Results

The survey launched on September 6 to encourage the public, partners, staff, and any other interested parties to provide feedback and comments on the CA Strategy. The main goal of the survey was to obtain feedback on the five draft goals and objectives developed by the project team and informed by staff and

the Strategic Plan. Survey results show strong public support for the proposed goals as per breakdown below.

- Protection and Management (98% agree)
- Greenspace Access and Connectivity (93% agree)
- Sustainability and Enhancement (96% agree)
- Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation (91% agree)
- Engagement and Collaboration (91% agree)

Participants were asked to rank the goals from most important to least important (1 = most important, 5 = least important) and the results were as followed:

1. Protection and Management
2. Sustainability and Enhancement
3. Greenspace Access and Connectivity
4. Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation
5. Engagement and Collaboration

Participants identified additional themes like invasive species management, biodiversity protection, access to nature, and suggestions of limiting access at some conservation areas for the protection of natural areas and species.

Indigenous Engagement

Information about the CA Strategy was shared with local First Nations, Indigenous partners and community through email. The list of contacts included local First Nations whose Traditional Territory and/or Treaty Lands are within the NPCA watershed jurisdiction, as well as the Niagara Region Métis Council, Friendship Centres, Indigenous representatives on NPCA's PAC, and local Indigenous businesses and organizations. Outreach and engagement with these partners will continue as conservation area specific management plans are developed.

Public Information Centre

NPCA hosted a hybrid PIC on September 24, which was live-streamed and shared on the YouTube channel for individuals who were not able to attend. A presentation on the CA strategy was delivered focused on the process, requirements from the CA Act, timelines, programs and services, land use categories, and the draft goals and objectives. A question-and-answer period followed, and in-person and online attendees posed questions to NPCA staff. Attendees were encouraged to visit the Get Involved NPCA portal to fill out the survey and provide additional feedback after the meeting. A total of 23 people registered

for the PIC, with four people attending in person and 9 attending online. The YouTube live stream received 42 views to date.

Draft CA Strategy

Moving forward into Phase Three, the plan emphasizes a consistent feedback loop, with opportunities for a 3-week commenting period for the draft strategy, as well as involvement from NPCA's board and staff. The timeline culminates in a final strategy release, ensuring the community has been engaged and informed at each stage of the project.

Following the initial round of public engagement, NPCA analyzed and incorporated community feedback received through the survey, PAC member comments, and the PIC to refine the goals and objectives of the CA Strategy and proceed to a draft.

7.0 PERIODIC REVIEW

Ontario Regulation 686/21 requires a process for the periodic review and updating of the Conservation Area Strategy including procedures to ensure stakeholders, and the public are consulted during the review and update process. NPCA will review the CA Strategy within a year of a new Strategic Plan to determine if the goals and objectives need to be updated. If an updated CA Strategy is required, a public engagement and consultation process like the one described in Section 6 will be undertaken to ensure the watershed community is aware, informed, and involved in the opportunities to provide feedback and participate in the update of the CA Strategy. A review of the CA Strategy may also be required if directed by the NPCA Board of Directors.

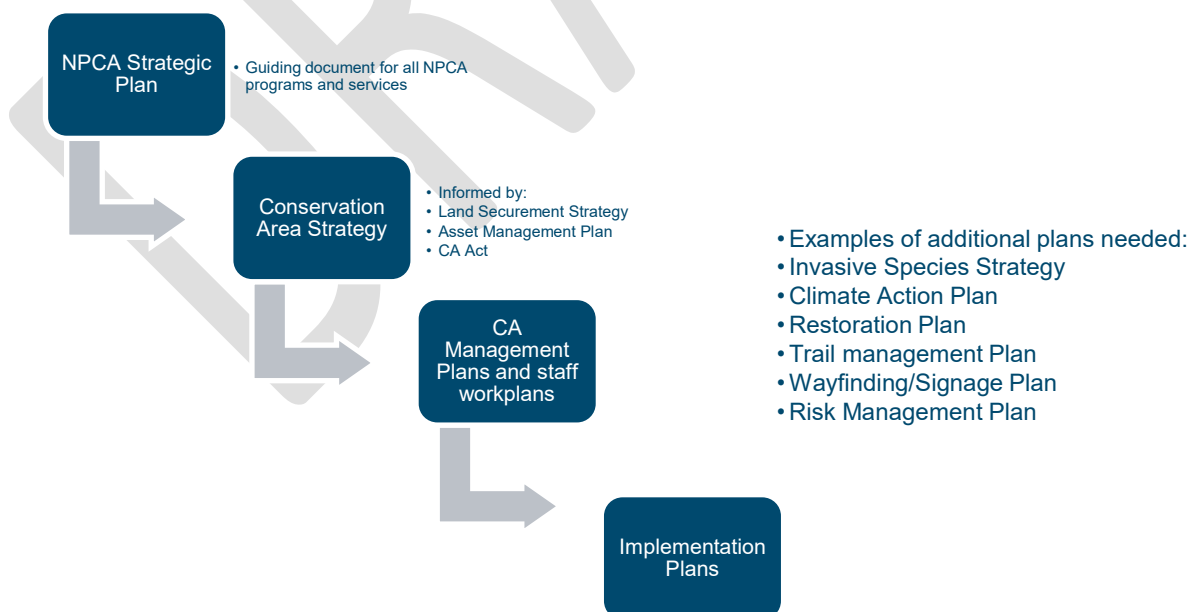
8.0 FUTURE CONSIDERATIONS

NPCA is an important environmental resource management organization - providing access to incredibly beautiful natural areas, leading educational and stewardship programs, and being a trusted source of scientific information and guidance to our partners and the community while protecting people and property from natural hazards, protecting drinking water sources, and restoring the watershed for the benefit of all who live here. NPCA recognizes that our organization must remain flexible and adaptable to change over the next decade. We continue to navigate and respond to changes to the CA Act, prioritizing the transition and legislative requirements as we continue to revitalize NPCA. Furthermore, we understand that the Niagara peninsula watershed will experience growth, intensification, and extreme weather

impacts, as well as a tremendous need for greenspace. We look forward to continuing to work with our communities, partner municipalities, conservation heroes, and our Board and staff to operationalize and implement the goals and objectives of the CA Strategy.

Collectively, NPCA Strategic Plan, Land Securement Strategy, and CA Strategy will guide our actions for accomplishing the goals and objectives outlined in this document while working toward our vision of *Nature for all*. Our mission to create a common ground for conservation-inspired action and accountability to nature is exemplified through our work every day as we develop management plans, action plans, and workplans to operationalize the CA Strategy.

The assessment of NPCA’s conservation areas in the context of the watershed natural heritage features, and the network of trails has highlighted the opportunities that exist to augment and create linkages between natural areas, trails, and other publicly accessible lands. These opportunities are supported and aligned with the NPCA Strategic Plan, Land Securement Strategy and the goals and objectives found in Section 2.2 of the CA Strategy. As NPCA moves towards implementation and the development of priority-specific plans (e.g. Invasive species strategy, restoration plans), these items will be prioritized based on future workplans, budgets and aligned with all relevant internal plans and policies (e.g. asset management plan). Development of management plans for each of the 41 conservation areas will take years to complete, but each will be guided by the goals and objectives of the CA Strategy. Each management plan will have their own engagement plan throughout the design and implementation stages to ensure that there is public support and understanding for each conservation area plan.



Continued commitment and support of the NPCA Board of Directors, staff, and all our partners in conservation will help to move us forward into the future to ensure a resilient watershed will be available for future generations, and for those that don't always have a voice at the table but deserve biodiverse and healthy natural areas to call home (plants, animals, insects). The NPCA is thankful for the continued friendship and collaboration with landowners, municipal partners, friends of groups, conservation clubs, watershed residents, conservation area users, local businesses, farmers, and school boards for working with us, being stewards of nature and the environment, and for your passion and for the appreciation you have for the beautiful Niagara Peninsula watershed, the life source for all who live here.

DRAFT

9.0 RESOURCES

Bruce Trail Conservancy - <https://brucetrail.org/>

Canadian Protected and Conserved Areas Database - <https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/services/national-wildlife-areas/protected-conserved-areas-database.html>

Conservation Authorities Act <https://www.ontario.ca/laws/statute/90c27>

Conservation Ontario Guidance on the Conservation Authority Mandatory Conservation Area Strategy, 2022. (Document)

Conservation Ontario <https://conservationontario.ca/>

Escarpment Biosphere Conservancy <https://escarpment.ca/>

Great Lakes Waterfront Trail - <https://waterfronttrail.org/>

Greenbelt Plan - <https://files.ontario.ca/greenbelt-plan-2017-en.pdf>

<https://pub-niagararegion.escribemeetings.com/filestream.ashx?DocumentId=33077>

Mississauga of the Credit First Nation - <https://mncfn.ca/>

Niagara Agriculture Profile report (Sept 2023)

Niagara Escarpment Biosphere Network <https://nebnetwork.org/>

Niagara Escarpment Plan - https://files.ontario.ca/appendix_-_niagara_escarpment_plan_2017_-_oc-10262017.pdf

Niagara Geopark <https://www.niagarageopark.com/>

Niagara Parks <https://www.niagaraparks.com>

NPCA Land Securement Strategy 2022-2032 (Document)

NPCA Strategic Plan 2021-2031 https://npca.ca/images/uploads/common/Strat_Plan_-_2021-31_Web.pdf

NPCA Watershed Report Card https://npca.ca/images/uploads/common/WRC_NPCA_2023_-_CO.pdf

Six Nations of the Grand River First Nation - <https://www.sixnations.ca/>

Trans Canada Trail <https://tctrail.ca>

DRAFT

Appendix 1: NPCA Inventory of Programs and Services

NPCA Inventory of Programs and Services								01-Sep-23	
Program or Service	Dept	Description	Funding Category (1, 2, 3)	Explanation of Funding Category	CA Act Reference	Cost Estimate	Funding Mechanism % of cost	MOU Required	Strategic Plan Ref
Natural Hazard Management									
Protecting people and properties from flood, erosion, and other natural hazards.									
Flood Forecasting and Warning	301					\$236,100	Municipal levy - 73% Provincial - 27%	N/A	Goal 1.1 Goal 1.2 Goal 2.3 Goal 4.2
		Delivery of accurate, real-time information for flood forecasting, warning, and messaging	1	Programs and services related to the risk of natural hazards	s.21.1(1)				
		Water quantity monitoring specific to flood forecasting and warning	1	Programs and services related to the risk of natural hazards	s.21.1(1)				
		Climate monitoring	1	Programs and services related to the risk of natural hazards	s.21.1(1)				
Flood and Erosion Management									
Note: Cost may vary; estimate does not capture ice management or flood and erosion mitigation projects. Current floodplain mapping is subsidized by self-generated revenues and federal funding grants.									
						\$347,794	Municipal levy - 70% Provincial - 30% Self-generated - TBD		Goal 1.1 Goal 1.2 Goal 2.3 Goal 4.2
		Management and monitoring of riverine erosion across the watershed jurisdiction	1	Programs and services related to the risk of natural hazards	s.21.1(1)			N/A	
		Ice management (new)	1	Programs and services related to the risk of natural hazards	s.21.1(1)			N/A	
		Floodplain mapping	1	Programs and services related to the risk of natural hazards	s.21.1(1)			N/A	
		Flood and erosion risk and mitigation studies (new; other than shoreline)	1	Programs and services related to the risk of natural hazards	s.21.1(1)			N/A	
		Operation and maintenance of NPCA flood and erosion control infrastructures	1	Programs and services related to the risk of natural hazards	s.21.1(1)			N/A	
		Flood and erosion hazard mitigation projects (NPCA owned and upper/single tier)	1	Programs and services related to the risk of natural hazards	s.21.1(1)			N/A	
		Flood and erosion hazard mitigation projects - Fee for Service	2,3	Services provided under MOU or other agreement in support of municipal flood and erosion control and remediation projects	s.21.1.1 s.21.1.2			MOU required on a project basis	

NPCA Inventory of Programs and Services

01-Sep-23

Program or Service	Dept	Description	Funding Category (1, 2, 3)	Explanation of Funding Category	CA Act Reference	Cost Estimate	Funding Mechanism % of cost	MOU Required	Strategic Plan Ref
Shoreline Hazard Management	329					\$196,178	Municipal levy - 100% Self-generated - TBD		Goal 1.2 Goal 2.2
		Shoreline management plans update	1	Programs and services related to the risk of natural hazards	s.21.1(1)			N/A	
		Integration of natural hazard management with overall shoreline climate resiliency and watershed resource management to respond to climate change risk and vulnerability (new)	1	Programs and services related to the risk of natural hazards	s.21.1(1)			N/A	
		Flood and erosion hazard mitigation projects (NPCA owned and upper/single tier)	1	Programs and services related to the risk of natural hazards	s.21.1(1)			N/A	
		Flood and erosion hazard mitigation projects - Fee for Service	2,3	Services provided under MOU or other agreement in support of municipal flood and erosion control and remediation projects	s.21.1.1 s.21.1.2			MOU required on a project basis	
Environmental Planning and Policy	345					\$429,145	Municipal levy - 56% Provincial 3% Self-generated - 41%		Goal 1.2 Goal 2.1 Goal 5.3
		Review and commenting on proposals, applications, or other matters under the Federal and Provincial Environmental Assessment Acts related to s. 28 and natural hazards	1	Programs and services related to the risk of natural hazards	s.21.1(1)			N/A	
		Review and process s. 28 permit applications related to public infrastructure (e.g. Hydro One, Enbridge, Bell, municipal, DART protocol)	1	Programs and services related to the risk of natural hazards	s.21.1(1)			N/A	
		Class Environmental Assessment for Flood and Erosion Control Projects	2	Services provided under MOU or other agreement in support of municipal flood and erosion control and remediation projects	s.21.1.1			MOU required on a project basis	
Planning and Permitting	361					\$622,759	Municipal levy - 40% Provincial - 4% Self-generated - 56%	N/A	Goal 1.2 Goal 2.1 Goal 5.3
		Review and commenting on proposals, applications, or other matters under the Planning Act, Niagara Escarpment Act, and Aggregates Resources Act related to s. 28 and natural hazards	1	Programs and services related to the risk of natural hazards	s.21.1(1)				
		Review and process s. 28 permits (not related to public infrastructure)	1	Programs and services related to the risk of natural hazards	s.21.1(1)				
Compliance and Enforcement	371	Investigation and enforcement of regulatory compliance under s.28	1	Programs and services related to the risk of natural hazards	s.21.1(1)	\$643,375	Municipal levy - 40% Self-generated - 60%	N/A	Goal 1.2
Natural Hazard Management - Total						\$2,475,351			
Watershed Resource Management and Climate Change		Programs and services to understand the current conditions, cumulative impacts, and risks to watersheds. Strategies and measures to protect, enhance, and restore watersheds toward creating healthy and climate resilient watersheds.							
Watershed-based Resource Management Strategy	NEW	Development and implementation of the strategy, including compiling existing resources, management plans, watershed plans, studies, and data	1	Programs and services related to the risk of natural hazards	s.21.1(1)	NEW	Municipal levy - 100%	N/A	Goal 1.1 Goal 1.2 Goal 1.3 Goal 2.2 Goal 4.1 Goal 4.2

NPCA Inventory of Programs and Services

01-Sep-23

Program or Service	Dept	Description	Funding Category (1, 2, 3)	Explanation of Funding Category	CA Act Reference	Cost Estimate	Funding Mechanism % of cost	MOU Required	Strategic Plan Ref
Watershed and Sub-watershed Resources Planning	343					\$375,210	Municipal levy - 59% New MOU's - 41%		Goal 1.1 Goal 2.2 Goal 4.1
		Updates to NPCA watershed plans	1	Programs and services as determined by NPCA related to watershed-based resource management	s.21.1.2			N/A	
		Sub-watershed-level assessments and analyses (e.g., water budgets, catchment assessment, non-point source modelling, groundwater modelling, and systematic conservation monitoring)	1	Programs and services as determined by NPCA related to watershed-based resource management	s.21.1.2				N/A
		Determine the cumulative watershed impacts from natural resource inventory and resource assessment studies	1	Programs and services as determined by NPCA related to watershed-based resource management	s.21.1.2				N/A
		Develop and maintain recommendations and guidelines to assist in the management of watershed natural resources	1	Programs and services as determined by NPCA related to watershed-based resource management	s.21.1.2				N/A
		Provide data and technical analysis to inform sub-watershed and quaternary planning for growth areas	2	Municipal programs and services provided under MOU or other agreement in support of municipal sub-watershed and quaternary planning	s.21.1.1				MOU required on a project basis
Water Monitoring (surface and groundwater)	265 217					\$388,600	Municipal levy - 50% Self-generated - 50%		Goal 1.1 Goal 1.3 Goal 4.1 Goal 4.2
		Provincial water quality monitoring network	1	Programs and services related to the risk of natural hazards as it relates to the Provincial monitoring programs	s. 21.1(1)			N/A	
		Local water quality monitoring program	3	Programs and services as determined by NPCA related to water monitoring beyond the Provincial monitoring programs	s.21.1.2				MOU for each benefiting municipality required
		Benthic macroinvertebrate monitoring program	3	Programs and services as determined by NPCA related to water monitoring beyond the Provincial monitoring programs	s.21.1.2				MOU for each benefiting municipality required
		Stream temperature monitoring program	3	Programs and services as determined by NPCA related to water monitoring beyond the Provincial monitoring programs	s.21.1.2				MOU for each benefiting municipality required
		Provincial groundwater monitoring network	1	Programs and services related to the risk of natural hazards as it relates to the Provincial monitoring programs	s. 21.1(1)				N/A
		Local groundwater monitoring network	3	Programs and services as determined by NPCA related to water monitoring beyond the Provincial monitoring programs	s.21.1.2				MOU for each benefiting municipality required

NPCA Inventory of Programs and Services

01-Sep-23

Program or Service	Dept	Description	Funding Category (1, 2, 3)	Explanation of Funding Category	CA Act Reference	Cost Estimate	Funding Mechanism % of cost	MOU Required	Strategic Plan Ref
		Water quality monitoring on NPCA-owned lands in support of land management plans	1	Programs and services related to the conservation and management of lands owned or controlled by the NPCA	s. 21.1(1)			N/A	
		Water quality monitoring in support to municipal programs and services (e.g. stormwater quality monitoring)	2	Municipal programs and services provided under MOU or other agreement related to water quality monitoring	s.21.1.1			MOU required on a project basis	
		Well water decommissioning program	3	Programs and services as determined by NPCA related to water monitoring beyond the Provincial monitoring programs	s.21.1.2			MOU for each benefiting municipality required	
Ecological Monitoring	119					\$116,150	Municipal levy - 100%		Goal 1.1 Goal 1.4 Goal 2.2
		Flora, fauna, and wetlands monitoring in support of watershed resource management programs and policy development	3	Programs and services as determined by NPCA related to water monitoring beyond the Provincial monitoring programs	s. 21.1.2			N/A	
		Ecological monitoring on NPCA-owned lands in support of land management plans	1	Programs and services related to the conservation and management of lands owned or controlled by the NPCA	s. 21.1(1)			N/A	
		Ecological monitoring in support to municipal programs and services (e.g. planning for growth areas)	2	Municipal programs and services provided under MOU or other agreement related to ecological monitoring	s.21.1.1			MOU required on a project basis	
Ecological Restoration	227					\$438,270	Municipal levy - 75 % Self-generated - 25% Cost apportionment MOU's required		Goal 1.3 Goal 1.4 Goal 3.2 Goal 4.1 Goal 4.2
		Internal restoration services related to conservation area land management plans	1	Programs and services related to the conservation and management of lands owned or controlled by the NPCA	S.21.1(1)			N/A	
		Internal restoration services to support NPCA programs and services (e.g. review of s. 28 permit applications and compliance and enforcement, informing land securement strategy implementation)	1	Programs and services related to the risk of natural hazards	S.21.1(1)			N/A	
		Watershed restoration services to lead and support external ecological restoration projects, plans and strategies with municipal and private partners, including habitat creation and enhancement projects, Class Environmental Assessment (EA) flood and erosion control projects, invasive species management, and other fee-for-service opportunities.	2	Municipal programs and services provided under MOU or other agreement related to ecological restoration programs	s.21.1.1			MOU required on a project basis	
		Restoration grant program	3	Programs and services as determined by NPCA related to ecological restoration	s.21.1.2			MOU for each benefiting municipality required	

NPCA Inventory of Programs and Services

01-Sep-23

Program or Service	Dept	Description	Funding Category (1, 2, 3)	Explanation of Funding Category	CA Act Reference	Cost Estimate	Funding Mechanism % of cost	MOU Required	Strategic Plan Ref
Community Engagement and Stewardship	123					\$168,905	Municipal levy - 75% Self-generated - 25%		Goal 3.2 Goal 4.1 Goal 4.2
		Agricultural Stewardship Program for working with agricultural communities with an emphasis on best management practices, water quality improvement projects, outreach & education, promoting habitat restoration opportunities, and providing technical expertise to the agricultural community	3	Programs and services as determined by NPCA related to community engagement and stewardship	s.21.1.2			MOU for each benefiting municipality required	
		Urban Stewardship Program to encourage resilience to climate change while increasing volunteerism and inspiring larger action. May include small-scale habitat projects, community park naturalization, rain gardens and other demonstration projects, schoolyard greening, and stream/park cleanup as well as increasing the urban tree canopy cover especially in vulnerable, low nature areas.	3	Programs and services as determined by NPCA related to community engagement and stewardship	s.21.1.2			MOU for each benefiting municipality required	
		Corporate Stewardship Program to create opportunities for private corporations and businesses to engage their staff in fulfilling their corporate social responsibility goals, including reducing their environmental footprint. Activities may include invasive species removal, stream/park cleanups, tree	3	Programs and services as determined by NPCA related to community engagement and stewardship	s.21.1.2			MOU for each benefiting municipality required	
		Community outreach, engagement, and partnership building, including volunteer management	3	Programs and services as determined by NPCA related to community engagement and stewardship	s.21.1.2			MOU for each benefiting municipality required	
		Outreach engagement and stewardship projects - fee for service	2	Services provided under MOU or other agreement	s.21.1.1			MOU for each benefiting municipality required	
Regulatory Mapping Technical Studies	125	Technical studies to support NPCA hazard management functions (e.g. Ecological land classification mapping; S.28 regulation mapping of wetlands, watercourses, and karst; Digital terrain elevation model)	1	Programs and services related to the risk of natural hazards	s.21.1(1)	\$451,263	Municipal levy - 100%	N/A	Goal 1.1 Goal 1.2 Goal 1.3 Goal 2.2 Goal 5.2
Climate Change Resilience	303 133					NEW	Municipal Levy - 75% Self Generated - 25%		Goal 1.1 Goal 1.2 Goal 2.3
		Climate change research to support climate change forecasting, watershed vulnerability and risk assessments, and watershed impact assessment and	1	Programs and services related to the risk of natural hazards	s.21.1(1)			N/A	
		Emerging climate change research and practice to support municipal programs and services (e.g., natural assets inventory)	2	Municipal programs and services provided under MOU or other agreement related to climate change resilience	s.21.1.1			MOU required on a project basis	
Watershed Resource Management and Climate Change – Total						\$1,938,398			

NPCA Inventory of Programs and Services

01-Sep-23

Program or Service	Dept	Description	Funding Category (1, 2, 3)	Explanation of Funding Category	CA Act Reference	Cost Estimate	Funding Mechanism % of cost	MOU Required	Strategic Plan Ref
Other Watershed Related Programs									
Drinking Source Water Protection	205	Source Protection Authority role as set out in the Clean Water Act, 2006 Provision of risk management services to municipalities throughout the Source Protection Region on a fee-for-service basis (currently not offered by NPCA – cost not included) Implementation of best management practices for private drinking systems (future pending provincial guidance)	1	Programs and services related to the NPCA's duties, functions and responsibilities as a source protection authority under the Clean Water Act, 2006.	s.21.1(1)	\$147,595	Agreements - 100%	N/A	Goal 1.1 Goal 4.1
Niagara River Remedial Action Plan	241	Coordination of the multi-stakeholder initiative to protect and restore the Niagara River through agreements with Canada and Ontario	3	Programs and service related to NPCA's agreement with Federal and Provincial governments to coordinate and implement the Niagara River Remedial Action Plan	s.21.1.2	\$170,000	Agreements - 100%	N/A	Goal 1.3 Goal 4.1
Other	TBD	New projects/programs funded through external funding sources that benefit partners and the watershed 2 Billion Trees - Natural Resources Canada	3	Programs and services as determined by NPCA	s.21.1.2	\$50,000	Agreements - 100%	N/A	Goal 1.3 Goal 3.2 Goal 4.1
Other watershed-related programs - Total						\$367,595			
Conservation Authority Lands and Conservation Areas		Manage 2,982 ha of lands, including 41 conservation areas essential to watershed management, environmental protection, cultural heritage, and recreation.							
Section 29 Enforcement and Compliance	489	Conservation areas regulations enforcement and compliance	1	Programs and services related to the conservation and management of lands owned or controlled by the NPCA	s. 21.1(1)	\$110,800	Municipal levy - 100%	N/A	Goal 1.4
Active Recreation Programs (conservation areas)	401, 403, 405, 407 395, 411	Day use for conservation areas Other services (e.g., weddings, facility rentals, events and retail)	Camping 3	Programs and services as determined by NPCA related to active recreation programs in Conservation Areas	s.21.1.2	\$1,728,425	Self-generated - 100%	N/A	Goal 1.4 Goal 3.1 Goal 3.2 Goal 3.3 Goal 3.4 Goal 6.2
Education Programs	413, 487	Education programs and day camps heritage programs	Cultural 2,3	Programs and services as determined by NPCA related to the delivery of education and cultural heritage programs Municipal programs and services provided under MOU or other agreement	s.21.1.1 s.21.1.2	\$173,658	Self-generated - 100%	N/A	Goal 1.4 Goal 3.1 Goal 3.2 Goal 3.3 Goal 3.4 Goal 6.2
Land Management - Other Agencies	NEW	Land and facilities' management, maintenance and operations for other agencies (Federal, Provincial, Regional, Local)	2,3	Programs and services as determined by NPCA related to land and facilities' management Municipal programs and services provided under MOU or other agreement related to land and facilities' management.	s.21.1.1 s.21.1.2	NEW	Self-generated - 100%	MOU required on a project basis	Goal 1.4 Goal 3.1 Goal 3.2 Goal 3.3 Goal 3.4 Goal 6.2

NPCA Inventory of Programs and Services

01-Sep-23

Program or Service	Dept	Description	Funding Category (1, 2, 3)	Explanation of Funding Category	CA Act Reference	Cost Estimate	Funding Mechanism % of cost	MOU Required	Strategic Plan Ref
Land Care Program (conservation areas)	427	Management and maintenance of conservation areas (e.g., gates, fencing, signage, landscaping, pedestrian bridges, trails, parking lots, and roadways)	1	Programs and services related to the conservation and management of lands owned or controlled by the NPCA	s. 21.1(1)	\$1,014,585	Municipal levy - 100%	N/A	Goal 1.4
		Passive recreation	Risk						Goal 3.1
		Management	Hazard						Goal 3.3
		tree management	Maintenance of						
		heritage buildings	Forest Management						
Land Acquisition and Disposition	TBD					Varies	Reserves New MOU's		Goal 1.4 Goal 3.1
		Strategic acquisition of properties related to mitigating the risk of natural hazards in accordance with NPCA Land Securement Strategy	1	Programs and services related to the risk of natural hazards	s.21.1(1)			N/A	
		Strategic cost-shared acquisition of properties with lower-tier municipal partners and other agencies	2	Municipal programs and services provided under MOU or other agreement related to acquisition of non-natural hazard properties	s.21.1.1			MOU with municipality as required	
		Strategic acquisition of properties in accordance with NPCA Land Securement Strategy	3	Programs and services as determined by NPCA related to the implementation of the NPCA Land Securement Strategy	s.21.1.2			MOU for each benefiting municipality required	
Land Lease and Agreement Management	TBD					\$51,633	Self-generated - 100%		Goal 1.4
		Management of current and future land leases and property agreements with specific municipalities	2	Municipal programs and services provided under MOU or other agreement related to land leases and property agreements	s.21.1.1			MOU with municipality as required	
		Management of current and future land leases and property agreements (general)	3	Programs and services as determined by NPCA related to land leases and property agreements	s.21.1.2			MOU for each benefiting municipality required	
Land Management Planning	357					NEW	TBD	N/A	Goal 1.4
		Conservation Area Land Inventory and Conservation Area Strategy – new requirement	1	Programs and services related to the conservation and management of lands owned or controlled by the NPCA	s.21.1(1)				
		Conservation Area Management Planning	1	Programs and services related to the conservation and management of lands owned or controlled by the NPCA	s.21.1(1)				
Conservation Authority Lands & Conservation Areas - Total						\$3,079,101			

NPCA Inventory of Programs and Services

01-Sep-23

Program or Service	Dept	Description	Funding Category	Explanation of Funding Category	CA Act Reference	Cost Estimate	Funding Mechanism % of cost	MOU Required	Strategic Plan Ref
Enabling Services									
Support for all CA departments, the Board of Directors, member municipalities and the general public enables NPCA to operate in an accountable, transparent, efficient and effective manner.									
Corporate Services	101	Administrative support	Human	Programs and services related to the NPCA's duties, functions and responsibilities prescribed by the regulations (O. Reg. 402/22 comes into force July 1, 2023)	s.21.1(1)	\$1,489,772	Municipal levy - 90% Self Generated - 10%	N/A	Goal 5.1
	107	resources (incl health and safety)	Property taxes						Goal 5.2
	127	and occupancy costs	Oversight of programs						Goal 5.3
	153	and policies	Operating costs not directly related to any specific program or service (e.g., overhead)						Goal 5.4
		Records management		Goal 6.1					
		Grant management		Goal 6.2					
Financial Services	105	Annual budget		Programs and services related to the NPCA's duties, functions and responsibilities prescribed by the regulations (O. Reg. 402/22 comes into force July 1, 2023)	s.21.1(1)	\$360,418	Municipal levy - 100%	N/A	Goal 5.2
		Accounts payable and receivable							Goal 5.3
		Procurement	Payroll						Goal 6.1
		Financial analytics and reporting							Goal 6.2
		Audit							
		Admininstration of reserves and investments							
Information Management and Technology	131	Digital technology, licensing fees, data/voice services		Programs and services related to the NPCA's duties, functions and responsibilities prescribed by the regulations (O. Reg. 402/22 comes into force July 1, 2023)	s.21.1(1)	\$544,924	Municipal levy - 100%	N/A	Goal 1.1
	109	Management and integration of data for geographic information system (GIS)	Support open						Goal 1.2
		data portal and science	Mapping and						Goal 1.3
		GIS support for watershed resources planning and natural hazards management	Support						Goal 2.2
		development and implementation of watershed-based resource management strategy		Goal 5.2					
				Goal 5.3					
Governance and Corporate Administration	103	Support to governance and corporate administration	Board	Programs and services related to the NPCA's duties, functions and responsibilities prescribed by the regulations (O. Reg. 402/22 comes into force July 1, 2023)	s.21.1(1)	\$573,191	Municipal levy - 100%	N/A	Goal 5.2
	150	governance	Public						Goal 5.3
		Advisory Committee and ad-hoc committees	Strategic						
		planning/reporting and CAO oversight							
Communications, Marketing and Public Relations	111	Marketing and promotion		Programs and services related to the NPCA's duties, functions and responsibilities prescribed by the regulations (O. Reg. 402/22 comes into force July 1, 2023)	s.21.1(1)	\$401,904	Municipal levy - 100%	N/A	All
		Media relations	Strategic						
		plan	Public and						
		stakeholder consultation							
Vehicles and Equipment	801	Fleet and equipment required to support and maintain NPCA operations, including capital purchases, fuel, licences, repairs, and maintenance		Programs and services related to the NPCA's duties, functions and responsibilities prescribed by the regulations (O. Reg. 402/22 comes into force July 1, 2023)	s.21.1(1)	\$259,400	Municipal levy - 100%	N/A	All

NPCA Inventory of Programs and Services

01-Sep-23

Program or Service	Dept	Description	Funding Category (1, 2, 3)	Explanation of Funding Category	CA Act Reference	Cost Estimate	Funding Mechanism % of cost	MOU Required	Strategic Plan Ref
Asset Management	153					\$1,119,246	Municipal levy - 57%		Goal 1.2
	155						Self-generated - 40%		Goal 1.4
		Capital costs for flood infrastructure for conservation land infrastructure	Capital costs	1	Programs and services related to the risk of natural hazards Programs and services related to the NPCA's duties, functions and responsibilities prescribed by the regulations (O. Reg. 402/22 comes into force July 1, 2023)		s.21.1(1)		N/A
		Asset management planning (including depreciation) Asset management software and equipment		3	Programs and services as determined by NPCA related to asset management		s.21.1.2		MOU for each benefiting municipality required
Enabling services - Total						\$4,748,855			
Grand Total						\$12,609,300			



TOWN OF PETAWAWA

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October 25, 2024

Premier Doug Ford
Legislative Building
Queen's Park
Toronto, ON M7A 1A1
Via email: premier@ontario.ca

Premier Ford:

RE: Ontario Provincial Police Costs 2025

Please be advised that at its meeting of October 21, 2024, Council of the Corporation of the Town of Petawawa endorsed the following resolution:

MOVED BY: James Carmody
SECONDED BY: Theresa Sabourin

That Council of the Corporation of the Town of Petawawa supports Resolution No. 229 of the Municipality of Tweed and further calls on the Ontario Government to immediately implement sustainable funding for small rural municipalities by reabsorbing the cost of the Ontario Provincial Police Force back into the provincial budget with no cost recovery to municipalities;

And further, that Council direct staff to circulate this resolution to Premier Doug Ford, Minister of Solicitor General, Minister of Finance, and to the Association of Municipalities of Ontario and all Municipalities in Ontario.

CARRIED

The Town of Petawawa appreciates the Province's attention to the financial challenges faced by small rural municipalities and looks forward to a collaborative solution.

Sincerely,

Colin Howard, Dipl.M.M., Bus.Admin.
Director of Legislative Services/Clerk

Encl: Municipality of Tweed Resolution No. 229

cc: The Honourable Michael Kerzner, Solicitor General
The Honourable Peter Bethlenfalvy, Minister of Finance
The Association of Municipalities of Ontario
All Municipalities of Ontario
Neil Nicholson, Mayor, Township of Whitewater Region

Municipality of Tweed Council Meeting
Council Meeting



Resolution No. 229
Title: Councillor P. Valiquette
Date: Tuesday, April 23, 2024

Moved by P. Valiquette
Seconded by J. Palmateer

WHEREAS it is apparent that the Ontario Government has overlooked the needs of small rural Ontario;
AND WHEREAS Ontario's small rural municipalities face insurmountable challenges to fund both upfront investments and ongoing maintenance of their capital assets including roads, bridges, water/wastewater and municipally owned buildings including recreational facilities, libraries and other tangible capital assets;

AND WHEREAS small rural Ontario's operating needs consume the majority of property tax revenue sources;

AND WHEREAS small rural municipalities (of 10,000 people or less) are facing monumental infrastructure deficits that cannot be adequately addressed through property tax revenue alone;

AND WHEREAS in 2015 the provincial government moved to standardized billing for all non-contract J.P.P. (5.1) locations;

AND WHEREAS the Ontario Government has committed \$9.1 billion to Toronto alone to assist with operating deficits and the repatriation of the Don Valley and Gardner Expressway; and \$534 million to Ottawa for the repatriation of Hwy 174;

AND WHEREAS the annual cost of the Ontario Provincial Police, Municipal Policing Bureau for small rural non-contract (5.1) municipalities is approximately \$428 million;

AND WHEREAS this annual cost is significantly less than the repatriation costs of the Gardiner Express Way, the Don Valley Parkway and Highway 174 (Ottawa Region) but provides a greater impact to the residents of the Province overall;

AND WHEREAS this will afford relief to small rural municipalities for both infrastructure and operating needs while having a minimal impact on the provincial budget;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT The Municipality of Tweed call on the Ontario Government to immediately implement sustainable funding for small rural municipalities by reabsorbing the cost of the Ontario Provincial Police Force back into the provincial budget with no cost recovery to municipalities;

AND FURTHER, that Council direct staff to circulate this resolution to Premier Doug Ford (premier@ontario.ca), Minister of Solicitor General, Minister of Finance, and to the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (amo@amo.on.ca) and all Municipalities in Ontario.

Carried

Council Members

Mayor Neil Nicholson
Deputy Mayor Cathy Regier

Councillors:
Mark Bell
Michael Moore
Chris Olmstead
Connie Tabbert
Joey Trimm

Certified True Copy

Wednesday, October 16, 2024

Re: Resolution - OPP Notice of Motion for funding support - Municipality of Tweed

At its meeting of October 16, 2024, the Council of the Township of Whitewater Region adopted the following resolution:

WHEREAS it is apparent that the Ontario Government has overlooked the needs of small rural Ontario;

AND WHEREAS Ontario's small rural municipalities face insurmountable challenges to fund both upfront investments and ongoing maintenance of their capital assets including roads, bridges, water/ wastewater and municipally owned buildings including recreational facilities, libraries and other tangible capital assets:

AND WHEREAS small rural Ontario's operating needs consume the majority of property tax revenue sources;

AND WHEREAS small rural municipalities (of 10,000 people or less) are facing monumental

infrastructure deficits that cannot be adequately addressed through property tax revenue alone;

AND WHEREAS in 2015 the provincial government moved to standardized billing for all non-contract

D.P.P. (5.1) locations;

AND WHEREAS the Ontario Government has committed \$9.1 billion to Toronto alone to assist with operating deficits and the repatriation of the Don Valley and Gardner Expressway; and \$534 million to

Ottawa for the repatriation of Hwy 174;

(613) 646-2282

P.O. Box 40,
44 Main Street
Cobden, ON
K0J 1K0

whitewaterregion.ca

AND WHEREAS the annual cost of the Ontario Provincial Police, Municipal Policing Bureau for small rural non-contract (5.1) municipalities is approximately \$428 million;

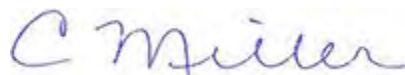
AND WHEREAS this annual cost is significantly less than the repatriation costs of the Gardiner Express Way, the Don Valley Parkway and Highway 174 (Ottawa Region) but provides a greater impact to the residents of the Province overall;

AND WHEREAS this will afford relief to small rural municipalities for both infrastructure and operating needs while having a minimal impact on the provincial budget;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT The Township of Whitewater Region call on the Ontario Government to immediately implement sustainable funding for small rural municipalities by reabsorbing the cost of the Ontario Provincial Police Force back into the provincial budget with no cost recovery to municipalities: **AND FURTHER,** that Council direct staff to circulate this resolution to Premier Doug Ford (premier@ontario.ca), Minister of Solicitor General, Minister of Finance, and to the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (amo@amo.on.ca), [MPP John Yakabuski \(john.yakabusko@pc.ola.org\)](mailto:john.yakabusko@pc.ola.org) and all Municipalities in Ontario.

Carried as amended - Resolution #2024 - 5187

Sincerely,



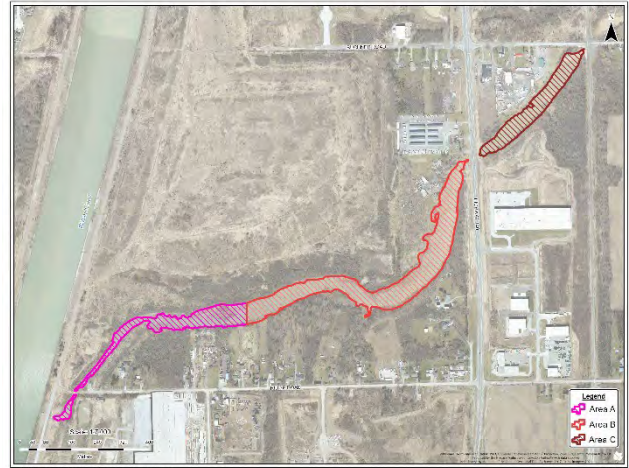
Carmen Miller
Clerk/CEMC

The Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority (NPCA) in collaboration with Environment and Climate Change Canada and the Ontario Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks, is undertaking a project to determine contaminated sediment remediation options for a portion of Lyons Creek East (LCE) in Welland, Ontario.

The project area is located east of the Welland Canal to Buchner Road (Fig. 1) is contaminated with historic sources of polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs). It is the last of 14 sites identified for cleanup as part of the [Niagara River Remedial Action Plan](#).

Members of the Niagara Peninsula watershed community, especially those in the Welland are invited to participate in the development of the Conservation Area Strategy. Involvement opportunities and more information about the project can be found on the NPCA's online Get Involved engagement platform at:

<https://getinvolved.npca.ca/lyons-creek-east>



About the Project

Collaborative monitoring has been ongoing for more than 15 years as part of a natural recovery approach in 2008, selected through scientific evidence and public consultation. Monitoring included many lines of evidence such as: sediment, water, fish, aquatic bugs, turtle eggs. Recent results suggest a more active remediation approach is needed. The purpose of the project is to determine future cleanup options for the site and engaging with the community to support decision-making.

Public Information Centre

A Public Information Centre (PIC) is being held to inform the community and other interested parties on the overall progress on the Lyons Creek East sediment management planning project including the results of a recent ecological study.

The PIC will be in-person only, held at the following date and location:

Date: Tuesday, November 19, 2024
Time: 6:00 pm to 8:00 pm
Location: Welland International Flatwater Centre
 16 Townline Tunnel Road, Welland, ON

Contact

For more information about the Lyons Creek East sediment management planning project, please contact:

Natalie Green
 Manager, Climate Change and Special Programs
 905-788-3135 ext. 243 | ngreen@npca.ca

You're Invited

Public Information Centre



Join representatives from the Niagara River Remedial Action Plan program to learn about past and current sediment cleanup efforts for a portion of Lyons Creek East.

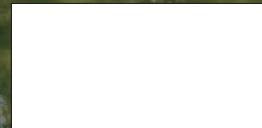


**NIAGARA
RIVER**

Remedial Action Plan

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Page 159 of 174



Public Information Centre

Tuesday, November 19, 2024
6:00 - 8:00 P.M.

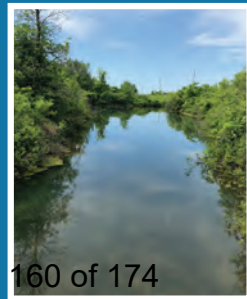
Welland International Flatwater Centre
Townline Tunnel Rd, Welland

Pre-registration is required to attend.



*Learn more &
stay informed*

Scan the QR code
or visit
www.getinvolved.npca.ca
to register



Project experts will share a progress update, including the results of an ecological study, discuss next steps, and answer questions.



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GREATER TORONTO & HAMILTON AREA

WEDNESDAY,
OCTOBER 30, 2024

Vol. 27
No. 43

2 CLOSING THE CLIMATE ACTION GAP

Feds Launch Toolkit for Sustainable Housing & Infrastructure

4 LAYING THE GROUNDWORK FOR MORE MISSING MIDDLE

Richmond Hill Expanding Housing Options

■ OSHAWA MIXED-USE PROPOSAL WOULD BRING INTEGRATED TRANSIT STATION AND HOUSING FOR STUDENTS

MIXING USES ON THE SIMCOE STREET CORRIDOR

Matt Durnan

A mixed-use development proposed for a site in one of Oshawa's most rapidly-evolving corridors would bring significant transit-oriented, student-focused housing to the area while also serving to improve transit infrastructure with the inclusion of an integrated transit stop within the proposed building.

At its October 7 meeting, Oshawa economic and development services committee received an information report on 6IX Dev Inc's official plan and zoning by-law amendment applications for a site at 1804, 1806, and 1808 Simcoe Street North and 426 Niagara Drive to permit the development of a 10-storey mixed-use building, accommodating 386 residential units.

The roughly 0.47-hectare site is currently occupied by

four single-detached residential buildings that stand between one and 1.5 storeys in height. Three of the four buildings are single-family homes, while the fourth building (located at 1808 Simcoe Street) operates as a physiotherapy clinic. All four of

the existing buildings on the site would be demolished as part of the proposed redevelopment of the property.

The site is situated in Oshawa's Samac neighbourhood in the northern part of the city, generally characterized by low-

density residential, green space and institutional uses, including post-secondary institutions **Ontario Tech University** and **Durham College**, which are both located nearby at 2000 Simcoe Street.

CONTINUED PAGE 6 ■



Rendering of 6IX Dev Inc's proposed 10-storey mixed-use building at 1804, 1806 and 1808 Simcoe Street North and 426 Niagara Drive in Oshawa. The proposed development would bring 386 new residential units to the rapidly-evolving Simcoe Street corridor. Nearly 300 of the units would be studio and one-bedroom units, with a focus on housing students of the nearby Ontario Tech University and Durham College. The proposal also includes new retail uses at grade and an integrated transit station that would serve future higher-order transit along Simcoe Street. Durham Region is currently conducting a feasibility study considering options for developing a rapid transit line along the Simcoe Street Corridor.

SOURCE: 6IX GROUP
ARCHITECT: 6IX DESIGN ARCHITECT

UPCOMING DATES

OCTOBER

- 30 Barrie General Committee, 7:00 p.m.
Brampton Council, 9:30 a.m.
Georgina Council, 9:00 a.m.
Mississauga Council, 9:30 a.m.

NOVEMBER

- 4 Ajax Community Affairs & Planning Committee, 1:00 p.m.
Brampton Planning & Development Committee, 7:00 p.m.
Brock Committee of the Whole, 10:00 a.m.
Burlington Committee of the Whole, 9:30 a.m.
Clarington General Government Committee, 9:30 a.m.
King Council Public Planning Meeting, 6:00 p.m.
Milton Council, 7:00 p.m.
Oshawa Economic & Development Services Committee, 1:30 p.m.
Pickering Planning & Development Committee, 7:00 p.m.
Scugog General Purpose & Administration Committee, 1:30 p.m.
Uxbridge General Purpose & Administration Committee, 10:00 a.m.
Whitby Public Meetings, 7:00 p.m.
- 5 Aurora Committee of the Whole, 7:00 p.m.
Caledon Planning & Development Committee—Public Meeting, 7:00 p.m.

FEDS LAUNCH TOOLKIT FOR SUSTAINABLE HOUSING AND INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT

CLOSING THE CLIMATE ACTION GAP



Lana Hall

As municipalities across the country look to create housing and infrastructure that can withstand a new wave of changing climate conditions, the **Government of Canada** has launched a suite of resources designed to make this task easier for decision-makers. The Climate Toolkit for Housing and Infrastructure (CTHI) is a \$94.7-million initiative designed to provide municipalities with access to data, digital resources and industry experts, something team members on the Toolkit project say it could “level the playing field” especially for smaller municipalities looking to strengthen their infrastructure projects against the effects of extreme weather, such as flooding or wildfire, while reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

Formally announced on October 24 by the **Ministry of**

Housing, Infrastructure and Communities, the toolkit will eventually include a digital help desk, an online platform that provides climate data and access to a roster of climate and infrastructure experts who can advise municipalities on specific projects if needed. The toolkit’s resources are free of charge.

“We’ve seen how quickly infrastructure can be compromised by climate events,” says **Canadian Urban Institute** (CUI) senior director of programs and partnerships **Matt Buckman**. “Every municipality across the country has experienced something similar—wildfires in Jasper, floods in Toronto, heat waves in Quebec—all of which takes a toll on our infrastructure and housing stock.”

The CTHI help desk, which is operated by staff at the Ministry of Housing, Infrastructure

and Communities, allows users to request information about a certain topic, such as natural infrastructure, buildings, or transportation, and be connected with digital resources about best practices for sustainability measures and climate resiliency during the planning and development process. Help desk users can also access data about climate risk, and built-form case studies through a portal in the toolkit, developed in collaboration with **ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability**.

By December, the toolkit will also include a roster of climate and infrastructure consultants, selected in collaboration with CUI, whom Buckman says can provide more tangible assistance on projects within the context of a particular municipality.

“It’s the space between

CONTINUED PAGE 3



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ISSN 1918-7548

THE CLIMATE ACTION GAP

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2

making your commitment that you're going to reduce emissions ... and managing all of the data and energy audits and climate-specific methodologies, taking all of that information, synthesizing it down, and then applying it into a tangible project," he says.

While the exact nature of how professionals on this roster will provide their expertise is still being determined, Buckman says he anticipates municipalities might require advice about built form and stormwater management, perhaps advice for specific projects that could be applied to similar developments within

their boundaries.

"It could be, 'We have a rec centre and we'd like to make it more energy efficient but we don't have anyone locally that could do that. Could you connect us with an expert to help us?' It could [be] 'We've dealt with floods in the past but we've followed all the provincial flood mapping guidelines and our pipes still couldn't manage floods. What's the appropriate diameter of a pipe that we should be using for climate events in our climate geography?'"

For smaller municipalities, which may lack specialized staff or resources to undertake

studies and consultations on topics like these, having access to this information through the federal toolkit may help "level the playing field," says **Canadian Climate Institute** director of adaptation **Ryan Ness**.

"We've heard from municipalities across the country, especially smaller ones, that they often lack the information and capacity to assess their infrastructure projects and growth plans, in terms of what they mean for both greenhouse gas emissions in the future ... as well as what it might mean in terms of what could be at risk in the future from the hazards of a changing climate," says Ness. "They certainly will benefit from more information in this space."

Ness also believes the resource will help municipalities of all sizes make better decisions

about where and when to build housing and infrastructure amid pressures to develop these projects as quickly as possible.

"[Municipalities] rely on taxes and development charges to fund infrastructure and maintenance and the delivery of services. And so, they have a driver to grow their tax base in order to be able to do that, which often drives—in the absence of good information or solid guidelines like building codes or land use regulations—hasty decisions," he says.

"... That kind of standardization and levelling of the playing field from a regulatory standpoint will raise the bar of municipal decision-making and ensure that these things don't slip through the cracks as municipalities are pushed to approve development."

To learn more about or to explore the Climate Toolkit for Housing and Infrastructure, please visit the Government of Canada website [here](#). 🌱

Baseline Emissions Calculator
This custom Climate Insight tool provides users with estimates of emissions by asset, using energy data or provided archetypes.

Equity Checklist
This provides users with guidance on integrating equity considerations at various project stages.

Learn and Understand
New to climate change? Explore our Learn and Understand pages.

Image from the Climate Toolkit for Housing and Infrastructure (CTHI) digital library, showing some of the resources available through the platform. The Climate Toolkit was rolled out by the federal government last week. Designed in partnership with the Canadian Urban Institute and ICLEI, the toolkit will include a digital help desk, an online platform that provides climate data and access to a roster of climate and infrastructure consultants who can advise municipalities on building housing and infrastructure designed to withstand changing climate conditions

SOURCE: GOVERNMENT OF CANADA

LAYING THE GROUNDWORK FOR MORE MISSING MIDDLE



Matt Durnan

The City of Richmond Hill is working to add more tools to its planning tool belt in an effort to increase the city's housing supply, with policy changes that will permit up to four dwelling units per lot, as-of-right, in all of the city's residential zones, while also permitting residential buildings of up to four storeys, as-of-right, within Richmond Hill's major transit station areas (MTSAs).

At its October 22 meeting, Richmond Hill council received an information report on municipally-initiated official plan and zoning by-law amendment applications seeking to expand existing additional residential unit (ARU) permissions from three units as-of-right to four units in areas where zoning permits the development of single-detached, semi-detached, and townhouse dwelling units.

The zoning by-law and official plan amendments would also permit the development of residential buildings of up to four storeys as-of-right within the city's MTSAs along Yonge Street, Highway 7, and near the

Newkirk GO station.

In short, this policy change would make the planning process for these housing types more expeditious and less expensive, as the units would be permitted as-of-right and a landowner or developer would not have to apply for a zoning by-law amendment to build this type of housing.

"The inspiration to do this at this time was the HAF (federal Housing Accelerator Fund) requirements and we have been working on this for a while, and we're fairly ready to implement it," Richmond Hill Mayor **David West** told *NRU*.

Numerous Ontario municipalities have implemented similar policies to allow four units as of right in their residential neighbourhoods as a requirement for qualifying for funding from the **Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation's** (CMHC) Housing Accelerator Fund, which is intended to incentivize municipal governments to expedite new residential construction projects.

For many municipalities in

the GTHA however, expanding permissions for additional residential units has not exactly resulted in substantial uptake of applications for this type of housing (multiplexes), and Richmond Hill is no different.

"We implemented three units as-of-right permissions about three years ago, and there has been maybe a couple hundred suites that have been implemented over that period of time, so it hasn't really been a huge amount," West said.

"I'm anticipating that there will be some uptake with four units as-of-right, but how much

uptake remains to be seen."

While it may be difficult to forecast what the direct impacts of the proposed policy changes will be when it comes to getting more housing built, West says that it is critical for the City to have as many tools as possible at its disposal to create new housing, and that policies like this have an important role to play in ensuring that there is a broader range of housing options available in Richmond Hill.

CONTINUED PAGE 5 ■

What I like about the [four storeys as-of-right in MTSAs] policy is that this is what missing middle is and what we are missing in Richmond Hill. Allowing people to build up to four storeys as-of-right in our MTSAs will help promote a housing stock that we don't have a lot of, and it's another choice. I'm not going to be thrilled about putting that housing type in our established neighbourhoods, but in the right areas, they make perfect sense.

-Richmond Hill Mayor David West

LAYING THE GROUNDWORK

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

“The proposed amendments to the city’s official plan and zoning by-laws will introduce as-of-right permissions for gentle density,” Richmond Hill director of development planning **Deborah Giannetta** told *NRU*.

“This will help the City remove barriers to housing development, provide for additional residential units that will accommodate individuals, families and caregivers, provide an income source for the landowner, and streamline processes to facilitate gentle density.”

Richmond Hill has set a target of building 27,000 new residential units by 2031, in response to the **Province of Ontario’s** goal of achieving 1.5 million new homes province-wide by 2031.

Mayor West says that the vast

majority of the biggest projects and the lowest-hanging fruit for the City to achieve its housing target will be achieved through high-density developments along the Yonge Street corridor, but this policy change will have a role to play in ensuring that there is a range of housing options available to Richmond Hill residents, specifically missing middle housing, in the city’s key intensification areas.

“Most of our density and most of our potential to create large amounts of housing will be found along Yonge Street, and it won’t be ground-related. It will be condo-type developments. Having four units as-of-right is an option [for housing], but it’s not our biggest volume option,” West said.

“What I like about the [four storeys as-of-right in MTSAs] policy is that this is what

missing middle is and what we are missing in Richmond Hill. Allowing people to build up to four storeys as-of-right in our MTSAs will help promote a housing stock that we don’t have a lot of, and it’s another choice. I’m not going to be thrilled about putting that housing type in our established neighbourhoods, but in the right areas, they make perfect sense.”

The direct impact of the proposed policy change would be to make for a more expeditious planning process to develop missing middle housing types like multiplexes and four-storey multi-unit housing, but there are also spinoff impacts related to the core reason for the City pursuing this change in the first place, and that is with respect to the HAF.

“The City of Richmond Hill signed a \$31 million agreement with the federal government through the Housing Accelerator Fund which will support initiatives to remove barriers to housing development, increase affordable housing supply and support the development of complete, low-carbon and climate-resilient communities that are affordable, inclusive, equitable and diverse,” Giannetta said.

One of the major vehicles to administer HAF dollars will be through the City’s new community improvement plan (CIP), which is also currently being developed by city

planning staff and is yet another tool that the City is looking to add to its arsenal to help create a wider range of housing options in Richmond Hill.

“We’re very close to finalizing our community improvement plan, so we’ll be using these [HAF] funds to incentivize things like purpose-built rental housing that will allow for more affordability now and into the future,” West said.

“[Purpose-built rental] is another thing that we are very short of, and it is a very important component to the overall affordability offerings that municipalities like Richmond Hill need to make. So that [CIP] will be up and running by the end of December and full steam ahead in January to get the funds working to make sure that we’re incentivizing the types of housing that we need.”

Richmond Hill is also in the very late stages of finalizing its additional residential units policy, with Mayor West indicating that he expects the official plan amendment and zoning by-law amendment applications will come before council for final approval some time in December. 🌱

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SIMCOE STREET CORRIDOR

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

“The Simcoe Street corridor is rapidly changing. Given the proximity to the Ontario Tech University and Durham College there is a lot of growth that the Simcoe Street corridor has seen over the years,” **Bousfields** senior planner **Himanshu Katyal** told *NRU*.

“This corridor is identified as an intensification corridor

in the Oshawa official plan and is designated as a planned commercial strip. So basically, a mixed-use development is permitted by the land use policies, and intensification is encouraged.”

Additionally, **Durham Region** is currently undertaking a feasibility study to explore the possibility of establishing

a rapid transit corridor along Simcoe Street and are analyzing two potential options, including bus rapid transit (BRT) and aerial cable car (similar to the one that operates at Pearson International Airport).

“Given the policy context and the infrastructure projects in the area, I think this proposal aligns well with the context,” **Katyal** said.

“This includes a mixed-use building including a transit station, so we’ve had a two-stage pre-application process with both the **City of Oshawa** and

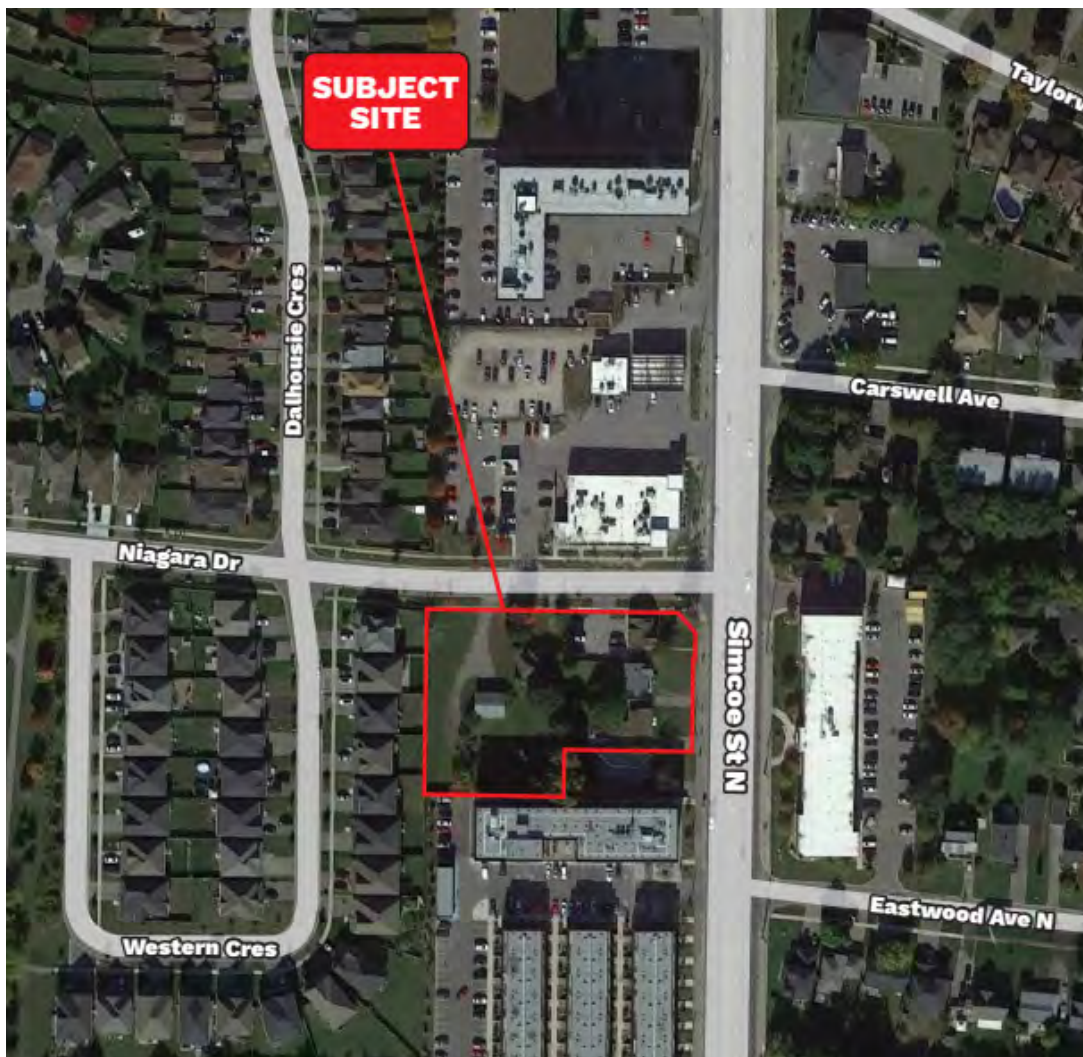
Durham Region, and as part of that pre-consultation process, the rapid transit [feasibility] study was identified. And this proposal includes an integrated transit stop within the building.”

The Simcoe Street North site is located just 450 metres south of the Durham College/Ontario Tech University campus, and the proposed mixed-use development has been thought out and designed with students very much top-of-mind.

A total of 386 dwelling units are proposed within the 10-storey building, with 128 of them being studio units and another 169 proposed as one-bedroom units, for a total of nearly 300 residential units that would bring smaller, student-focused residences to the Simcoe Street corridor.

The combination of being in close proximity to two post-secondary institutions and the Region’s analysis of the potential for higher-order transit in the area made the integration of a

CONTINUED PAGE 7



Aerial image showing the location of the site at 1804, 1806 and 1808 Simcoe Street North and 426 Niagara Drive in Oshawa where 6IX Dev Inc is proposing to develop a 10-storey mixed-use building. Currently, the site accommodates four single-detached residential buildings, one of which serves as a physiotherapy clinic. All four existing buildings on the site would be demolished to make way for the new mixed-use development that would accommodate 386 residential units, along with an integrated transit station within the building and retail uses at grade.

SOURCE: CITY OF OSHTAWA
PLANNER: BOUSFIELDS

SIMCOE STREET CORRIDOR

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6

transit station within the proposed mixed-use building a fairly simple design choice for the proponents.

“We have almost 400 [residential] units and probably close to 800 people that are going to live in this building, most of which will be students that are going to rely on that transit that is going to connect them to the retail to the north, and the GO station to the south,” 6IX Group CEO **Frank Taheri** told *NRU*.

“The intent was that if we have a connected building to the station, this would help with having better ridership and it will improve the marketability of our building and the functionality of our retail space. All three of these work together to make this a better proposal.”

With the proposal aimed at housing students and being transit-supportive, the development team was able to come in under the City of Oshawa’s parking requirements that would have required 676 total residential vehicle parking spaces and 103 commercial parking spaces.

This proposal instead comes in at just 312 vehicle parking spaces, with 168 residential vehicle parking spaces, 110 vehicle parking spaces for the commercial uses, and 34

visitor parking spaces, all to be accommodated within two levels of underground parking.

The emerging development trend in the area is very much in line with what 6IX Dev Inc is proposing. Simcoe Street is in the midst of a significant transition from a predominantly low-rise, low-density area to a bustling high-density mixed-use neighbourhood offering a vast array of housing, retail and amenity options.

“Simcoe Street is an intensification corridor and the idea is that there will be more intensification along this corridor in the future. Given the recent developments we’ve seen in the area, the trend is that this is going from predominantly single-detached dwellings to mid-rise, mixed-use buildings,” **Katyal** said.

Creating a mixed-use,

complete community was at the forefront of 6IX Dev Inc’s planning vision for the site, along with supporting the City of Oshawa’s goals of supporting its post-secondary institutions and student populations.

“The intent of the City has always been to increase the density in this area so that they can support their students and allow the university and college to grow,” said Taheri.

“As it stands, one of the major problems that Oshawa has is that students are coming to this neighbourhood to study, and once their studies are done, they leave Oshawa.”

The developer is exploring the potential for offering rent-to-own units to students who complete their studies at one of the nearby post-secondary institutions and remain in the community once their studies are completed.

On the mixed-use side of things, the proposal is considering a broad range of uses for the ground floor of the building, including

accommodating the integrated transit station, a potential grocery store, a commercial gym, and retail tailored to the needs of the community.

“It’s all about having that mixed-use facility that will improve the community and the area,” said Taheri.

“Our intent has always been to create a community that would serve the community, not just build mortar and brick and make money. We want to ensure there is serviceability and accessibility to the building, and that it’s something that will stand the test of time. That’s very important to our team.”

The application is currently being reviewed by City of Oshawa planning staff, and the hope of the proponent team is that it will return to council with a recommendation within the next year. 🌱



Subject Site, 1804 Simcoe Street, Oshawa



Subject Site, 1806 Simcoe Street, Oshawa



Subject Site, 1808 Simcoe Street, Oshawa



Subject Site, 426 Niagara Drive, Oshawa

Photos showing the four single-detached buildings that occupy the site at 1804, 1806 and 1808 Simcoe Street North and 426 Niagara Drive in Oshawa. The building at 1808 Simcoe Street North accommodates a physiotherapy clinic, while the others are single-family homes. All four existing buildings would be demolished as part of 6IX Dev Inc’s proposed redevelopment of the site that would bring a 10-storey mixed-use building accommodating 386 residential units and a transit station and retail space at grade.

SOURCE: CITY OF OSHAWA

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HAMILTON

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Development Planning – Director's Office – 5th Floor

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Join our Team



The City of Thorold is currently seeking a **Manager of Development Planning**. By joining the City of Thorold team, you will be choosing to become part of the fastest growing municipality in the beautiful Niagara Region.

If you are interested in this position, click [here](#) to review the job posting details. **The application deadline is Thursday, November 7, 2024.**

The Town of Ajax We are hiring!



Currently seeking a **Full Time Secretary-Treasurer, Committee of Adjustment (Planner)** to receive, analyze and examine applications and supporting documents for completeness and ensure they are filed in compliance with Provincial legislation and regulations.

Interested? Click here to review the detailed job description.

Application deadline: November 8, 2024 at 11:59 p.m.

ajax.ca/Careers

COMMITTEE AGENDAS



PEEL

Approval recommended for Mississauga affordable seniors' housing

At its October 28 meeting, Mississauga Planning & Development Committee considered a [public meeting recommendation report](#) recommending approval of official plan and zoning by-law amendment applications by **Saint Luke's Dixie Senior**

Residence Corporation for 4150 Westminster Place. The applicant proposes to develop an eight-storey seniors' affordable rental building containing 70 residential units. An existing three-storey apartment building on the site would be retained.

Approval recommended for Mississauga commercial building

At its October 28 meeting, Mississauga Planning & Development Committee considered a [public meeting](#)

[recommendation report](#) recommending approval of a rezoning application by **2094404 Ontario Inc.** for

1094 & 1108 Eglinton Avenue East. The applicant proposes to develop a two-storey commercial building. 🌱

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INFILL DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITY

Permitting Both Residential & Commercial Uses

CBRE's Land Services Group is pleased to offer for sale a 16-acre property at 100 Rossignol Drive in Orleans, Ottawa. The site supports both residential and commercial uses and is strategically located within an established commercial and residential core, providing direct access to Highway 174. The property is largely designated as Neighbourhood with an Evolving Neighbourhood overlay and partially as Greenspace within the Official Plan.

The General Mixed Use zoning allows for varied uses, including low and mid-rise apartments, townhouses, retirement homes, community centres, offices, restaurants, and retail stores, with building heights from 3-10 storeys. This site presents a prime infill development opportunity in the rapidly growing Orleans area with excellent access to transportation infrastructure.

[CLICK TO VIEW BROCHURE](#)

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IN BRIEF

Whitby updating Green Standard for sustainable development

The **Town of Whitby** is updating its Green Standard, a comprehensive toolkit designed to promote sustainable development in the town. The standard serves as a guide for developers to incorporate sustainability measures in their projects, ensuring that new developments make positive contributions to local communities and environments. As part of its public engagement strategy, the Town has posted an online survey to learn which sustainable building practices

residents believe are most important for new developments. The survey will be available until Tuesday, November 12. To participate in the Town of Whitby Green Standard sustainable building practices survey, please visit the Town's website [here](#) by November 12.

Whitby hosting public open houses on new Comprehensive Zoning By-law

The **Town of Whitby** is developing a new comprehensive zoning by-law to guide future land use across the town. The new by-law will consolidate Whitby's three

existing zoning by-laws into a single document, reflecting modern zoning practices that align with provincial, regional, and town policies.

As part of the final phase of its public engagement on the by-law, the Town will be hosting two in-person community open houses to gather public input on the proposed draft of the by-law before it is finalized in 2025.

Members of the public are invited to attend one of two community open houses to learn more and share their thoughts on the draft. Sessions will be held on Wednesday, November 13 from 7 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. at Whitby Town Hall (575 Rossland

Road East) and on Monday, November 18 from 7 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. at Brooklin Community Centre and Library (8 Vipond Road). Sessions will consist of a presentation by **SGL Planning & Design** followed by a question and answer session.

To register for one of the two community open houses on the Town of Whitby's new comprehensive zoning by-law, please visit the Town website [here](#). Presentation materials will be made available on the Town website after the sessions for those unable to attend in person.



CBRE LAND SERVICES GROUP

61-69

AINSLIE STREET SOUTH

CAMBRIDGE, ONTARIO

ASKING PRICE: \$8,350,000

HIGH-DENSITY DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITY ADVANCED ZONING APPLICATION

±1.8 ACRES | ±399 UNITS

CBRE's Southern Ontario Investment Team and Land Services Group, on behalf of B. Riley Farber Inc. as court-appointed receiver, are pleased to offer for sale 61-69 Ainslie Street South, a ±1.8 acre high-rise mixed-use development site in the Galt core area of Cambridge.

The property enjoys a prime location within the vibrant Galt City Centre, in proximity to unique shops, cafes, restaurants, and retailers. The site benefits from scenic Grand River views, with walking trails and green spaces just steps away. The property boasts exceptional transit connectivity being adjacent to the Ainslie Bus Terminal, a short drive to the Highway 401 corridor, and 150 metres from the planned Phase 2 Downtown Cambridge LRT stop.

The proposed development envisions two high-rise towers, 18 and 21-storeys in height, connected by a 5 storey podium, with the ground floor dedicated to commercial uses. The development comprises ±399 residential units, structured parking with 340 spaces, and a total GFA of ±296,008 SF.

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OFFERS TO BE REVIEWED AS RECEIVED

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All outlines are approximate | www.cbre.ca/mclsg | CBRE Limited, Brokerage | 2005 Sheppard Ave. E., #800, Toronto, ON M2J 5B4 *Sales Representative **Broker

OLT NEWS

BRAMPTON MID-RISE DEVELOPMENT APPROVED

In an October 18 decision, OLT Member **Eric Crowe** allowed appeals, in part, by **Soneil Brampton Inc.** against the **City of Brampton's** refusal of its official plan and zoning by-law amendment applications for 75 Clarence Street.

Soneil proposes to develop the 0.34-hectare Clarence Street property with an eight-storey mixed-use building containing 443 square metres of at-grade retail space and 82 residential units above. City planning staff recommended approval

of the applications. However, council disregarded the staff recommendation and refused the applications.

Prior to the hearing, Soneil and the City reached a settlement on the basis of revisions to the wording of the zoning by-law amendment, as reflected in an agreed statement of facts between the parties' land use planning experts.

The Tribunal convened a settlement hearing and heard evidence from Soneil's planner, **Sarah Clark (Glen Schnarr & Associates)** in support of the proposed development and its implementing planning

instruments. Clark testified that the proposal would intensify an underutilized property and noted the ways in which the settlement scopes the zoning by-law amendment to exclude "day nursery" and "commercial school" as permitted uses.

The Tribunal accepted Clark's uncontested planning evidence and allowed the appeals, in part, approving the amendments as appended to the decision.

Solicitors involved in this decision were **Max Reedijk** and **Katarzyna Sliwa (Dentons)** representing Soneil Brampton Inc. and **Bruce Engell**

(**WeirFoulds**) representing the City of Brampton. [See OLT Case No. [OLT-24-000387](#).]

SETTLEMENT APPROVED FOR COOKVILLE DEVELOPMENT

In an October 9 decision, OLT Member **Aaron Sauve** allowed appeals, in part, by **65 Agnes Inc.** against the **City of Mississauga's** failure to make a decision on its official plan and zoning by-law amendment applications for 65-71 Agnes Street.

65 Agnes proposes to

CONTINUED PAGE 13

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OLT NEWS

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 12

develop a 29-storey residential building. The originally-submitted proposal included a podium ranging in height from five to eight storeys. The building would contain a total of 379 residential units, and 412 vehicular parking spaces.

The City did not make a decision on the applications within the *Planning Act* timeframes and 65 Agnes appealed to the OLT. As a result of Tribunal-assisted mediation, 65 Agnes and the City reached a settlement on the basis of

various revisions to the original development proposal.

The settlement proposal continues to seek to develop a 29-storey residential building, however the scale of the podium has been reduced to range from four to six storeys. The developer now proposes a total of 405 residential units, and a reduced parking supply of 284 spaces.

The Tribunal convened a settlement hearing, and heard evidence from planner **David Huynh (Bousfields)** in support

of the revised proposal. Huynh highlighted the fact that the site is located within a short walk of Cooksville GO Station, as well as the under-construction Hurontario LRT and the planned Dundas Street bus rapid transit. Moreover, the site is located within a Major Transit Station Area.

The Tribunal accepted Huynh's evidence that the settlement proposal represents an appropriate form of development for the site and allowed the appeals, in part, on an interim basis, subject to the fulfillment of various conditions.

Solicitors involved in this decision were **Jamie Cole** and

Michael Foderick (McCarthy Tétrault) representing 65 Agnes Inc. and **Jill Manser** representing the City of Mississauga. [See *OLT Case No. OLT-23-000761*.]

FLAMBOROUGH SEVERANCE APPROVED

In an October 16 decision, OLT Member **Nazanin Eisazadeh** allowed an appeal by **Dragana Anna Jovic Suykens** against the **City of Hamilton** Committee of Adjustment's refusal of her consent application for 13 Herbert Place.

Jovic proposes to sever the existing 2.06-acre Flamborough

CONTINUED PAGE 14

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OLT NEWS

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 13

property. The retained lot would maintain an existing single-detached dwelling and driveway from Herbert Place. The severed lot would accommodate a new single-detached dwelling fronting Hauser Place. Both of the new lots would be zoning-compliant.

The Herbert Place property is in a rural area, and both the severed and conveyed lots would be privately serviced by an independent private well and upgraded septic systems incorporating advanced treatment systems.

The City opposed the use


of advanced treatment systems due to concerns around groundwater contamination, and maintained that this proposed servicing approach offends the Rural Hamilton Official Plan and the City's related Hydrogeological Guidelines.

The Tribunal heard from three witnesses on behalf of Jovic, and from four witnesses on behalf of the City of Hamilton. Based on the evidence of Jovic's witnesses, the Tribunal found that the proposed consent has sufficient regard for the applicable legislative and policy criteria,

and is appropriately supported by a Hydrogeological Study.

In light of its findings, the Tribunal allowed the appeal and granted provisional consent, subject to various conditions.

Solicitors involved in this decision were **Nancy Smith** and **Anna Toumanians** (TMA

Law) representing Dragana Anna Jovic Suykens and **Paula Boutis** representing the City of Hamilton. [See *OLT Case No. OLT-23-000469*.] 

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PEOPLE

York Region chair and chief executive officer (CEO) **Wayne Emmerson** has announced his coming retirement from the Region, effective November 29, 2024. Emmerson was appointed York Region chair in 2014, and is currently serving his third consecutive term in the position. Prior to his election as York Region chair, Emmerson served 17 years as

mayor of the **Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville**, after six years of serving as a Town councillor. York Region staff will share information on the process and timelines for appointing a successor to Emmerson at the Region's November 7 committee of the whole meeting.

Niagara Region has appointed **Henri Koning** as its new commissioner

of community services, effective immediately. Koning succeeds previous Niagara Region commissioner of community services **Adrienne Jugley**, who announced her impending retirement earlier this month. Jugley has served the Region for almost ten years in the role. Prior to taking on this new role, Koning served Niagara Region as director of

seniors' services since 2012. In her new role as commissioner of community services, Koning will oversee the entire community services division, which includes children's services, homelessness and community engagement, housing services, seniors services, and social assistance and economic opportunities.