



Board of Directors Meeting Agenda

Thursday, July 4, 2024

This page intentionally left blank.



Board of Directors Meeting

Thursday, July 4, 2024 at 6:00 p.m.

Hamilton Conservation Authority is now conducting meetings in a hybrid format via an in-person and WebEx platform.

All hybrid meetings can be viewed live on HCA's You Tube Channel:
<https://www.youtube.com/user/HamiltonConservation>

1. **Call to Order** – Brad Clark
2. **Declarations of Conflict of Interest**
3. **Approval of Agenda**
4. **Delegations**
5. **Consent Items for Applications, Minutes and Correspondence**
 - 5.1. Applications – Development, Interference with Wetlands, Alterations to Shorelines and Watercourses Page 1
 - 5.2. Approval of Board of Directors Minutes – June 6, 2024 Page 5
 - 5.3. Approved April 11, 2024 Conservation Advisory Board Minutes – for receipt only Page 11
 - 5.4. Approved April 18, 2024 Budget & Administration Committee Minutes – for receipt only Page 17
 - 5.5. One Email Correspondence, Closure Ancaster Wells for Construction/Rehabilitation of Bridge Page 23
6. **Foundation Briefing** Foundation Chair – Kathy Lacasse
7. **Member Briefing**

8. Business Arising from the Minutes

9. Reports from Budget & Administration Committee and Conservation Advisory Board

- 9.1. Budget & Administration Committee – June 17, 2024 – Susan Fielding
(Recommendations)
- 9.1.1. BA 2408 2023 – Report by the Auditors Page 53
- 9.1.2. BA 2409 2023 12 Month Financial Results – Audited Financial Statements Page 75
- 9.1.3. BA 2410 2023 Reserve Funds Balances & 2023 Operating Surplus Reserves Allocation Page 97
- 9.2. Conservation Advisory Board – June 13, 2024 – Wayne Terryberry
(Recommendations)
- 9.2.1. CA 2415 Draft Watershed Based Resource Management Strategy and Conservation Area Strategy Page 101
- 9.2.2. CA 2416 Invasive Species Strategy Update 2024 Page 167

10. Other Staff Reports/Memorandums

Reports to be approved

- 10.1. Fifty Point Conservation Area Entrance Road Rebuild Project – Tender – Matt Hall Page 195
- 10.2. Saltfleet Wetland Conservation Area Wetland Restoration Project – SC-5 Archaeology Stage 2 – Additional Work – Scott Peck Page 201
- 10.3. Appointment of Officer Under the Conservation Authorities Act – Mike Stone Page 205

Memorandums to be received

- 10.4. Update on Biodiversity Action Plan – Mike Stone Page 209
- 10.5. Watershed Conditions Report – Jonathan Bastien Page 215
- 10.6. Conservation Areas Experiences – Liam Fletcher Page 219

11. New Business

12. In-Camera Items

12.1. Confidential Report – BA/June 01-2024
(Personnel Matter)

12.2 Confidential Memorandum – BD/July 01-2024
(Legal Matter)

13. Next Meeting – Thursday, September 5, 2024 at 6:00 p.m.

14. Adjournment

This page intentionally left blank.



Report

TO: Board of Directors

FROM: Lisa Burnside, Chief Administrative Officer (CAO)

RECOMMENDED BY: T. Scott Peck, MCIP, RPP, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer/Director, Watershed Planning and Engineering

PREPARED BY: Mike Stone, MCIP, RPP, Manager, Watershed Planning, Stewardship & Ecological Services

DATE: July 4, 2024

RE: Permit Applications Summary Report

HCA permit applications approved by staff under the *Conservation Authorities Act* and Ontario Regulation 41/24 between the dates of May 28, 2024 and June 21, 2024 are summarized in the following Permit Applications Summary Report (PASR-6/24).

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the Board of Directors receive this Permit Application Summary Report PASR-6/24 as information.

This page intentionally left blank.

HAMILTON REGION CONSERVATION AUTHORITY**DEVELOPMENT, INTERFERENCE WITH WETLANDS, AND ALTERATIONS TO SHORELINES AND WATERCOURSES APPLICATIONS**

June 24, 2024

Development, Interference with Wetlands, and Alterations to Shorelines and Watercourses Applications Report to the Board of Directors of the Hamilton Region Conservation Authority, July 04, 2024

The proposed works are subject to Ontario Regulation 161/06, and in particular Section 2, Subsection (1).

SUMMARY ENFORCEMENT REPORT SER 6/24

File Number	Date Received	Date Permit Issued	Review Days	Applicant Name	Location	Application Description	Recommendation / Conditions
D/F,C,A/24/32	13-May-24	03-Jun-24	23		59 Cross St Lot 16, Concession 1 Dundas	for the installation of vegetated riverstone for bank stabilization of Sydenham Creek	Approved subject to standard conditions.
F/F,C,A/24/28	19-Mar-24	03-Jun-24	66		1689 Concession 10 W Lot 21, 22, Concession 10 Flamborough	for the replacement of culvert FLA-3235 on Concession 10 W	Approved subject to standard conditions.
D/C/24/22	22-Apr-24	03-Jun-24	44		10 Governor's Rd Lot 51, 52, Concession 1 Dundas	for the conversion of an existing commercial building to a medical/dental centre	Approved subject to standard conditions.
D/F,C,A/23/29	04-Apr-23	03-Jun-24	85		53 Cross St Lot 16, Concession 1 Dundas	for the construction of an armourstone retaining wall	Approved subject to standard conditions.
F/F,C,A/24/27	19-Mar-24	04-Jun-24	30		533 Millgrove Sideroad Lot 18, 19, Concession 3 Flamborough	for the replacement of culvert FLA-1883 on Millgrove Sideroad	Approved subject to standard conditions.
SC/F,C,A/24/25	19-Mar-24	06-Jun-24	26		310 Fifth Rd E Lot 14, 15, Concession 6 Stoney Creek	for the replacement of culvert STO-2394 on Fifth Road E	Approved subject to standard conditions.

HAMILTON REGION CONSERVATION AUTHORITY

DEVELOPMENT, INTERFERENCE WITH WETLANDS, AND ALTERATIONS TO SHORELINES AND WATERCOURSES APPLICATIONS

June 24, 2024

Development, Interference with Wetlands, and Alterations to Shorelines and Watercourses Applications Report to the Board of Directors of the Hamilton Region Conservation Authority, July 04, 2024

The proposed works are subject to Ontario Regulation 161/06, and in particular Section 2, Subsection (1).

SUMMARY ENFORCEMENT REPORT SER 6/24

F/F,C,A/24/35	03-Apr-24	20-Jun-24	32	Ofield Rd between 602 Ofield Rd and Concession 4W Lot , Concession Flamborough	for the ditch cleanout and replacement of Culvert FLA-1883	Approved subject to standard conditions.
SC/F,C,A/24/38	13-Mar-24	20-Jun-24	101	Fifty Road adjacent to 183 Fifty Rd Lot , Concession Stoney Creek	for ditching works along Fifty Road	Approved subject to standard conditions.

Hamilton Region Conservation Authority

Minutes

Board of Directors Meeting

Date June 6, 2024

Minutes of the Board of Directors meeting held on Thursday, June 6, 2024 at 6:00 p.m., at the HCA main office, 838 Mineral Springs Road, in Ancaster, and livestreamed on YouTube.

PRESENT: **Susan Fielding - in the Chair**
 Jeff Beattie - Virtual **Craig Cassar**
 Lisa DiCesare **Brian McHattie**
 Wayne Terryberry - Virtual **Alex Wilson - Virtual**

Jennifer Stebbing – Foundation Chair

REGRETS: **Brad Clark, Matt Francis, Mike Spadafora and Maureen Wilson**

STAFF PRESENT: **Jonathan Bastien, Lisa Burnside, Gord Costie, Marlene Ferreira, Scott Fleming, Brandon Good, Matt Hall, Amanda Martin, Scott Peck, Mike Stone, Jaime Tellier, and Sandra Winninger**

OTHERS: **Kathy Lacasse, Michael Howes (2WA Consults), Richard Leitner (media)**

1. Call to Order

The Chair called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone present. Members were informed of the absence of Councillor Clark due to a family matter.

Lisa Burnside welcomed and introduced Amanda Martin, the new Executive Director for the Foundation.

2. Declarations of Conflict of Interest

The Chair asked members to declare any conflicts under the Board's Governance Policy. There were none. HCA's Indigenous Land Acknowledgement was read.

3. Approval of Agenda

The Chair requested any additions or deletions to the agenda; there were none.

BD12, 3358

MOVED BY: Craig Cassar

SECONDED BY: Brian McHattie

THAT the agenda be approved.

CARRIED

4. Delegations

There were none.

5. Consent Items for Applications, Minutes and Correspondence

The following consent items were adopted:

- 5.1. Applications – Development, Interference with Wetlands, Alterations to Shorelines and Watercourses
- 5.2. Approval of Board of Directors Minutes – May 2, 2024
- 5.3. Two items of correspondence Received re: Development Sulphur Springs Road
- 5.4. Closure of Ancaster Wells Due to Road Construction on Sulphur Springs Road

Lisa DiCesare joined the meeting.

- 5.5. Letter to Minister of Health re: Phasing out of Free Well Water Testing and Closure of the Hamilton water lab

Staff responded to questions in regard to some of the items of correspondence posed by board members.

6. Foundation Briefing

Jennifer Stebbing reported on the following:

The Foundation received a total of **\$545,464** in new donations from May 1st to May 31st 2024. This includes:

- **\$500,000** to the Saltfleet CA Fund. This represents the third installment of Heritage Green Community Trust's two-million-dollar pledge
- **\$20,155** to the Environmental Education Fund

- **\$20,589** to the Westfield Unrestricted Fund

The remaining **\$4,902** was directed to various projects, including Area of Greatest Need Fund, Dundas Valley CA, and the Land Securement Fund.

This brings the Foundation's fiscal year-to-date fundraising total to **\$680,809** which is 85% of the annual goal.

The Foundation held its Annual General Meeting of Members on Monday, May 13th. The audited financial statements are available for review on the Foundation website.

Susan Fielding, Acting Chair, thanked Jennifer Stebbing for her time as Chair of the Foundation; it was her last meeting. Kathy Lacasse, who was also in attendance, was welcomed as the new Chair of the Foundation.

BD12, 3359

MOVED BY: Wayne Terryberry

SECONDED BY: Craig Cassar

THAT the Foundation Briefing be received.

CARRIED

7. Member Briefing

Jonathan Bastien provided a verbal update on the partnership between the HCA and PWQMN, highlighting the program measures water quality in rivers and streams across Ontario, with partner organizations which include conservation authorities. The data helps provides insight into the quality of ground and surface water in the Province. Conservation Authorities use the data gathered as part of it's Watershed Report Card which is produced every 5 years.

BD12, 3360

MOVED BY: Lisa DiCesare

SECONDED BY: Wayne Terryberry

THAT the Verbal Report be received

CARRIED

8. Business Arising from the Minutes

8.1. Final Draft HCA Strategic Plan Report

– 2WA Consultants

Michael Howes of 2WA Consultants provided an update to the Strategic Plan, outlining stakeholder and public engagement that occurred since the March 7, 2024 Board of Directors meeting. He noted that the results of the engagement didn't change the

priorities or the vision of the plan but did affect some of the language in the plan as well as informing the first-year initiatives.

Councillor Alex Wilson commended the work done on the plan and specifically liked the amount of engagement, including staff participation that occurred.

BD12, 3361

**MOVED BY: Craig Cassar
SECONDED BY: Lisa DiCesare**

THAT the Final Draft HCA Strategic Plan Report and content for the 2025 – 2029 HCA strategic plan be approved

CARRIED

9. Reports from Budget & Administration Committee and Conservation Advisory Board

There were none.

10. Other Staff Reports/Memoranda

Reports to be approved

10.1. ERO #19-8364 – Proposed Amendments to Development Permit Exemptions, Under R.R.O. 1990, Regulation 828 for lands in Niagara Escarpment Planning Area

Scott Peck brought forward the staff report regarding comments to be submitted to the Environmental Registry of Ontario (ERO) on proposed changes to the Niagara Escarpment Commission, to allow exceptions of the permitting process within their development control area. It was noted that the HCA is generally supportive of these changes but requested clarification on specific aspects from the Province. Scott Peck answered members questions regarding the report.

BD12, 3362

**MOVED BY: Wayne Terryberry
SECONDED BY: Alex Wilson**

THAT the comments as detailed in Appendix “A” of the report titled “Proposed amendments to development permit exemptions under R.R.O 1990, Regulation 828 for lands in the Niagara Escarpment Planning Area that is the area of development control - ERO #019-8364” dated June 6, 2024 be approved; and further,

THAT HCA staff be directed to submit the approved comments to the Public Input Coordinator as detailed in the posting 019#8364.

CARRIED

Memorandums to be received

10.2. Proposed Regulatory Changes under the Planning Act (Bill 185) and associated EROs

Scott Peck brought forward the staff memorandum which outlines proposed regulatory changes under the Planning Act relating to the *Cutting Red Tape to Build More Homes Act, 2024 (Bill 185): Removing Barriers for Additional Residential Units*. Additionally, there is an Environmental Registry of Ontario to address 2020 Provincial Policy Statements. It was noted that comments to the Province have been submitted to meet the May 10, 2024 deadline.

BD12, 3363

**MOVED BY: Brian McHattie
SECONDED BY: Craig Cassar**

THAT the memorandum entitled Proposed Regulatory Changes under the Planning Act (Bill 185) and associated EROs be received.

CARRIED

10.3. Watershed Conditions Report

Jonathan Bastien presented a summary of the memorandum.

BD12, 3364

**MOVED BY: Lisa DiCesare
SECONDED BY: Jeff Beattie**

THAT the memorandum entitled Watershed Conditions Report be received.

CARRIED

10.4. Conservation Areas Experiences Update

Brandon Good provided a summary of the memorandum and answered the members' questions.

BD12, 3365

MOVED BY: Alex Wilson

SECONDED BY: Lisa DiCesare

THAT the memorandum entitled Conservation Areas Experiences Update be received.

CARRIED

11. New Business

There was none.

12. Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Board of Directors will be held on Thursday, July 4, 2024 at 6:00 p.m. at the HCA Main Administration Office – Woodend Auditorium, 838 Mineral Springs Road, Ancaster, Ontario.

13. Adjournment

On motion, the meeting adjourned.

Scott Fleming
Secretary-Treasurer

HAMILTON CONSERVATION AUTHORITY

Conservation Advisory Board

MINUTES

Thursday, April 11, 2024

Minutes of the Conservation Advisory Board meeting held on Thursday, April 11, 2024 at 4:00 p.m., at the HCA main office, 838 Mineral Springs Road, in Ancaster, and livestreamed on YouTube.

PRESENT: **Sherry O'Connor – in the Chair**
 Elise Copps **Tyler Cunningham**
 Natalie Faught **Jamie Freeman**
 Brian McHattie **Haley McRae**
 Noah Stegman

REGRETS: **Cortney Oliver, Wayne Terryberry, Brad Clark (ex-officio), Susan Fielding (ex-officio)**

STAFF PRESENT: **Madolyn Armstrong, Lisa Burnside, Gord Costie, Marlene Ferreira, Scott Fleming, Matt Hall, Scott Peck, Karen Phong, Mike Stone, Jaime Tellier, and Sandra Winninger**

OTHERS: **Media – None**

1. Welcome

The Chair called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone present.

2. Declaration of Conflict of Interest

The Chair asked members to declare any conflicts under the HCA Administrative By-law. There were none.

3. Approval of Agenda

The Chair requested any additions or deletions to the agenda; there were none.

CA2408 **MOVED BY: Jamie Freeman**
 SECONDED BY: Haley McRae

THAT the agenda be approved.

CARRIED

4. Delegations

There were none.

5. Member Briefing

5.1 HCA 2003 Annual Report

Lisa Burnside provided an overview of the Annual Report and answered members questions.

5.2 Fifty Point Wetland update

Scott Peck reviewed the progress to date on the construction of the wetland at Fifty Point and answered members questions.

CA 2409 **MOVED BY: Tyler Cunningham**
 SECONDED BY: Noah Stegman

THAT the member briefing be received.

CARRIED

6. Chairman's Report on Board of Directors Actions

The following items were approved by the Board of Directors at the March 7, 2024 meeting:

CA 2405 Indigenous Interpretive Signage Proposal

CA 2406 Westfield Accession and Deaccession

CA 2407 Artaban Road and Lower Lions Club Road Parking Areas, with a friendly amendment to the motion, to delete the words "carrying capacity" for "visitor management plan".

7. Approval of Minutes of Previous Meeting

7.1. Minutes – Conservation Advisory Board (February 8, 2024)

**CA 2410 MOVED BY: Brian McHattie
 SECONDED BY: Noah Stegman**

THAT the minutes of the February 8, 2024 Conservation Advisory Board meeting be approved.

CARRIED

8. Business Arising from the Minutes

There was none.

9. Staff Reports/Memorandums

Reports for Recommendation

9.1. HCA Natural Hazard Infrastructure – Asset Management Plan

9.2. HCA Natural Hazard Infrastructure - Operation Plan

Karen Phong provided a concurrent overview on both reports. She highlighted the reason for creating the Asset Management Plan: change in Ontario regulations requiring conservation authorities to both develop the Asset Management Plan to inventory the flood and erosion control structures owned by the HCA. Additionally, the same regulation requires the HCA to develop an Operational Plan which summarizes operational tasks that are required for HCA flood and erosion control structures.

Members questions were answered following the presentation.

As both reports were presented together, the motion to approve combined both reports, 9.1 and 9.2.

**CA 2411 MOVED BY: Natalie Faught
 SECONDED BY: Noah Stegman**

THAT the Conservation Advisory Board recommends to the Board of Directors of the Hamilton Conservation Authority that the Hamilton Conservation Authority Natural Hazard

10. New Business

There was none.

11. Next Meeting

The next meeting of the CAB is scheduled for Thursday, June 13, 2024 at 4:00 p.m.; location TBD.

12. Adjournment

On motion, the meeting was adjourned.

This page intentionally left blank.

Hamilton Conservation Authority

Minutes

Budget & Administration Committee

April 18, 2024

Minutes of the Budget & Administration Committee meeting held on Thursday, April 18, 2024 at 6:00 p.m., at the HCA main office, 838 Mineral Springs Road, in Ancaster, and livestreamed on YouTube.

Present: Susan Fielding, in the Chair
Lisa DiCesare
Alex Wilson
Maureen Wilson

Regrets: Brad Clark

Staff Present: Lisa Burnside, Gord Costie, Scott Fleming, Marlene Ferreira, Matt Hall, Scott Peck, and Jaime Tellier

Others Present: None

1. Welcome

The Chair called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone present.

2. Declarations of Conflict of Interest

The Chair asked members to declare any conflicts under the HCA Administrative By-law. There were none.

3. Approval of Agenda

– November 23, 2023

6.2. 12 Month WSIB Injury Statistics

6.3. Annual Information Statistics re: 2023 Freedom of Information Requests

7. Business Arising from the Minutes

There was none.

8. Staff Reports/Memoranda

8.1. 12 Month Financial Results – Operating

Scott Fleming presented a summary of the memorandum and answered the members' questions.

8.2. 12 Month Financial Results – Capital & Major Maintenance

Scott Fleming presented a summary of the memorandum and answered the members' questions.

8.3. 12 Month Vendor Report

Scott Fleming presented a summary of the memorandum and answered the members' questions.

8.4. 2024 Insurance Renewal

Scott Fleming presented a summary of the memorandum and answered the members' questions.

BA 2403

**MOVED BY: Maureen Wilson
SECONDED BY: Alex Wilson**

THAT the memorandums entitled 12 Month Financial Results – Operating, 12 Month Financial Results – Capital & Major Maintenance, 12 Month Vendor Report and, 2024 Insurance Renewal be received.

CARRIED**8.5. Asset Management Strategy**

Matt Hall presented a summary of the report and answered the members' questions. The strategy and its physical asset inventory will assist with annual capital planning and budgeting and also aligns with required strategies for natural hazard water and erosion control asset and operational strategies as well as supporting new retired asset obligations for public sector accounting.

There was discussion that the City is also in the midst of its asset management strategy which includes a municipal natural assets component. It is anticipated that HCA will broaden the scope of this asset management initiative in the future to include natural assets once our strategy and inventory in development are complete and staff undertake meetings with the City for further collaboration and partnership.

BA 2404**MOVED BY: Maureen Wilson
SECONDED BY: Lisa DiCesare****THAT the Budget & Administration Committee
recommends to the Board of Directors:****THAT the HCA 2024 Asset Management Strategy be
approved.****CARRIED****8.6. Hiring of Contract Employee to Support Compliance with new Public Sector Accounting Asset Retirement Obligations**

Scott Fleming presented a summary of the report and answered the members' questions.

BA 2405**MOVED BY: Alex Wilson
SECONDED BY: Lisa DiCesare****THAT the Budget & Administration Committee
recommends to the Board of Directors:****THAT this report on the new Asset Retirement
Obligations be received for information; and further****THAT in order to achieve compliance with the Public
Sector Accounting Board's newly instituted PS 3280
Asset Retirement Obligations requirement, a contract
employee be added to the Finance department's
complement, funded through reserves as needed.**

CARRIED

9. New Business

There was none.

10. In-Camera Items for Matters of Law, Personnel and Property

There were none.

11. Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Budget and Administration Committee will be held on Thursday, May 16, 2024 at 6:00 p.m. at the HCA Main Administration Office – Woodend Auditorium, 838 Mineral Springs Road, Ancaster, Ontario.

12. Next Meeting Adjournment

On motion, the meeting adjourned.

This page intentionally left blank.

From: Joanne Turnell [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, June 25, 2024 10:50 AM
To: Nature <nature@conservationhamilton.ca>
Cc: Ward 12 Office <ward12@hamilton.ca>
Subject: ANCASTER WELL CLOSURE 4-6 PLEASE RECONSIDER THIS DECISION AND ALLOW CONTINUED ACCESS TO PUBLIC WATER

Hamilton Conservation Authority,

Our community is concerned about the pending 4-6 closure of the Ancaster Well as described in the notice circulated by the HCA.

We would like to remind you of the attached deed of sale from the City of Hamilton to the Conservation Authority which clearly states that the well is to be kept open to the public in perpetuity.

I also request that you to submit the deed, and land transfer records and the attached letters that were never acknowledged by the HCA, and ask your Board of Directors to direct Gord Costi to abide by the legally binding documents attached and provide continued access.

Please consider allowing continued access during this period per your agreement with the City of Hamilton.

There is a climate emergency, a heat wave and citizens need access to water.

Thank you.

Joanne Turnell
<http://saveourspring.ca>

This page intentionally left blank.

LAND
 REGISTRY
 OFFICE #62

17446-0004 (LT)

* CERTIFIED IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE LAND TITLES ACT * SUBJECT TO RESERVATIONS IN CROWN GRANT *

PROPERTY DESCRIPTION: PT LT 41, CON 1 ANCASTER , AS IN VM150487 ; S/T AB146681,AB337991,HL303384 ANCASTER CITY OF HAMILTON

PROPERTY REMARKS:

ESTATE/QUALIFIER:

FEE SIMPLE
 LT CONVERSION QUALIFIED

RECENTLY:

FIRST CONVERSION FROM BOOK

PIN CREATION DATE:

1997/02/17

OWNERS' NAMES

HAMILTON REGION CONSERVATION AUTHORITY

CAPACITY SHARE

BENO

REG. NUM.	DATE	INSTRUMENT TYPE	AMOUNT	PARTIES FROM	PARTIES TO	CERT/CHKD
<p>**EFFECTIVE 2000/07/29 THE NOTATION OF THE "BLOCK IMPLEMENTATION DATE" OF 1997/02/17 ON THIS PIN**</p> <p>**WAS REPLACED WITH THE "PIN CREATION DATE" OF 1997/02/17**</p> <p>** PRINTOUT INCLUDES ALL DOCUMENT TYPES (DELETED INSTRUMENTS NOT INCLUDED) **</p> <p>**SUBJECT, ON FIRST REGISTRATION UNDER THE LAND TITLES ACT, TO:</p> <p>** SUBSECTION 44(1) OF THE LAND TITLES ACT, EXCEPT PARAGRAPH 11, PARAGRAPH 14, PROVINCIAL SUCCESSION DUTIES *</p> <p>** AND ESCHEATS OR FORFEITURE TO THE CROWN.</p> <p>** THE RIGHTS OF ANY PERSON WHO WOULD, BUT FOR THE LAND TITLES ACT, BE ENTITLED TO THE LAND OR ANY PART OF</p> <p>** IT THROUGH LENGTH OF ADVERSE POSSESSION, PRESCRIPTION, MISDESCRIPTION OR BOUNDARIES SETTLED BY</p> <p>** CONVENTION.</p> <p>** ANY LEASE TO WHICH THE SUBSECTION 70(2) OF THE REGISTRY ACT APPLIES.</p> <p>**DATE OF CONVERSION TO LAND TITLES: 1997/02/17 **</p>						
HL177021	1961/09/29	BYLAW				C
REMARKS: SECONDLY AS TO PIN 17410-0052 ; RE: SUBDIVISION CONTROL						
HL303384	1965/02/19	TRANSFER EASEMENT			PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION OF THE TOWNSHIP OF ANCASTER	C
REMARKS: PLAN ATTACHED						
AB146681	1969/09/24	TRANSFER EASEMENT			PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION OF THE TOWNSHIP OF ANCASTER	C
62R1605	1974/04/08	PLAN REFERENCE				C
AB337991	1974/05/28	TRANSFER EASEMENT			THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION OF THE TOWNSHIP OF ANCASTER	C
LT525034	1998/10/13	TRANSFER	\$55,000	THE CORPORATION OF THE TOWN OF ANCASTER	HAMILTON REGION CONSERVATION AUTHORITY	C
LT525035	1998/10/13	REST COV APL ANNEX		THE CORPORATION OF THE TOWN OF ANCASTER		C

NOTE: ADJOINING PROPERTIES SHOULD BE INVESTIGATED TO ASCERTAIN DESCRIPTIVE INCONSISTENCIES, IF ANY, WITH DESCRIPTION REPRESENTED FOR THIS PROPERTY.

NOTE: ENSURE THAT YOUR PRINTOUT STATES THE TOTAL NUMBER OF PAGES AND THAT YOU HAVE PICKED THEM ALL UP.



Transfer/Deed of Land

Form 1 — Land Registration Reform Act, 1984

A

(1) Registry Land Titles (2) Page 1 of 3 pages

(3) Property Identifier(s) 17446-0004 (LT) Property

(4) Consideration FIFTY-FIVE THOUSAND—Dollars \$ 55,000.00

(5) Description This is a: Property Division Property Consolidation
 Part of Lot 41, Concession 1, in the Town of Ancaster, in the Regional Municipality of Hamilton-Wentworth as described in VM150487; subject to AB146681, AB337991, HL303384.

Additional: See Schedule

Additional: See Schedule

Additional: See Schedule

(6) This Document Contains (a) Redescription New Easement Plan/Sketch (b) Schedule for: Description Additional Parties Other (7) Interest/Estate Transferred Fee Simple

(8) Transferor(s) The transferor hereby transfers the land to the transferee and the transferee agrees to the Restrictive Covenants contained in the Schedule attached hereto.

Name(s) THE CORPORATION OF THE TOWN OF ANCASTER
 I HAVE THE AUTHORITY TO BIND THE CORPORATION

Signature(s)

Per: Robert E. Wade, Mayor

Date of Signature Y 1998 M 09 D 25

Signature(s)

Per: Patricia Sweeney, Clerk/Treasurer

Date of Signature Y 1998 M 09 D 21

(9) Spouse(s) of Transferor(s) I hereby consent to this transaction

Name(s) _____

Signature(s) _____

Date of Signature Y _____ M _____ D _____

(10) Transferor(s) Address for Service 300 Wilson Street East, Ancaster, Ontario L9G 2B9

(11) Transferee(s)

HAMILTON REGION CONSERVATION AUTHORITY

Signature

Per: R.F. Powers, Chairman

Date of Birth Y 1998 M 10 D 1

Signature

Per: B. W. Vanderbrug, General Manager

Date of Birth Y 1998 M 09 D 30

(12) Transferee(s) Address for Service P.O. Box 7099, 838 Mineral Springs Road, Ancaster, Ontario L9G 3L3

(13) Transferor(s) The transferor verifies that to the best of the transferor's knowledge and belief, this transfer does not contravene section 49 of the Planning Act, 1983.

Date of Signature Y _____ M _____ D _____

Signature _____

Solicitor for Transferor(s) I have explained the effect of section 49 of the Planning Act, 1983 to the transferor and I have made inquiries of the transferor to determine that this transfer does not contravene that section and based on the information supplied by the transferor, to the best of my knowledge and belief, this transfer does not contravene that section. I am an Ontario solicitor in good standing.

Name and Address of Solicitor _____

Signature _____

(14) Solicitor for Transferee(s) I have investigated the title to this land and to abutting land where relevant and I am satisfied that the title records reveal no contravention as set out in subclause 49 (21a) (c) (ii) of the Planning Act, 1983 and that to the best of my knowledge and belief this transfer does not contravene section 49 of the Planning Act 1983. I act independently of the solicitor for the transferor(s) and I am an Ontario solicitor in good standing.

Name and Address of Solicitor _____

Signature _____

Date of Signature Y _____ M _____ D _____

(15) Assessment Roll Number of Property	City	Mun.	Map	Sub.	Par.
	25	14	100	130	38400
(17) Document Prepared by:					
LEE A. PINELLI Barristers & Solicitors 1403-1 King Street West HAMILTON, Ontario L8P 1A4					
FOR OFFICE USE ONLY					
Registration Fee					
Land Transfer Tax					
Total					

Additional Property Identifier(s) and/or Other Information

WHEREAS it is recognized that it is appropriate that there be certain restrictions placed on the lands being transferred herein, the Transferor and Transferee covenant and agree as follows:

1. That the Transferee will maintain in perpetuity continued public access to well number 8, located on the lands being transferred herein;
2. That the Transferee will not charge a user fee for public access to the water supply available at well number 8, but may, instead, install a voluntary contribution box at or in the vicinity of well number 8; and
3. The Transferee assumes all responsibility and liability, if any, related to the water supply produced by well number 8.

Affidavit of Residence and of Value of the Consideration

Form 1 - Land Transfer Tax Act

Refer to all instructions on reverse side.
IN THE MATTER OF THE CONVEYANCE OF (insert brief description of land) PT. LOT 41, CO. 1, ANCASTER IN THE
REVENUE OF FRANKLTONS - WENTWORTH

BY (print names of all transferees in full) THE CORPORATION OF THE TOWN OF ANCASTER

TO (see instruction 1 and print names of all transferees in full) HAMILTON REGION CONSERVATION AUTHORITY

1. (see instruction 2 and print name(s) in full) LEE A. PINELLI

MAKE OATH AND SAY THAT:

1. I am (place a clear mark within the square opposite that one of the following paragraphs that describes the capacity of the deponent(s)): (see instruction 2)

- (a) A person in trust for whom the land conveyed in the above-described conveyance is being conveyed;
- (b) A trustee named in the above-described conveyance to whom the land is being conveyed;
- (c) A transferee named in the above-described conveyance;
- (d) The authorized agent or solicitor acting in this transaction for (insert name(s) of principal(s)) The Corporation of the Town of Ancaster and the Hamilton Region Conservation Authority

(e) The President, Vice-President, Manager, Secretary, Director, or Treasurer authorized to act for (insert name(s) of corporation(s)) _____ described in paragraph(s) (a), (b), (c) above; (strike out references to inapplicable paragraphs)

(f) A transferee described in paragraph () (insert only one of paragraph (a), (b) or (c) above, as applicable) and am making this affidavit on my own behalf and on behalf of (insert name of spouse) _____ described in paragraph(s) (a), (b), (c) above; (strike out references to inapplicable paragraphs)

2. (To be completed where the value of the consideration for the conveyance exceeds \$400,000.)

I have read and considered the definition of "single family residence" set out in clause 1(1)(a) of the Act. The land conveyed in the above-described conveyance contains at least one and not more than two single family residences. **Note:** Clause 2(1)(d) imposes an additional tax at the rate of one-half of one per cent upon the value of consideration in excess of \$400,000 where the conveyance contains at least one and not more than two single family residences.

contains at least one and not more than two single family residences. (see instruction 3)

3. I have read and considered the definitions of "non-resident corporation" and "non-resident person" set out respectively in clauses 1(1)(f) and (g) of the Act and each of the following persons to whom or in trust for whom the land is being conveyed in the above-described conveyance is a "non-resident corporation" or a "non-resident person" as set out in the Act. (see instructions 4 and 5) none

4. THE TOTAL CONSIDERATION FOR THIS TRANSACTION IS ALLOCATED AS FOLLOWS:

(a) Monies paid or to be paid in cash	\$ 55,000.00	All Blanks Must Be Filled In. Insert "Nil" Where Applicable.
(b) Mortgages (i) Assumed (show principal and interest to be credited against purchase price)	\$ nil	
(ii) Given back to vendor	\$ nil	
(c) Property transferred in exchange (detail below)	\$ nil	
(d) Securities transferred to the value of (detail below)	\$ nil	
(e) Liens, legacies, annuities and maintenance charges to which transfer is subject	\$ nil	
(f) Other valuable consideration subject to land transfer tax (detail below)	\$ nil	
(g) VALUE OF LAND, BUILDING, FIXTURES AND GOODWILL SUBJECT TO LAND TRANSFER TAX (Total of (a) to (f))	\$ 55,000.00	
(h) VALUE OF ALL CHATTELS - items of tangible personal property (Retail Sales Tax is payable on the value of all chattels unless exempt under the provisions of the "Retail Sales Tax Act", R.S.O. 1980, c.454, as amended)	\$ nil	
(i) Other consideration for transaction not included in (g) or (h) above	\$ nil	
(j) TOTAL CONSIDERATION	\$ 55,000.00	

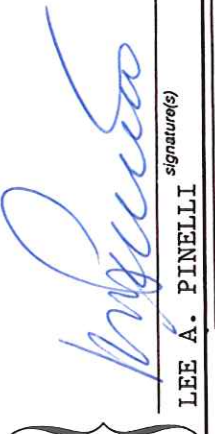
5. If consideration is nominal, describe relationship between transferor and transferee and state purpose of conveyance. (see instruction 6) n/a

6. If the consideration is nominal, is the land subject to any encumbrance? n/a

7. Other remarks and explanations, if necessary. _____

Sworn before me at the City of Hamilton
in the Regional Municipality of Hamilton-Wentworth
this 13th day of October 19 98


A Commissioner for taking Affidavits, etc.


LEE A. PINELLI
signature(s)

Property Information Record

A. Describe nature of instrument: Transfer

B. (i) Address of property being conveyed (if available) 1109 Sulphur Springs Road, Ancaster, Ontario

(ii) Assessment Roll No. (if available) 25 14 100 139 37400/25 14 100 130 38400

C. Mailing address(es) for future Notices of Assessment under the Assessment Act for property being conveyed (see instruction 7) P.O. Box 7099, 838 Mineral Springs Road Ancaster, Ontario L9G 3L3

D. (i) Registration number for last conveyance of property being conveyed (if available) 150487

(ii) Legal description of property conveyed: Same as in D.(i) above. Yes No Not known

E. Name(s) and address(es) of each transferee's solicitor
Lee A. Pinelli, Barristers and Solicitors, 1403-1 King Street West, Hamilton, Ontario L8P 1A4

School Tax Support (Voluntary Election) See reverse for explanation

- (a) Are all individual transferees Roman Catholic? Yes No
- (b) If Yes, do all individual transferees wish to be Roman Catholic Separate School Supporters? Yes No
- (c) Do all individual transferees have French Language Education Rights? Yes No
- (d) If Yes, do all individual transferees wish to support the French Language School Board (where established)? Yes No



Dear Hamilton Conservation Board Members

Friday November 17th 2017

City of Hamilton and the Township of Puslinch

Dan Bowman
Kris Brown
Councillor Chad Collins
Councillor Doug Conley
Councillor Lloyd Ferguson
Brad Gautreau
Councillor Aidan Johnson
Santina Moccio – Vice-Chair
Councillor Robert Pasuta - Chair
Councillor Susan Fielding - Puslinch
Maria Topalovic

Honourary Members

Chris Firth-Eagland
Mark Shurvin
Russ Powers
Thos. A. Beckett
Al Stacey
Wm. Powell*
Walker Drummond*
Archie H. McCoy*
Scott Fixter*
Thos. M. Thomson*
Les Couldry*

On Sept 5th the Save Our Spring Committee send a letter to the HCA – see attached below. Within the letter we offered alternative solutions to closure or fencing of the well. We also suggested that closing the well was directly against the legal land covenants.

Many members of the community were surprised at the move by the Hamilton Conservation Authority to move the vote for the Solution for the Ancaster Well from the November to the October board meeting as during this Community Process we all thought that we would have a larger discussion around possible solutions.

As you know Lloyd Ferguson did not support the concept of transfer of ownerships of the Well to a Community group, and he did not support changing the classification of the well to “artisan” to allow free continued access. He was indeed the champion of only one solution, Privatization. Many people within our community feel that this is a conflict of interest to his role as Town Council and that he should be removed from this process on conflict of interest.



The SOS Committee has now split Chris Krucker has decided to re-name his group to the Valley Water Watchers. I will continue to organize SOS events and support the SOS website. Many citizens want to know the answers to the following questions, and receive a formal response to the attached SOS letter.

In addition to the concerns around the legislation – there are also concerns around this political process.

Could you please respond in writing to these process related questions?

1. Why was the vote for the Ancaster Well Solution moved from Nov to Oct. and why was the public or any community groups not advised prior?
2. Has there been an offer to purchase the adjacent property – the Kennedy Farm by the HCA or any private members of the HCA.
3. Is it the intent of the HCA to put a fence around the well in fact an attempt to privatize so that an easement can be granted to the buyers of the Kennedy farm property?
4. Why were no other solutions considered other than fencing?
5. This question directly to Lisa Burnside, in a phone conversation you advised me that you were advised by the Board not to attend the Spring Valley home owner's association meeting or the Oct Board meeting. Why was this decision made?
6. Please further explain the policy that no one votes against a sitting Councilor in his own riding. I understand that Aiden Johnson is the first Councilor to do this in the History of the HCA. Is this an official policy and what were Aiden's objections, and how were they handled?
7. Does the HCA intend to null the Land Deed with the City of Hamilton and what is the process for that to happen?
8. Please can you supply evidence of an order to close the well from the health dept.

I look forward to a response to these community concerns.

Yours in water

Joanne Turnell
Save Our Spring
<http://saveourspring.ca>



August 5, 2017

Dear City Councilors,

We sincerely appreciate the hard work you do representing the citizens of the greater Hamilton community, and the time you volunteer to sit on the Board of the Hamilton Region Conservation Authority.

You will soon be casting a vote to close or to preserve the Ancaster Well.

We represent Save Our Spring (SOS), a team of concerned citizen volunteers working together to save the Ancaster Well as a continuing open water source for the community. We are currently gathering information on how and to what extent this water is being used within our community. We will be sharing our findings with you at the next HCA board meeting on September 7, 2017.

We sincerely ask that you give careful consideration to our concerns before casting your vote. Closing this water source will force thousands in our community to turn to bottled water as their primary drinking water source. This is clearly an undesirable outcome from an environmental and community standpoint. In addition, this water has a very real connection to our local heritage and to the psychological and economic well-being of those in our community. We urge you to consider these and the following points in the context of your mandate to serve your community.

We have summarized the following key issues that have been voiced to Save Our Spring, and which we will raise at the upcoming HCA Board meeting on September 7.

THE LEGISLATION

Small Drinking Water Systems

The Hamilton Conservation Authority indicates it has been advised by the City of Hamilton Health Services that the Ancaster Well is a Small Drinking Water System as defined under Ontario Regulation 319/08 of the Ontario Health Protection and Promotion Act. However we believe this interpretation is too broad and that Ontario Regulation 319/08 is meant to apply to more formal water distribution systems that are connected to domestic or commercial plumbing systems. Paragraph 6(2)(b) of the Regulation reads:

Every owner and every operator shall,

(b) ensure that all water provided by the system to the point where the system is connected to a user's plumbing system meets the requirements established by this Regulation or under the Ontario Drinking Water Quality Standards

The Ancaster Well is not connected to any user's domestic or commercial plumbing system.



Flow Rate

Small Drinking Water Systems have a higher flow rate than the current Ancaster Well. The relevant language in subsection 1(2) of the Regulation states:

a drinking water system [...] that is not capable of supplying drinking water at a rate of more than 2.9 litres per second will only be considered to be a small drinking water system if the system serves a public facility. O. Reg. 319/08, s. 1 (2).

The Ancaster Well does not serve a public facility.

Intent of Legislation

We believe an interpretation that would apply this legislation to the Ancaster Well is too broad. As a matter of statutory interpretation this legislation is intended to regulate humanly manufactured water distribution systems. The rationale is that if one engineers a water system one is responsible for safely maintaining it. The Ancaster Well water flows naturally from the ground under its own pressure in its natural unadulterated form. We believe it is not the aim of this legislation to regulate naturally flowing, untreated mineral water from deep source wells such as the Ancaster Well. SOS urges councillors to come forward to redress this overstep as our elected representatives and protect this valuable natural water source.

Regulation 319/08 can be found at <https://www.ontario.ca/laws/regulation/080319>

FIRST NATIONS

It has come to our attention that a number of Haudenosaunee families use the Ancaster Well. In the spirit of the recommendations of the Final Report of the Canadian Commission on Truth and Reconciliation, we respectfully request that the HCA initiate a consultation with the Haudenosaunee of Six Nations as is morally and legally appropriate before taking any decision or action affecting the continuation of the availability of this water source.

RESTRICTIVE COVENANT

SOS has reviewed the transfer documentation for the land where the Ancaster Well is located. The relevant language is below with a full abstract included as Schedule A.

Schedule to Transfer provides as follows:

"WHEREAS it is recognized that it is appropriate that there be certain restrictions placed on the lands being transferred herein, the Transferor and the Transferee covenant and agree as follows:

1. That the Transferee will maintain in perpetuity continued public access to well number 8, located on the land being transferred herein;
2. That the transferee will not charge a user fee for public access to the water supply available at well number 8, but may, instead, install a voluntary contribution box at or in the vicinity of well number 8; and
3. The Transferee assumes all responsibility and liability, if any, related to the water supply produced by well number 8."



CONCLUSION

We urge you to consider the depth of connection and importance of this water source to your community constituents. We firmly believe that with appropriate signage the way is clear to continue making this natural spring water available to those who choose to use it. In fact we believe the HCA is legally obliged to do so.

We look forward to seeing all of you at the upcoming Board meeting.

Sincerely,

Steering Committee, Save Our Spring (SOS) Cc

Board Members HCA



SCHEDULE A

PT LT 41, CON 1 ANCASTER , AS IN VM150487 ;

S/T AB146681,AB337991,HL303384 ANCASTER, CITY OF HAMILTON

Consideration, Notes & Comments Easement 28-Jan-65

Kennedy & Kennedy PUC of TWP of Ancaster Consideration = \$25.00

Purpose = water main & fire hydrant construction and maintenance

Easement 10-Jul-69 Kennedy & Kennedy PUC of TWP of Ancaster

Purpose = water drain construction for draining and pumping water from the pumping station on PUC lands to a creek on lands of the Grantors

Affidavit re Agreement between Kennedy & Kennedy and PUC of TWP of Ancaster of 31 December 1973 27-May-74 Hugh Fairbairn McKerracher, Sol.

For PUC of TWP of Ancaster

Statutory declaration re settlement of claim for losses due to well drilling and water extraction leading to a lowering of the water table.

PUC Twp. Of Ancaster paid \$550.00 to Kennedy & Kennedy

Kennedy & Kennedy granted an easement in perpetuity to the PUC of the TWP of Ancaster (10 feet wide to be used for installation and maintenance of a 1.5 inch water service

Kennedy & Kennedy agree to release and indemnify the PUC from any claims due to lowering of the water table now or in the future in consideration of this payment

Transfer/Deed of Land Signed 13 August 1992, registered 8 April 1993

Regional Municipality of Hamilton Wentworth The Corporation of the Town of Ancaster

Includes easement "required for the purposes of installing and maintaining water mains and appurtenances, 10 foot wide, including the right to pass over, along and use as a right of way

Affidavit of Residence and of Value appended (dated 7 April 1993) states "A return of lands from The regional Municipality of Hamilton-Wentworth to the Corporation of the Town of Ancaster for no consideration." fee paid "Total consideration....\$1.00"



Transfer/Deed of Land 13-Oct-98

The Corporation of the Town of Ancaster Hamilton region Conservation Authority This Transfer/Deed of Land is identical to the Restrictive Covenant registered on title on the same day. It is the practice of Service Ontario and agents to make the Restrictive Covenant explicit in this way. Consideration = \$55,000.00

Schedule to Transfer provides as follows: "WHEREAS it is recognized that it is appropriate that there be certain restrictions placed on the lands being transferred herein, the Transferor and the Transferee covenant and agree as follows: 1. That the Transferee will maintain in perpetuity continued public access to well number 8, located on the land being transferred herein; 2. That the transferee will not charge a user fee for public access to the water supply available at well number 8, but may, instead, install a voluntary contribution box at or in the vicinity of well number 8; and 3. The Transferee assumes all responsibility and liability, if any, related to the water supply produced by well number 8."



Dear Ms. Richardson,

Attached please find a letter we have circulated to City Councillors and members of the Board of Directors of the Hamilton Conservation Authority.

In it we detail the results of our research into the laws governing the Ancaster Well.

Our findings are that this water source is permissible under the new regulations, and moreover that closing the Ancaster Well is in contravention of the covenants set out in the transfer deed to the HCA.

We appreciate your time, and look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

Steering Committee (SOS)

Cc: Lisa Burnside - HCA



August 5, 2017

Dear City Councilors,

We sincerely appreciate the hard work you do representing the citizens of the greater Hamilton community, and the time you volunteer to sit on the Board of the Hamilton Region Conservation Authority.

You will soon be casting a vote to close or to preserve the Ancaster Well.

We represent Save Our Spring (SOS), a team of concerned citizen volunteers working together to save the Ancaster Well as a continuing open water source for the community. We are currently gathering information on how and to what extent this water is being used within our community. We will be sharing our findings with you at the next HCA board meeting on September 7, 2017.

We sincerely ask that you give careful consideration to our concerns before casting your vote. Closing this water source will force thousands in our community to turn to bottled water as their primary drinking water source. This is clearly an undesirable outcome from an environmental and community standpoint. In addition, this water has a very real connection to our local heritage and to the psychological and economic well-being of those in our community. We urge you to consider these and the following points in the context of your mandate to serve your community.

We have summarized the following key issues that have been voiced to Save Our Spring, and which we will raise at the upcoming HCA Board meeting on September 7.

THE LEGISLATION

Small Drinking Water Systems

The Hamilton Conservation Authority indicates it has been advised by the City of Hamilton Health Services that the Ancaster Well is a Small Drinking Water System as defined under Ontario Regulation 319/08 of the Ontario Health Protection and Promotion Act. However we believe this interpretation is too broad and that Ontario Regulation 319/08 is meant to apply to more formal water distribution systems that are connected to domestic or commercial plumbing systems. Paragraph 6(2)(b) of the Regulation reads:

Every owner and every operator shall,

(b) ensure that all water provided by the system to the point where the system is connected to a user's plumbing system meets the requirements established by this Regulation or under the Ontario Drinking Water Quality Standards

The Ancaster Well is not connected to any user's domestic or commercial plumbing system.



Flow Rate

Small Drinking Water Systems have a higher flow rate than the current Ancaster Well. The relevant language in subsection 1(2) of the Regulation states:

a drinking water system [...] that is not capable of supplying drinking water at a rate of more than 2.9 litres per second will only be considered to be a small drinking water system if the system serves a public facility. O. Reg. 319/08, s. 1(2).

The Ancaster Well does not serve a public facility.

Intent of Legislation

We believe an interpretation that would apply this legislation to the Ancaster Well is too broad. As a matter of statutory interpretation this legislation is intended to regulate humanly manufactured water distribution systems. The rationale is that if one engineers a water system one is responsible for safely maintaining it. The Ancaster Well water flows naturally from the ground under its own pressure in its natural unadulterated form. We believe it is not the aim of this legislation to regulate naturally flowing, untreated mineral water from deep source wells such as the Ancaster Well. SOS urges councillors to come forward to redress this overstep as our elected representatives and protect this valuable natural water source.

Regulation 319/08 can be found at <https://www.ontario.ca/laws/regulation/080319>

FIRST NATIONS

It has come to our attention that a number of Haudenosaunee families use the Ancaster Well. In the spirit of the recommendations of the Final Report of the Canadian Commission on Truth and Reconciliation, we respectfully request that the HCA initiate a consultation with the Haudenosaunee of Six Nations as is morally and legally appropriate before taking any decision or action affecting the continuation of the availability of this water source.

RESTRICTIVE COVENANT

SOS has reviewed the transfer documentation for the land where the Ancaster Well is located. The relevant language is below with a full abstract included as Schedule A.

Schedule to Transfer provides as follows:

"WHEREAS it is recognized that it is appropriate that there be certain restrictions placed on the lands being transferred herein, the Transferor and the Transferee covenant and agree as follows:

1. That the Transferee will maintain in perpetuity continued public access to well number 8, located on the land being transferred herein;
2. That the transferee will not charge a user fee for public access to

the water supply available at well number 8, but may, instead, install a voluntary contribution box at or in the vicinity of well number 8; and 3. The Transferee assumes all responsibility and liability, if any, related to the water supply produced by well number 8."



CONCLUSION

We urge you to consider the depth of connection and importance of this water source to your community constituents. We firmly believe that with appropriate signage the way is clear to continue making this natural spring water available to those who choose to use it. In fact we believe the HCA is legally obliged to do so.

We look forward to seeing all of you at the upcoming Board meeting.

Sincerely,

Steering Committee, Save Our Spring (SOS) Cc Board

Members HCA



SCHEDULE A

PT LT 41, CON 1 ANCASTER , AS IN VM150487 ;

S/T AB146681,AB337991,HL303384 ANCASTER, CITY OF HAMILTON

Consideration, Notes & Comments Easement 28-Jan-65

Kennedy & Kennedy PUC of TWP of Ancaster Consideration = \$25.00

Purpose = water main & fire hydrant construction and maintenance

Easement 10-Jul-69 Kennedy & Kennedy PUC of TWP of Ancaster

Purpose = water drain construction for draining and pumping water from the pumping station on PUC lands to a creek on lands of the Grantors

Affidavit re Agreement between Kennedy & Kennedy and PUC of TWP of Ancaster of 31 December 1973
27-May-74 Hugh Fairbairn McKerracher, Sol.

For PUC of TWP of Ancaster

Statutory declaration re settlement of claim for losses due to well drilling and water extraction leading to a lowering of the water table.

PUC Twp. Of Ancaster paid \$550.00 to Kennedy & Kennedy

Kennedy & Kennedy granted an easement in perpetuity to the PUC of the TWP of Ancaster (10 feet wide to be used for installation and maintenance of a 1.5 inch water service

Kennedy & Kennedy agree to release and indemnify the PUC from any claims due to lowering of the water table now or in the future in consideration of this payment

Transfer/Deed of Land Signed 13 August 1992, registered 8 April 1993

Regional Municipality of Hamilton Wentworth The Corporation of the Town of Ancaster

Includes easement "required for the purposes of installing and maintaining water mains and appurtenances, 10 foot wide, including the right to pass over, along and use as a right of way

Affidavit of Residence and of Value appended (dated 7 April 1993) states "A return of lands from The regional Municipality of Hamilton-Wentworth to the Corporation of the Town of Ancaster for no consideration." fee paid "Total consideration....\$1.00"



Transfer/Deed of Land 13-Oct-98

The Corporation of the Town of Ancaster Hamilton region Conservation Authority This Transfer/Deed of Land is identical to the Restrictive Covenant registered on title on the same day. It is the practice of Service Ontario and agents to make the Restrictive Covenant explicit in this way. Consideration = \$55,000.00

Schedule to Transfer provides as follows: "WHEREAS it is recognized that it is appropriate that there be certain restrictions placed on the lands being transferred herein, the Transferor and the Transferee covenant and agree as follows: 1. That the Transferee will maintain in perpetuity continued public access to well number 8, located on the land being transferred herein; 2. That the transferee will not charge a user fee for public access to the water supply available at well number 8, but may, instead, install a voluntary contribution box at or in the vicinity of well number 8; and 3. The Transferee assumes all responsibility and liability, if any, related to the water supply produced by well number 8."



August 5, 2017

Dear City Councillors,

We sincerely appreciate the hard work you do representing the citizens of the greater Hamilton community, and the time you volunteer to sit on the Board of the Hamilton Region Conservation Authority.

You will soon be casting a vote to close or to preserve the Ancaster Well.

We represent Save Our Spring (SOS), a team of concerned citizen volunteers working together to save the Ancaster Well as a continuing open water source for the community. We are currently gathering information on how and to what extent this water is being used within our community. We will be sharing our findings with you at the next HCA board meeting on September 7, 2017.

We sincerely ask that you give careful consideration to our concerns before casting your vote. Closing this water source will force thousands in our community to turn to bottled water as their primary drinking water source. This is clearly an undesirable outcome from an environmental and community standpoint. In addition, this water has a very real connection to our local heritage and to the psychological and economic well-being of those in our community. We urge you to consider these and the following points in the context of your mandate to serve your community.

We have summarized the following key issues that have been voiced to Save Our Spring, and which we will raise at the upcoming HCA Board meeting on September 7.

THE LEGISLATION

Small Drinking Water Systems

The Hamilton Conservation Authority indicates it has been advised by the City of Hamilton Health Services that the Ancaster Well is a Small Drinking Water System as defined under Ontario Regulation 319/08 of the Ontario Health Protection and Promotion Act. However we believe this interpretation is too broad and that Ontario Regulation 319/08 is meant to apply to more formal water distribution systems that are connected to domestic or commercial plumbing systems. Paragraph 6(2)(b) of the Regulation reads:

Every owner and every operator shall,

(b) ensure that all water provided by the system to the point where the system is connected to a user's plumbing system meets the requirements established by this Regulation or under the Ontario Drinking Water Quality Standards

The Ancaster Well is not connected to any user's domestic or commercial plumbing system.



Flow Rate

Small Drinking Water Systems have a higher flow rate than the current Ancaster Well. The relevant language in subsection 1(2) of the Regulation states:

a drinking water system [...] that is not capable of supplying drinking water at a rate of more than 2.9 litres per second will only be considered to be a small drinking water system if the system serves a public facility. O. Reg. 319/08, s. 1 (2).

The Ancaster Well does not serve a public facility.

Intent of Legislation

We believe an interpretation that would apply this legislation to the Ancaster Well is too broad. As a matter of statutory interpretation this legislation is intended to regulate humanly manufactured water distribution systems. The rationale is that if one engineers a water system one is responsible for safely maintaining it. The Ancaster Well water flows naturally from the ground under its own pressure in its natural unadulterated form. We believe it is not the aim of this legislation to regulate naturally flowing, untreated mineral water from deep source wells such as the Ancaster Well. SOS urges councillors to come forward to redress this overstep as our elected representatives and protect this valuable natural water source.

Regulation 319/08 can be found at <https://www.ontario.ca/laws/regulation/080319>

FIRST NATIONS

It has come to our attention that a number of Haudenosaunee families use the Ancaster Well. In the spirit of the recommendations of the Final Report of the Canadian Commission on Truth and Reconciliation, we respectfully request that the HCA initiate a consultation with the Haudenosaunee of Six Nations as is morally and legally appropriate before taking any decision or action affecting the continuation of the availability of this water source.

RESTRICTIVE COVENANT

SOS has reviewed the transfer documentation for the land where the Ancaster Well is located. The relevant language is below with a full abstract included as Schedule A.

Schedule to Transfer provides as follows:

"WHEREAS it is recognized that it is appropriate that there be certain restrictions placed on the lands being transferred herein, the Transferor and the Transferee covenant and agree as follows:

1. That the Transferee will maintain in perpetuity continued public access to well number 8, located on the land being transferred herein;
2. That the transferee will not charge a user fee for public access to the water supply available at well number 8, but may, instead, install a voluntary contribution box at or in the vicinity of well number 8; and
3. The Transferee assumes all responsibility and liability, if any, related to the water supply produced by well number 8."



CONCLUSION

We urge you to consider the depth of connection and importance of this water source to your community constituents. We firmly believe that with appropriate signage the way is clear to continue making this natural spring water available to those who choose to use it. In fact we believe the HCA is legally obliged to do so.

We look forward to seeing all of you at the upcoming Board meeting.

Sincerely,

Steering Committee, Save Our Spring (SOS)

cc: Board Members HCA



SCHEDULE A

PT LT 41, CON 1 ANCASTER , AS IN VM150487 ;

S/T AB146681,AB337991,HL303384 ANCASTER, CITY OF HAMILTON

Consideration, Notes & Comments Easement 28-Jan-65

Kennedy & Kennedy PUC of TWP of Ancaster Consideration = \$25.00

Purpose = water main & fire hydrant construction and maintenance

Easement 10-Jul-69 Kennedy & Kennedy PUC of TWP of Ancaster

Purpose = water drain construction for draining and pumping water from the pumping station on PUC lands to a creek on lands of the Grantors

Affidavit re Agreement between Kennedy & Kennedy and PUC of TWP of Ancaster of 31 December 1973 27-May-74 Hugh Fairbairn McKerracher, Sol.

For PUC of TWP of Ancaster

Statutory declaration re settlement of claim for losses due to well drilling and water extraction leading to a lowering of the water table.

PUC Twp. Of Ancaster paid \$550.00 to Kennedy & Kennedy

Kennedy & Kennedy granted an easement in perpetuity to the PUC of the TWP of Ancaster (10 feet wide to be used for installation and maintenance of a 1.5 inch water service

Kennedy & Kennedy agree to release and indemnify the PUC from any claims due to lowering of the water table now or in the future in consideration of this payment

Transfer/Deed of Land Signed 13 August 1992, registered 8 April 1993

Regional Municipality of Hamilton Wentworth The Corporation of the Town of Ancaster

Includes easement "required for the purposes of installing and maintaining water mains and appurtenances, 10 foot wide, including the right to pass over, along and use as a right of way

Affidavit of Residence and of Value appended (dated 7 April 1993) states "A return of lands from The regional Municipality of Hamilton-Wentworth to the Corporation of the Town of Ancaster for no consideration." fee paid "Total consideration....\$1.00"



Transfer/Deed of Land 13-Oct-98

The Corporation of the Town of Ancaster Hamilton region Conservation Authority This Transfer/Deed of Land is identical to the Restrictive Covenant registered on title on the same day. It is the practice of Service Ontario and agents to make the Restrictive Covenant explicit in this way. Consideration = \$55,000.00

Schedule to Transfer provides as follows: "WHEREAS it is recognized that it is appropriate that there be certain restrictions placed on the lands being transferred herein, the Transferor and the Transferee covenant and agree as follows: 1. That the Transferee will maintain in perpetuity continued public access to well number 8, located on the land being transferred herein; 2. That the transferee will not charge a user fee for public access to the water supply available at well number 8, but may, instead, install a voluntary contribution box at or in the vicinity of well number 8; and 3. The Transferee assumes all responsibility and liability, if any, related to the water supply produced by well number 8."



August 9 2017

**Councillor Chad Collins
Councillor Doug Conley
Councillor Lloyd Ferguson
Councillor Aidan Johnson
Councillor Robert Pasuta - Chair
Councillor Susan Fielding - Puslinch**

All,

It is with sincere appreciation that we thank you for your choice to become an elected official of the citizens of this community.

We also thank you for your willingness to sit on volunteer Boards, such as that as the Hamilton Conservation Authority.

You soon will be casting a vote either for or against the closure of the Ancaster Well.

We represent the Save Our Spring team of volunteers that is endeavoring to protect the Ancaster Well.

We are in the process of gathering information on how this water is used within our community, we will be sharing with you're the results of that survey at our next delegation to the HCA board.

We sincerely ask you to contemplate the greater good when casting your vote, and ask to you to make your decision first as an elected public official bound to ethical and moral principles.

We ask you to contemplate the following legal questions that have been posed to our committee and seek the answers among your selves as these will be our questions at the next HCA Board meeting.



1. We ask you to seek a second opinion to determine whether the application of the Small Drinking Water Standard is legally applicable for the Ancaster Well. (SEE ARTICLE 1)

The Hamilton Conservation Authority has advised us that the City of Hamilton Health Services has advised them that it is the law and they must comply, however, we believe this law is being applied in error and that the Ancaster Well does not legally fall under the category of Small Drinking Water System as defined in the interpretation of the enclosed standard.

2. We have reason to believe that this well is under Restrictive Covenant and that the Hamilton Conservation Authority has legal obligation to keep this well open. (SEE ARTICLE 2)

Schedule to Transfer provides as follows: "WHEREAS it is recognized that it is appropriate that there be certain restrictions placed on the lands being transferred herein, the Transferor and the Transferee covenant and agree as follows: 1. That the Transferee will maintain in perpetuity continued public access to well number 8, located on the land being transferred herein; 2. That the transferee will not charge a user fee for public access to the water supply available at well number 8, but may, instead, install a voluntary contribution box at or in the vicinity of well number 8; and 3. The Transferee assumes all responsibility and liability, if any, related to the water supply produced by well number 8."

Please can you reply to our concerns and again we sincerely ask you at your next moment of contemplation to consider the far reaching benefits to a community by having a redundant water supply in case of disaster.

Having a safe and free source of water such as the Ancaster Well, you are serving the greater good, turning off this supply out of fear of litigation is perhaps one of the lowest forms of government decision making. We ask you to help to create a better world for tomorrow that includes safe and free access to water.

Chris Krucker
Manorun Organic Farm
Chairman – SOS – Save Our Spring

ARTICLE 1

SMALL DRINKING WATER STANDARDS

<https://www.ontario.ca/laws/regulation/080319>



1. (1) For the purposes of this Regulation, the following drinking water systems are specified as small drinking water systems: 1. Subject to subsection (2), every municipal drinking water system that does not serve a major residential development and that does not serve a designated facility.

2. Subject to subsection (2), every non-municipal drinking water system that does not serve a major residential development or a trailer park or campground that has more than five service connections and that does not serve a designated facility.

3. Every non-municipal drinking water system that,

... serves, A. a major residential development, or B. a trailer park or campground that has more than five service connections, and

... does not operate to supply water to a development, trailer park or campground referred to in subparagraph ... for at least 60 consecutive days,

A. every calendar year, or

B. every period that begins on April 1 in one year and ends on March 31 in the following year. O. Reg. 319/08, s. 1 (1).

(2) Despite the specifications set out in paragraphs 1 and 2 of subsection (1), a drinking water system described in those paragraphs that is not capable of supplying drinking water at a rate of more than 2.9 litres per second will only be considered to be a small drinking water system if the system serves a public facility. O. Reg. 319/08, s. 1 (2).

(3) Where a drinking water system described in paragraph 1 or 2 of subsection (1) has one or more distribution lines that supply water exclusively for operations described in subsection (4), the following calculation shall be performed for purposes of determining under subsection (2) whether the drinking water system is capable of supplying drinking water at a rate of more than 2.9 litres per second:

ARTICLE 2

**PT LT 41, CON 1 ANCASTER , AS IN VM150487 ;
S/T AB146681,AB337991,HL303384 ANCASTER, CITY OF HAMILTON**



Consideration, Notes & Comments Easement 28 Jan 65
Kennedy & Kennedy PUC of TWP of Ancaster Consideration = \$25.00
Purpose = water main & fire hydrant construction and maintenance

Easement 10 Jul 69 Kennedy & Kennedy PUC of TWP of Ancaster
Purpose = water drain construction for draining and pumping water from the pumping station
on PUC lands to a creek on lands of the Grantors

Affidavit re Agreement between Kennedy & Kennedy and PUC of TWP of Ancaster of 31
December 1973 27 May 74 Hugh Fairbairn McKerracher, Sol.
For PUC of TWP of Ancaster
Statutory declaration re settlement of claim for losses due to well drilling and water extraction
leading to a lowering of the water table.

PUC Twp. Of Ancaster paid \$550.00 to Kennedy & Kennedy
Kennedy & Kennedy granted an easement in perpetuity to the PUC of the TWP of Ancaster (10
feet wide to be used for installation and maintenance of a 1.5 inch water service
Kennedy & Kennedy agree to release and indemnify the PUC from any claims due to lowering of
the water table now or in the future in consideration of this payment

Transfer/Deed of Land Signed 13 August 1992, registered 8 April 1993
Regional Municipality of Hamilton Wentworth The Corporation of the Town of Ancaster
Includes easement "required for the purposes of installing and maintaining watermains and
appurtenances, 10 foot wide, including the right to pass over, along and use as a right of way
Affidavit of Residence and of Value appended (dated 7 April 1993) states "A return of lands
from The regional Municipality of Hamilton Wentworth to the Corporation of the Town of
Ancaster for no consideration." fee paid "Total consideration....\$1.00"

Transfer/Deed of Land 13 Oct 98
The Corporation of the Town of Ancaster Hamilton region Conservation Authority This
Transfer/Deed of Land is identical to the Restrictive Covenant registered on title on the same
day. It is the practice of Service Ontario and agents to make the Restrictive Covenant explicit in
this way. Consideration = \$55,000.00

Schedule to Transfer provides as follows: "WHEREAS it is recognized that it is appropriate that
there be certain restrictions placed on the lands being transferred herein, the Transferor and
the Transferee covenant and agree as follows: 1. That the Transferee will maintain in
perpetuity continued public access to well number 8, located on the land being transferred
herein; 2. That the transferee will not charge a user fee for public access to the water supply



available at well number 8, but may, instead, install a voluntary contribution box at or in the vicinity of well number 8; and 3. The Transferee assumes all responsibility and liability, if any, related to the water supply produced by well number 8."

Restrictive Covenant Registered on Title 13 Oct 98 The Corporation of the Town of
Ancaster Hamilton region Conservation Authority This Transfer/Deed of Land is
identical to the Restrictive Covenant registered on title on the same day. It is the practice of
Service Ontario and agents to make the Restrictive Covenant explicit in this way.
Consideration = \$55,000.00



Hamilton Region Conservation Authority and Confederation Beach Park

For the year ended December 31, 2023

Report to the Board of Directors
Audit strategy and results

June 11, 2024

Melanie Dugard, CPA, CA

Principal

T 416 607 7303

E Melanie.Dugard@ca.gt.com

Kashif Khan, CPA, ACA (Pak)

Manager

T 416-360-4091

E Kashif.Khan@ca.gt.com

Contents

Executive summary	1
Audit risks and results	3
Adjustments and uncorrected misstatements	5
Other reportable matters	6
Thought leadership	7

Appendices

Appendix A – Draft management representation letter
Appendix B – Overview and approach
Appendix C – Accounting developments
Appendix D – Auditing developments

Executive summary

Purpose of report and scope

The purpose of this report is to engage in an open dialogue with you regarding our audit of the financial statements of Hamilton Region Conservation Authority and Confederation Beach Park (the "Authority") for the year ended December 31, 2023. This communication will assist the Board of Directors in understanding our overall audit strategy and results of audit procedures and includes comments on misstatements, significant accounting policies, sensitive estimates and other matters.

The information in this document is intended solely for the information and use of the Budget and Administration Committee and Board of Directors. It is not intended to be distributed or used by anyone other than these specified parties.

We have obtained our engagement letter dated March 13, 2023, which outlines our responsibilities and the responsibilities of management.

We were engaged to provide the following deliverables:

Deliverable

Report on the December 31, 2023 financial statements

Communication of audit strategy and results

Status of our audit

We have substantially completed our audit of the financial statements of the Authority and the results of that audit are included in this report.

We will finalize our report upon resolution of the following items that were outstanding:

- Response to a few follow-up queries from the fieldwork;
- Receipt of signed management representation letter (a draft has been attached in **Appendix A**);
- Approval of the financial statements by the Board;
- Response from the Authority's legal counsel to be dated within five days of when the financial statements are approved by the Board; and
- Inquiries which will be required between the date of the report to the date the financial statements are approved by the Board.

Auditor's report modifications

Our responsibility is to form an opinion on the financial statements. We are also required to communicate matters that impact our standard auditor's report, including key audit matters or modifications to the reports. Our auditor's opinion is qualified over the departure of not determining the Authority's liability for asset retirement obligations related to its tangible capital assets under the new accounting standard, PS 3280 – *Asset retirement obligations*.

Approach

Our audit approach requires that we establish an overall strategy that focuses on risk areas. We identify and assess risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error. The greater the risk of material misstatement associated with an area of the financial statements, including disclosures, the greater the audit emphasis placed on it in terms of audit verification and analysis. Where the nature of a risk of material misstatement is such that it requires special audit consideration, it is classified as a significant risk.

Our approach is discussed further in the **Appendix B**.

Independence

We have a rigorous process where we continually monitor and maintain our independence. The process of maintaining our independence includes, but is not limited to:

- Identification of threats to our independence and putting into place safeguards to mitigate those threats. For example, we evaluate the independence threat of any non-audit services provided to the Authority
- Confirming the independence of our engagement team members

We have identified no information regarding our independence that in our judgment should be brought to your attention.

Audit risks and results

We highlight our significant findings in respect of risks, accounting practices and other areas of focus.

Area of focus	Why there is a risk	Our response and findings
Admission, product, service and program fees	<p>There is a presumed risk of fraud in revenue.</p> <p>The risk primarily relates to revenue recognized under user fees and other revenue.</p>	<p>We verified significant revenues to supporting documentation on sample basis, as well as an analysis of user fees by month compared to expectations (prior year).</p> <p>We performed reasonability analysis of the accounts receivable at year end by testing subsequent receipts and reviewing any accounts written off during the year.</p> <p>We tested key controls around the user fee process and also performed a substantive test of fees on a sample basis.</p> <p><i>No matters of concern were found.</i></p>
Fraud risk from management override or weakness in segregation of duties	<p>This is a presumed fraud risk.</p> <p>The risk primarily relates to inherent pressure for a public sector entity to not exceed any budgeted amounts. The combination of the opportunity and motivation makes this presumed fraud risk applicable to the Authority.</p>	<p>We obtained the entire population of journal entries for the year and using data analytics, tested a sample based on characteristics deemed unusual given our knowledge of the Authority's operations.</p> <p>We reviewed any accounting estimates for biases,</p> <p>We evaluated the business rationale for significant transactions that are or appear to be outside the normal course of business.</p> <p><i>No matters of concern were found.</i></p>
Risk of expenditures and payables understated or not recorded in the correct period	<p>This risk primarily relates to the inherent bias to manage the budget.</p>	<p>We performed a variance analysis of operating expenses and accrued liabilities between prior year and current year and then investigated any significant or unusual variances.</p> <p>We tested a sample of expenses to ensure that the expenses were recorded in the appropriate period; and</p> <p>We performed a search for unrecorded liabilities by testing a sample of disbursements after year end to ensure they were recognized in the correct period.</p> <p><i>No matters of concern were found.</i></p>

Accounting practices

Area of focus	Matter	Our response and findings
Financial instruments	Sections PS 3450 Financial Instruments, PS 3041 Portfolio Investments, PS 2601 Foreign Currency Translation and Section 1201 Financial Statement Presentation along with the related amendments requires the fair value measurement of derivatives and portfolio investments in equities quoted in an active market. Additional disclosures are also required for classifications of financial instruments based on their subsequent measurement policy.	We examined management's financial instruments and determined applicability of the new disclosures required by the standard. We assisted management in the preparation of the note disclosures. Based on our audit procedures, we have determined that management's disclosures are reasonable
Accounting estimates and disclosures	Management is responsible for determining significant accounting policies. The choice of different accounting policy alternatives can have a significant effect on the financial position and results of operations of the Authority. The application of those policies often involves significant estimates and judgments by management. Examples of such estimates would include allowances for doubtful accounts, the amortization rates used for tangible capital assets, and certain accruals as at year end.	Based on our audit procedures, we are of the opinion that the estimates made by management are reasonable.
Fraud and illegal acts	Our audit procedures were performed for the purpose of forming an opinion of the financial statements and although these procedures might bring possible fraudulent or illegal activities to our attention, our audit procedures are less likely to detect material misstatements arising from fraud or other illegal acts because such acts are usually accompanied by acts designed to conceal their existence.	We did not detect any fraudulent or illegal activities or material misstatements resulting from fraudulent or illegal activities during our audit.
Litigation proceedings	We are required to examine legal costs incurred in the year to verify that there are not any contingent liabilities that could have an effect today and in the future of Authority's financial results.	We are in the process of communicating with the Authority's legal counsel. Based on management's representations and our audit procedures, there are no claims or possible claims of which we are aware that may result in a contingent liability, except for the ongoing lawsuit relating to one terminated employee. Should a claim or possible claim or potential liability be identified by the Authority's legal counsel, we will inform the Committee and the Board accordingly.

Adjustments and uncorrected misstatements

Adjustments

Misstatements identified and adjusted in the financial statements by the Authority as a result of our audit procedures are as follows:

Description	Statement of financial position			Income effect	
	Assets	Liabilities	Accumulated surplus	Annual surplus	
To record gain on sale of property	\$ (103,612)	\$ -	\$ -	\$ (1,296,388)	1,400,000
Total adjusted misstatements	\$ (103,612)	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 103,612	

Uncorrected misstatements

We have no non-trivial unadjusted misstatements to report.

Summary of disclosure matters

Our audit did not identify any unadjusted non-trivial misstatements of disclosure matters.

Other reportable matters

Internal control

The audit is designed to express an opinion on the financial statements. We obtain an understanding of internal control over financial reporting to the extent necessary to plan the audit and to determine the nature, timing and extent of our work. Accordingly, we do not express an opinion on the effectiveness of internal control.

If we become aware of a deficiency in your internal control over financial reporting, the auditing standards require us to communicate to the Board of Directors those deficiencies we consider significant. However, a financial statement audit is not designed to provide assurance on internal control.

While not significant deficiencies in internal controls, we did identify the following specific best practice recommendation:

Formal risk assessment process

While we noted that there is an informal risk assessment process where management and Board discuss the prevailing risks in the committee and Board meetings, it is best practice to have a formal risk assessment process whereby the Board reviews all risks that impact the Authority as a whole.

We recommended that the Board implement a formal risk assessment process which would help management to prepare for any such risks which can impact the operations and also to have mitigation plan in place to track and update on regular basis.

Accounting

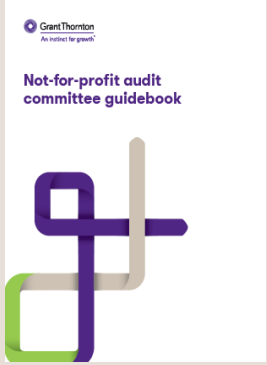



Details of the changes to accounting standards are included in Appendix C. PS 3280 *Asset Retirement* Obligations came into effect for the December 31, 2023 year end. Due to the requirement to evaluate all assets held for potential legal obligation to remediate when no longer in use, management requires another year to prepare for implementation of the standard. As a result, we have qualified our audit opinion. There are no other items noted that would have an immediate impact on the financial statements but should be considered in future years if become applicable.

Assurance

No items that would have an immediate impact were noted, however items under development are included in Appendix D.

Thought leadership

We are leaders in the charity and not-for-profit accounting industry, and we pass our knowledge on to our clients through numerous “Thought Leadership” publications. We have included below our most recent publications.

 <p>Grant Thornton An audit for growth</p> <p>Not-for-profit audit committee guidebook</p>	<p><u>Not-for-profit audit committee guidebook</u></p>	 <p>WOMEN IN BUSINESS 2...</p> <p>Accelerating parity across leadership and beyond</p>	<p><u>Women in Business 2023</u></p>	 <p>CYBERSECURITY</p> <p>Key cybersecurity questions answered</p> <p>4 min read 29 Jun 2023</p>	<p><u>Key cybersecurity questions answered</u></p>
 <p>ADVISORY</p> <p>Four ways to boost your whistleblower program's effectiveness</p> <p>6 min read 26 May 2023</p>	<p><u>Four ways to boost your whistleblower program's effectiveness</u></p>				

Appendix A – Management Representation Letter

Management Representation Letter

June XX, 2024

Grant Thornton LLP
33 Main Street East
Hamilton, ON
L8N 4K5

Dear Ms. Dugard:

We are providing this letter in connection with your audit of the financial statements of Hamilton Region Conservation Authority ("the Authority") as of December 31, 2023, and for the year then ended, for the purpose of expressing an opinion as to whether the financial statements present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position, results of operations, and cash flows of Hamilton Region Conservation Authority in accordance with Canadian public sector accounting standards.

We acknowledge that we have fulfilled our responsibilities for the preparation of the financial statements in accordance with Canadian public sector accounting standards and for the design and implementation of internal controls to prevent and detect fraud and error. We have assessed the risk that the financial statements may be materially misstated as a result of fraud, and have determined such risk to be low. Further, we acknowledge that your examination was planned and conducted in accordance with Canadian generally accepted auditing standards (GAAS) so as to enable you to express an opinion on the financial statements. We understand that while your work includes an examination of the accounting system, internal controls and related data to the extent you considered necessary in the circumstances, it is not designed to identify, nor can it necessarily be expected to disclose, fraud, shortages, errors and other irregularities, should any exist.

Certain representations in this letter are described as being limited to matters that are material. An item is considered material, regardless of its monetary value, if it is probable that its omission from or misstatement in the financial statements would influence the decision of a reasonable person relying on the financial statements.

We confirm, to the best of our knowledge and belief, as of June XX, 2024, the following representations made to you during your audit.

Financial statements

1. The financial statements referred to above present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the Authority as at December 31, 2023 and the results of its operations and its cash flows for the year then ended in accordance with Canadian public sector accounting standards, as agreed to in the terms of the audit engagement.

Completeness of information

2. We have made available to you all financial records and related data and all minutes of the meetings of directors, and committees of directors, as agreed in the terms of the audit engagement. Summaries of actions of recent meetings for which minutes have not yet been prepared have been provided to you. All significant board and committee actions are included in the summaries.
3. We have provided you with unrestricted access to persons within the Authority from whom you determined it necessary to obtain audit evidence.
4. There are no material transactions that have not been properly recorded in the accounting records underlying the financial statements.
5. There were no restatements made to correct a material misstatement in the prior period financial statements that affect the comparative information.

6. We are unaware of any known or probable instances of non-compliance with the requirements of regulatory or governmental authorities, including their financial reporting requirements.
7. We are unaware of any violations or possible violations of laws or regulations the effects of which should be considered for disclosure in the financial statements or as the basis of recording a contingent loss.
8. We have disclosed to you all known deficiencies in the design or operation of internal control over financial reporting of which we are aware.
9. We have identified to you all known related parties and related party transactions, including sales, purchases, loans, transfers of assets, liabilities and services, leasing arrangements guarantees, non-monetary transactions and transactions for no consideration.

Fraud and error

10. We have no knowledge of fraud or suspected fraud affecting the Authority involving management; employees who have significant roles in internal control; or others, where the fraud could have a non-trivial effect on the financial statements.
11. We have no knowledge of any allegations of fraud or suspected fraud affecting the Authority's financial statements communicated by employees, former employees, analysts, regulators or others.
12. We acknowledge our responsibility for the design, implementation and maintenance of internal control to prevent and detect fraud.
13. We believe that there are no uncorrected misstatements in the financial statements taken as a whole.

Recognition, measurement and disclosure

14. We believe that the methods, significant assumptions and data used by us in making accounting estimates and related disclosures are appropriate to achieve recognition, measurement and disclosure that are in accordance with Canadian public sector accounting standards.
15. We have no plans or intentions that may materially affect the carrying value or classification of assets and liabilities, both financial and non-financial, reflected in the financial statements.
16. All related party transactions have been appropriately measured and disclosed in the financial statements.
17. The nature of all material measurement uncertainties has been appropriately disclosed in the financial statements, including all estimates where it is reasonably possible that the estimate will change in the near term and the effect of the change could be material to the financial statements.
18. All outstanding and possible claims, whether or not they have been discussed with legal counsel, have been disclosed to you and are appropriately reflected in the financial statements.
19. All liabilities and contingencies, including those associated with guarantees, whether written or oral, have been disclosed to you and are appropriately reflected in the financial statements.
20. With respect to environmental matters:
 - a) at year end, there were no liabilities or contingencies that have not already been disclosed to you;

- b) liabilities or contingencies have been recognized, measured and disclosed, as appropriate, in the financial statements; and
 - c) commitments have been measured and disclosed, as appropriate, in the financial statements.
21. The Authority has satisfactory title to (or lease interest in) all assets, and there are no liens or encumbrances on the Authority's assets nor has any been pledged as collateral.
22. We have disclosed to you, and the Authority has complied with, all aspects of contractual agreements that could have a material effect on the financial statements in the event of non-compliance, including all covenants, conditions or other requirements of all outstanding debt.
23. The Goods and Services Tax (GST) and Harmonized Sales Tax (HST) transactions recorded by the Authority are in accordance with the federal and provincial regulations. The GST and HST liability/receivable amounts recorded by the Authority are considered complete.
24. Employee future benefit costs, assets, and obligations have been determined, accounted for and disclosed in accordance with the requirements of Section 3250 Retirement Benefits and 3255 Post-Employment Benefits of the Chartered Professional Accountants of Canada (CPA Canada) Public Sector Accounting Handbook.
25. There have been no events subsequent to the balance sheet date up to the date hereof that would require recognition or disclosure in the financial statements. Further, there have been no events subsequent to the date of the comparative financial statements that would require adjustment of those financial statements and related notes.

Other

26. We have considered whether or not events have occurred or conditions exist which may cast significant doubt on the Authority's ability to continue as a going concern and have concluded that no such events or conditions are evident.

Yours very truly,

Lisa Burnside
Chief Administration Officer

Scott Fleming
Director of Finance & Central Support Services

Appendix B – Overview and approach

Our audit is planned with the objective of obtaining reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, so that we are able to express an opinion on whether the financial statements are prepared, in all material respects, in accordance with Canadian public sector accounting standards. The following outlines key concepts that are applicable to the audit, including the responsibilities of parties involved, our general audit approach and other considerations.

Roles and responsibilities

Role of the board of directors

- Help set the tone for the organization by emphasizing honesty, ethical behaviour and fraud prevention
 - Oversee management, including ensuring that management establishes and maintains internal controls to provide reasonable assurance regarding reliability of financial reporting
 - Oversee the work of the external auditors
-

Role of management

- Prepare financial statements in accordance with Canadian public sector accounting standards
 - Design, implement and maintain effective internal controls over financial reporting processes, including controls to prevent and detect fraud
 - Exercise sound judgment in selecting and applying accounting policies
 - Prevent, detect and correct errors, including those caused by fraud
 - Provide representations to external auditors
 - Assess quantitative and qualitative impact of misstatements discovered during the audit on fair presentation of the financial statements
-

Role of Grant Thornton LLP

- Provide an audit opinion that the financial statements are in accordance with Canadian public sector accounting standards
 - Conduct our audit in accordance with Canadian Generally Accepted Auditing Standards (GAAS)
 - Maintain independence and objectivity
 - Be a resource to management and to those charged with governance
 - Communicate matters of interest to those charged with governance
 - Establish an effective two-way communication with those charged with governance, to report matters of interest to them and obtain their comments on audit risk matters
-

Audit approach

Our understanding of the Authority and its operations drives our audit approach, which is risk based and specifically tailored to Hamilton Region Conservation Authority and Confederation Beach Park.

The five key phases of our audit approach



Phase	Our approach
1. Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We obtain our understanding of your operations, internal controls and information systems We plan the audit timetable together
2. Assessing risk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We use our knowledge gained from the planning phase to assess financial reporting risks We customize our audit approach to focus our efforts on key areas
3. Evaluating internal controls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We evaluate the design of controls you have implemented over financial reporting risks We identify areas where our audit could be more effective or efficient by taking an approach that includes testing the controls We provide you with information about the areas where you could potentially improve your controls
4. Testing accounts and transactions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We perform tests of balances and transactions We use technology and tools, including data interrogation tools, to perform this process in a way that enhances effectiveness and efficiency
5. Concluding and reporting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We conclude on the sufficiency and appropriateness of our testing We finalize our report and provide you with our observations and recommendations

Our tailored audit approach results in procedures designed to respond to an identified risk. The greater the risk of material misstatement associated with the account, class of transactions or balance, the greater the audit emphasis placed on it in terms of audit verification and analysis.

Throughout the execution of our audit approach, we maintained our professional skepticism, recognizing the possibility that a material misstatement due to fraud could exist notwithstanding our past experiences with the entity and our beliefs about management's honesty and integrity.

Fraud risk factor considerations

We are responsible for planning and performing the audit to obtain reasonable assurance as to whether the financial statements are free of material misstatement caused by error or by fraud. Our responsibility includes:

- The identification and assessment of the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements due to fraud through procedures including discussions amongst the audit team and specific inquiries of management
- Obtaining sufficient appropriate audit evidence to respond to the fraud risks noted
- Responding appropriately to any fraud or suspected fraud identified during the audit

Due to the inherent limitations of an audit, there is an unavoidable risk that some material misstatements may not be detected and this is particularly true in relation to fraud. The primary responsibility for the prevention and detection of fraud rests with those charged with governance and management.

We are required to communicate with you on fraud-related matters, including:

- Obtaining an understanding of how you exercise oversight of management's processes for identifying and responding to the risks of fraud in the entity and the internal control that management has established to mitigate these risks
- Inquiring as to whether you have knowledge of any actual, suspected or alleged fraud affecting the entity

The following provides a summary of some of the fraud related procedures that are performed during the audit:

- Testing the appropriateness of journal entries recorded in the general ledger and other adjustments made in the preparation of the financial statements
- Reviewing accounting estimates for biases
- Evaluating the business rationale (or the lack thereof) for significant transactions that are or appear to be outside the normal course of operations

Quality control

We have a robust quality control program that forms a core part of our client service. We combine internationally developed audit methodology, advanced audit technology, rigorous review procedures, mandatory professional development requirements, and the use of specialists to deliver high quality audit services to our clients. In addition to our internal processes, we are subject to inspection and oversight by standard setting and regulatory bodies. We are proud of our firm's approach to quality control and would be pleased to discuss any aspect with you at your convenience.

IDEA Data Analysis Software

We apply our audit methodology using advanced software tools. IDEA Data Analysis Software is a powerful analysis tool that allows audit teams to read, display, analyze, manipulate, sample and extract data from almost any electronic source. The tool has the advantages of enabling the audit team to perform data analytics on very large data sets in a very short space of time, while providing the checks, balances and audit trail necessary to ensure that the data is not corrupted and that the work can be easily reviewed. SmartAnalyzer, an add-on to IDEA, further improves the efficiency and effectiveness of the audit by providing automated routines for certain common analytical tasks, such as identifying unusual and potentially fraudulent journal entries. Grant Thornton continues to invest in developing industry-leading audit data analytical tools.

Appendix C – PSAS

Accounting developments

Public Sector Accounting Standards

Effective date

2022-2023 Annual Improvements to PSAS

Effective April 1, 2023 (Immediately)

The Public Sector Accounting Board (PSAB) has adopted an annual improvements process to make minor improvements to standards which include clarifying guidance or wording within the standards or correcting relatively minor unintended consequences, conflicts or oversights.

The following standards were amended in the 2022-2023 process:

- Section PS 3160 *Public Private Partnerships*
The amendment updated the transitional provisions to explicitly state that early adoption is permitted.
- Section PS 3420 *Inter-Entity Transactions*
The amendment clarifies that PSG-8 *Purchased Intangibles* applies to inter-entity transactions.

Section PS 1202 *Financial Statement Presentation*

New Section PS 1202 *Financial Statement Presentation* replaces Section PS 1201 *Financial Statement Presentation*.

The main features of the new Section include:

- Changes to the statement of financial position to present financial assets, non-financial assets, total assets, financial liabilities, non-financial liabilities total liabilities and net assets/net liabilities
- Separate statement of changes in net assets or net liabilities (formerly known as accumulated surplus) by required categories
- The addition of a statement of net financial assets or net financial liabilities that presents a revised net financial assets or net financial liabilities (formerly known as “net debt”) calculation
- The option to present the change in net financial assets or net financial liabilities on the statement of net financial assets or net financial liabilities
- Ability to present an amended budget when there is an election or the majority of the governing body of a government organization is newly elected or appointed
- The requirement to provide a subtotal prior to financing activities in the statement of cash flow
- Guidance on assessing the going concern assumption

As a result of the issuance of the new Section, various Sections and Guidelines of the Handbook have been amended to include references to the Section. The impacted Sections and Guidelines include:

Fiscal years beginning on or after April 1, 2026.

Earlier adoption is permitted *only if* the Conceptual Framework is also adopted at the same time.

Prior period amounts would need to be restated to conform to the presentation requirements for comparative financial information in Section PS 1202.

Public Sector Accounting Standards**Effective date**

- PS 1300 *Government Reporting Entity*
- PS 2120 *Accounting Changes*
- PS 2500 *Basic Principles of Consolidation*
- PS 2510 *Additional Areas of Consolidation*
- PS 2601 *Foreign Currency Translation*
- PS 3041 *Portfolio Investments*
- PS 3060 *Interest in Partnerships*
- PS 3070 *Investments in Government Business Enterprises*
- PS 3100 *Restricted Assets and Revenues*
- PS 3160 *Public Private Partnerships*
- PS 3230 *Long-Term Debt*
- PS 3250 *Retirement Benefits*
- PS 3255 *Post-Employment Benefits, Compensated Absences and Termination Benefits*
- PS 3260 *Liability for Contaminated Sites*
- PS 3280 *Asset Retirement Obligations*
- PS 3300 *Contingent Liabilities*
- PS 3310 *Loan Guarantees*
- PS 3400 *Revenue*
- PS 3410 *Government Transfers*
- PS 3430 *Restructuring Transactions*
- PS 3450 *Financial Instruments*
- PS 4200 *Financial Statement Presentation by Not-for-Profit Organizations*
- PSG-2 *Leased Tangible Capital Assets*
- PSG-4 *Funds and Reserves*
- PSG-5 *Sale-Leaseback Transactions*

Conceptual Framework for Financial Reporting in the Public Sector

PSAB's Conceptual Framework for Financial Reporting in the Public Sector replaces Sections PS 1000 *Financial Statement Concepts* and PS 1100 *Financial Statement Objectives*.

Fiscal years beginning on or after April 1, 2026.

Earlier adoption is permitted.

The new Conceptual Framework includes:

- Characteristics of public sector entities
- Objectives of financial reporting
- Primary users of financial reporting and their expectations
- Role of financial statements
- Foundations and objectives of financial statements
- Qualitative characteristics of information in financial statements
- Qualitative characteristics of information in financial statements and related considerations
- Definitions of elements
- Criteria of general recognition and derecognition; and,
- Concepts of general measurement and presentation

As a result of the issuance of the Conceptual Framework, various Sections and Guidelines of the Handbook have been amended to include references to the new Conceptual Framework, add/clarify key definitions that are consistent with the Conceptual Framework, and/or remove references to qualitative characteristics that are no longer qualitative characteristics in the new Conceptual Framework. These Sections include:

- Introduction to the Public Sector Accounting Handbook (formerly the Introduction to the Public Sector Accounting Standards)
- PS 1150 *Generally accepted Accounting Principles*
- PS 1201 *Financial Statement Presentation*
- PS 1300 *Government Reporting Entity*
- PS 2100 *Disclosure of Accounting Policies*
- PS 2120 *Accounting Changes*
- PS 2130 *Measurement Uncertainty*
- PS 2200 *Related Party Transactions*
- PS 3150 *Tangible Capital Assets*
- PS 3200 *Liabilities*
- PS 3210 *Assets*
- PS 3400 *Revenue*
- PS 3430 *Restructuring Transactions*
- PS 3450 *Financial Instruments; and*
- PS 4230 *Capital Assets Held by Not-for-Profit Organizations*

The Conceptual Framework will be applied prospectively.

Public Sector Accounting Standards**Effective date**

Section PS 3160 Public Private Partnerships

New Section PS 3160 *Public Private Partnerships* establishes standards on how to account for public private partnerships between public and private sector entities where infrastructure is procured by a public sector entity using a private sector partner that is obligated to design, build, acquire or better infrastructure; finance the infrastructure past the point where the infrastructure is ready for use and operate and/or maintain the infrastructure. Infrastructure typically includes items such as tangible capital assets (i.e., complex network systems), but may also include items that are intangible in nature. The main features of the new Section are:

- The infrastructure is recognized as an asset when the public sector entity acquires control of the infrastructure. A liability is also recognized when the public sector entity recognizes an asset
- The infrastructure asset and corresponding liability are initially measured at the cost of the infrastructure asset
- Subsequent measurement of the infrastructure asset is based on the asset cost amortized in a rational and systematic manner over the useful life of the asset
- Subsequent measurement of the financial liability is at amortized cost using the effective interest method. When all or a portion of the liability represents a performance obligation, revenue is recognized, and the liability reduced in accordance with the substance of the public private partnership agreement (as performance is achieved)

Retrospective or prospective application is permitted.

Fiscal years beginning on or after April 1, 2023.

Earlier adoption is permitted.

Section PS 1000 Financial statement concepts, Section 1201 Financial Statement Presentation, and PSG-8 Purchased intangibles

Section PS 1000 has been amended to remove the prohibition of recognition of purchased intangibles in public sector financial statements. Consequentially, Section PS 1201 has also been amended to remove disclosure requirements for unrecognized purchased intangibles since entities can now recognize purchased intangibles in their financial statements. Entities still reporting in accordance with Section PS 1200 *Financial Statement Presentation* can also adopt the amendments and recognize purchased intangible assets. New Public Sector Guideline, PSG-8 *Purchased intangibles*, has been issued to explain the scope of the intangibles that are allowed to be recognized in the financial statements given this amendment to Section PS 1000. However, it is important to note that no further recognition, measurement, disclosure and presentation guidance has been provided.

The main features of PSG-8 include:

- A definition of purchased intangibles (which does not include those received through a government transfer, contribution or inter-entity transaction)
- Examples of items that are not purchased intangibles
- References to other guidance in the Handbook on intangibles
- Reference to the asset definition, general recognition criteria and the GAAP hierarchy for accounting for purchased intangibles

Retrospective or prospective application is permitted.

Fiscal years beginning on or after April 1, 2023.

Earlier adoption is permitted.

Section PS 3400 Revenues

New Section PS 3400 *Revenue* establishes standards on how to account for and report on revenue. It does not apply to revenues for which specific standards already exist, such as government transfers, tax revenue or restricted revenues. The Section distinguishes between revenue that arises from transactions that include performance obligations (i.e., exchange transactions) and transactions that do not have performance obligations (i.e., non-exchange transactions). The main features of the new Section are:

- Performance obligations are defined as enforceable promises to provide specific goods or services to a specific payer
- Revenue from transactions with performance obligations will be recognized when (or as) the performance obligation is satisfied by providing the promised goods or services to the payer
- Revenue from transactions with no performance obligations will be recognized when a public sector entity has the authority to claim or retain the revenue and identifies a past transaction or event that gives rise to an asset

Fiscal years beginning on or after April 1, 2023.

Earlier adoption is permitted.

(NOTE: The effective date was previously April 1, 2022, but in August 2020, as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Public Sector Accounting Board (PSAB) has deferred the effective date by one year.)

Appendix D – Assurance developments

Canadian Auditing Standards (CASs) and other Canadian Standards issued by the AASB	Effective date
<p data-bbox="107 552 1554 617">Issuance of CSQM 1 <i>Quality Management for Firms that Perform Audits or Reviews of Financial Statements, or Other Assurance or Related Services Engagements</i>, CSQM 2 <i>Engagement Quality Reviews</i> and revised CAS 220 <i>Quality Management for an Audit of Financial Statements</i></p> <p data-bbox="107 617 1554 698">Auditors must effectively manage audit quality, both at the firm level and the engagement level. The IAASB recognised a need to strengthen standards addressing quality control and the AASB implemented similar changes to those made at the international level. In January 2021, the AASB unanimously approved the suite of quality management standards.</p> <p data-bbox="107 698 1554 812">CSQM 1 introduces a new approach to “managing quality”. Quality management is intended to be proactive in nature and to be a continuous process. Implementing the new standard requires firms to analyse and enhance many of their internal processes to achieve effective quality management. This standard replaces the extant standard, CSQC 1 <i>Quality Control for Firms that Perform Audits and Reviews of Financial Statements, and Other Assurance Engagements</i></p> <p data-bbox="107 812 1554 941">CSQM 2 deals specifically with the topic of engagement quality reviews (EQRs), which are performed by firms to obtain an objective evaluation of the significant judgments made by the engagement team and the conclusions reached. The standards setters recognized the importance of EQRs and noted that many stakeholders (including oversight bodies) were concerned that the requirements of CSQM 1 with respect to EQRs were not sufficiently robust. As a result, CSQM 2 was issued. CSQM 1 deals with the topic of when an EQR should be performed, while CSQM 2 covers the appointment and eligibility considerations related to the person performing the EQR and the performance and documentation requirements.</p> <p data-bbox="107 941 1554 974">CAS 220 was revised to clarify and strengthen the key elements of quality management at the engagement level by:</p> <ul data-bbox="107 974 1554 1118" style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="107 974 1554 1006">• emphasizing that the engagement partner is responsible for managing and achieving quality at the engagement level<li data-bbox="107 1006 1554 1071">• clarifying the engagement partner’s responsibilities, and acknowledging the engagement partner can assign certain tasks/procedures to members of the engagement team who are appropriately skilled or suitably experienced in managing and achieving quality<li data-bbox="107 1071 1554 1118">• modernizing the standard for the evolving environment	<p data-bbox="1554 552 1915 714">CSQM 1 is effective for audits or reviews of financial statements or other assurance engagements as of December 15, 2022 and related services engagements as of December 15, 2023.</p> <p data-bbox="1554 714 1915 941">CSQM 2 is effective for audits or reviews of financial statements with periods beginning on or after December 15, 2022, other assurance engagements beginning on or after December 15, 2022 and related services engagements beginning on or after December 15, 2023.</p> <p data-bbox="1554 941 1915 1118">CAS 220 is effective for audits of financial statements for periods beginning on or after December 15, 2022.</p>

Potential revisions to CAS 500 Audit Evidence

The current audit evidence standard was issued many years ago. Since then, developments in technology have affected how entities operate and process information and how audits are performed. In December 2020, the IAASB initiated a project to revise the current standard to respond to changes in the business environment. The Exposure Draft proposes several key changes:

- To respond to changes in the information auditors use, including the nature and source of the information, a set of attributes has been developed to enhance the auditor's principle-based judgments related to audit evidence in a wide variety of circumstances. Enhancements and clarifications have also been made regarding the auditor's role when using information prepared by management's expert
- To modernise the standard and support a principles-based approach that recognises the evolution in technology, new application material has been added, including explanations of how automated tools may affect auditor bias and examples that recognise the use of technology by the entity or the auditor
- To foster professional skepticism when making judgments about information to be used as audit evidence and sufficient appropriate audit evidence, language has been added to emphasise the importance of maintaining professional skepticism at various stages, such as when attempting to ensure that audit procedures are being designed and performed in an unbiased manner.

The comment period for the Exposure Draft ended on March 15, 2023. It is expected that the effective date for the revised standard will be for periods beginning in 2025, but the exact effective date will depend on when the standard is approved.

Potential revisions to CAS 570 Going Concern

Auditors are required to obtain sufficient appropriate audit evidence on the appropriateness of management's use of the going concern basis of accounting and conclude on whether a material uncertainty exists in relation to going concern. Financial statement users have raised questions about how much auditors should be able to detect from their audit procedures in this area, and what is communicated to users about the entity's ability to continue as a going concern. This led the IAASB to initiate a project to revise the standard. In April 2023, the IAASB issued its Exposure Draft and the AASB has issued a corresponding Exposure Draft. The Exposure Draft proposes several key changes, which include:

- Defining material uncertainty related to going concern
- Enhancing the risk identification and assessment requirements so they are consistent with those set out in CAS 315 (Revised) *Identifying and Assessing the Risks of Material Misstatement*
- Enhancing the auditor's evaluation of management's going concern assessment, including requirements to support the auditor's application of professional skepticism
- Adding a requirement for the auditor to request management to extend its going concern assessment of the entity to cover at least 12 months from the date of approval of the financial statements if management has not already done so
- Enhancing the auditor's consideration of information related to management's going concern assessment that becomes available to the auditor after the date of the auditor's report but before the date the financial statements are issued
- Adding requirements to enhance communications about going concern in the auditor's report.

The comment period for the Exposure Draft ended on July 31, 2023. It is expected that the effective date for the revised standard will be for periods beginning in 2026, but the exact effective date will depend on when the standard is approved.

Proposed Canadian Standard on Sustainability Assurance (CSSA) 5000, General Requirements for Sustainability Assurance Engagements

In September 2022, the IAASB approved a project proposal to develop a new overarching standard for sustainability assurance engagements. In January 2023, the AASB approved a project proposal to concurrently adopt this international standard with any potential additional Canadian amendments, as a first of its kind Canadian Standard on Sustainability Assurance (CSSA).

CSSA 5000 will not be a financial statement audit standard, but rather will serve as a comprehensive, standalone standard suitable for sustainability assurance engagements. It will apply to sustainability information reported across any appropriate sustainability topic, prepared according to any suitable framework, including the recently released IFRS Sustainability Disclosure Standards S1 and S2. The proposed standard is profession agnostic, supporting its use by both professional accountant and non-accountant assurance practitioners who meet the relevant ethical and quality management requirements, and will apply to both limited and reasonable assurance engagements.

The comment period for the Exposure Draft ended on November 6, 2023. It is expected that the effective date will be for periods beginning in 2026, but the exact effective date will depend on when the standard is approved.

This page intentionally left blank.



Hamilton Region Conservation Authority
Financial Statements
December 31, 2023

DRAFT

Contents

	<u>Page</u>
Independent auditor's report	1 - 2
Statement of Financial Position	3
Statement of Operations	4
Statement of Cash Flows	5
Statement of Changes in Net Financial Assets	6
Notes to the Financial Statements	7 – 14
Schedule of Tangible Capital Assets	15
Schedules of Business Unit Activity	
Corporate Support	16
Watershed Management Services	17
Land Management Operations	18
Westfield Heritage Village	19

Independent auditor's report

To the Members of
Hamilton Region Conservation Authority

Grant Thornton LLP
33 Main Street East
Hamilton, ON
L8N 4K5
T +1 905 523 7732
F +1 905 572 9333

Qualified Opinion

We have audited the financial statements Hamilton Region Conservation Authority (the "Organization"), which comprise the statement of financial position as at December 31, 2023, and the statements of operations, changes in net financial assets and cash flows for the year then ended, and notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies.

In our opinion, except for the effects of the matter described in the *Basis for Qualified Opinion* section of our report, the accompanying financial statements present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of Hamilton Region Conservation Authority as at December 31, 2023, and the results of its financial performance and its cash flows for the year then ended in accordance with Canadian public sector accounting standards.

Basis for Qualified Opinion

For the year ending December 31, 2023, the Organization was required to adopt a new accounting standard, PS 3280 – *Asset retirement obligations*. The Organization has not determined its liability for asset retirement obligations related to its tangible capital assets in the statement of financial position as at December 31, 2023 which is a departure from Canadian public sector accounting standards. The impact of this departure from Canadian public sector accounting standards has not been determined and therefore, we were not able to determine whether any adjustments might be necessary to the annual surplus and cash flows for the year ended December 31, 2023, tangible capital assets and asset retirement obligations as at December 31, 2023 and net financial assets as at January 1 and December 31, 2023.

We conducted our audit in accordance with Canadian generally accepted auditing standards. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the *Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements* section of our report. We are independent of Hamilton Region Conservation Authority in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in Canada, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our qualified opinion.

Responsibilities of Management and Those Charged with Governance for the Financial Statements

Management is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of these financial statements in accordance with Canadian public sector accounting standards, and for such internal control as management determines is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, management is responsible for assessing the Organization's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to a going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless management either intends to liquidate the Organization or to cease operations, or has no realistic alternative to do so.

Those charged with governance are responsible for overseeing the Organization's financial reporting process.

Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with Canadian generally accepted auditing standards will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

As part of an audit in accordance with Canadian generally accepted auditing standards, we exercise professional judgment and maintain professional skepticism throughout the audit. We also:

- Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.
- Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the Organization's internal control.
- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by management.
- Conclude on the appropriateness of management's use of the going concern basis of accounting and, based on the audit evidence obtained, whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the Organization's ability to continue as a going concern. If we conclude that a material uncertainty exists, we are required to draw attention in our auditor's report to the related disclosures in the financial statements or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify our opinion. Our conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of our auditor's report. However, future events or conditions may cause the Organization to cease to continue as a going concern.
- Evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the financial statements, including the disclosures, and whether the financial statements represent the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation.

We communicate with those charged with governance regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that we identify during our audit.

Hamilton, Canada
June XX, 2024

Chartered Professional Accountants
Licensed Public Accountants

Hamilton Region Conservation Authority Statement of Financial Position

December 31

2023

2022

Financial assets

Cash and cash equivalents (Note 5)	\$ 9,944,782	\$ 14,457,266
Accounts receivable	3,740,054	718,979
Due from Confederation Beach Park	<u>82,970</u>	<u>-</u>
Total financial assets	<u>\$ 13,767,806</u>	<u>\$ 15,176,245</u>

Liabilities

Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	\$ 1,064,860	\$ 1,681,428
Due to Confederation Beach Park	-	448,177
Due to Hamilton Conservation Foundation	1,435	-
Employee future benefit costs (Note 8)	154,593	151,695
Deferred revenues (Note 9)	<u>897,235</u>	<u>928,159</u>
Total liabilities	<u>\$ 2,118,123</u>	<u>\$ 3,209,459</u>

Net financial assets \$ 11,649,683 \$ 11,966,786

Non-financial assets

Inventory	133,350	155,208
Prepaid expenses	517,829	433,414
Tangible capital assets (Page 15)	<u>58,910,226</u>	<u>53,212,454</u>
Total non-financial assets	<u>\$ 59,561,405</u>	<u>\$ 53,801,076</u>

Accumulated surplus (Note 10) \$ 71,211,088 \$ 65,767,862

Contingent liabilities, contractual obligations and commitments (Notes 14 and 15)

On behalf of the Authority

_____ Chair _____ Director

See accompanying notes and schedules to the financial statements

Hamilton Region Conservation Authority

Statement of Operations

For the Year Ended December 31

2023

2023

2022

	<u>Budget</u> (Note 16)	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Actual</u>
Revenues			
Admissions, product, service & program fees	\$ 7,252,886	\$ 7,732,481	\$ 7,171,618
Municipal levy & special projects	7,133,680	7,120,000	6,748,592
Federal & Provincial grants	250,996	1,448,185	368,378
Gain (loss) on sale of tangible capital assets	-	1,341,905	(375,952)
Hamilton Conservation Foundation	190,800	854,864	752,010
Rentals	897,490	843,643	888,197
Interest	235,000	774,296	360,970
Management fees	500,000	535,566	438,067
Regulatory fees	380,000	309,094	301,194
Private and In-Kind donations (Note 11)	1,470	1,823	6,841
Federal grant recovery	-	-	(892,588)
Other income	51,650	47,484	61,019
	<u>16,893,972</u>	<u>21,009,340</u>	<u>15,828,345</u>
Expenditures			
Wages & benefits	9,945,917	8,311,900	7,275,492
Staff expenses	200,500	1,400,378	1,216,359
Utilities	872,325	883,282	787,468
Contractors / consultants	366,254	879,230	1,211,987
Professional fees	718,750	786,922	743,549
Materials & supplies	579,677	633,322	559,676
Products for resale	301,200	311,399	301,723
Miscellaneous expense (Note 13)	1,639,565	974,199	793,643
	<u>14,624,188</u>	<u>14,180,632</u>	<u>12,889,897</u>
Amortization	<u>1,200,000</u>	<u>1,385,482</u>	<u>1,258,911</u>
	<u>15,824,188</u>	<u>15,566,114</u>	<u>14,148,808</u>
Annual surplus for the year	<u>\$ 1,069,784</u>	<u>\$ 5,443,226</u>	<u>\$ 1,679,537</u>
Accumulated surplus, beginning of year	65,767,862	65,767,862	64,088,325
Accumulated surplus, end of year	<u>\$ 66,837,646</u>	<u>\$ 71,211,088</u>	<u>\$ 65,767,862</u>

See accompanying notes and schedules to the financial statements

Hamilton Region Conservation Authority

Statement of Cash Flows

December 31

2023

2022

Change in cash and cash equivalents

Operating

Annual surplus	\$ 5,443,226	\$ 1,679,537
Items not affecting cash		
Amortization	1,385,482	1,258,911
(Gain) loss on disposal of tangible capital assets	<u>(1,341,905)</u>	<u>375,952</u>
	<u>5,486,803</u>	<u>3,314,400</u>
Non-cash changes to operations		
Change in accounts receivable	(3,021,075)	(113,014)
Change in inventory	21,858	(77,260)
Change in prepaid expenses	(84,415)	(136,721)
Change in employee future benefit costs	2,898	(25,782)
Change in accounts payable and accrued liabilities	(616,568)	344,867
Change in Due to Hamilton Conservation Foundation	1,435	(1,555)
Change in Due to Confederation Beach Park	(531,147)	305,065
Change in deferred revenues	<u>(30,924)</u>	<u>82,667</u>
	<u>1,228,866</u>	<u>3,692,667</u>

Capital

Proceeds on disposal of tangible capital assets	1,474,522	6,000
Purchase of tangible capital assets	<u>(7,215,872)</u>	<u>(8,384,030)</u>
	<u>(5,741,350)</u>	<u>(8,378,030)</u>
Net change in cash and cash equivalents	(4,512,484)	(4,685,363)
Cash and cash equivalents		
Beginning of year	<u>14,457,266</u>	<u>19,142,629</u>
End of year	<u>\$ 9,944,782</u>	<u>\$ 14,457,266</u>

See accompanying notes and schedules to the financial statements

Hamilton Region Conservation Authority

Statement of Changes in Net Financial Assets

For the year ended December 31	2023	2023	2022
	<u>Budget</u>	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Actual</u>
Annual surplus	\$ 1,069,784	\$ 5,443,226	\$ 1,679,537
Purchase of tangible capital assets	(2,000,000)	(7,215,872)	(8,384,030)
Proceeds on disposal of tangible capital assets	-	1,474,522	6,000
Gain (loss) on sale of tangible capital assets	-	(1,341,905)	375,952
Amortization	1,200,000	1,385,482	1,258,911
Change in inventory	-	21,858	(77,260)
Change in prepaid expenses	-	(84,415)	(136,721)
	<u>(800,000)</u>	<u>(5,760,329)</u>	<u>(6,957,149)</u>
Change in net financial assets	269,784	(317,103)	(5,277,612)
Net financial assets, beginning of year	<u>11,966,786</u>	<u>11,966,786</u>	<u>17,244,398</u>
Net financial assets, end of year	<u>\$ 12,236,570</u>	<u>\$ 11,649,683</u>	<u>\$ 11,966,786</u>

See accompanying notes and schedules to the financial statements

Hamilton Region Conservation Authority

Notes to the Financial Statements

December 31, 2023

1. Nature of operations

The Hamilton Region Conservation Authority (the “Authority”) was established in 1966 under the Conservation Authorities Act of Ontario to manage a designated watershed of approximately 112,000 acres of which the Authority owns over 11,000. The Authority is financed from municipal contributions, government grants, donations, user fees, product sales and services.

2. Summary of significant accounting policies

Basis of accounting and management responsibility

The financial statements of the Hamilton Region Conservation Authority are the responsibility of and prepared by management in accordance with Canadian Public Sector Accounting Standards (“PSAS”). The more significant accounting policies are summarized as follows:

Accrual accounting

These statements reflect the incorporation of the full accrual basis of accounting and the reporting of the change in net financial assets and accumulated surplus. The accrual basis of accounting recognizes the effect of transactions and events in the period in which the transactions and events occur, regardless of whether there has been a receipt of payment of cash or its equivalent. Accrual accounting recognizes a liability until the obligation or condition(s) underlying the liability is partially or wholly satisfied. Accrual accounting recognized an asset until the future economic benefit underlying the asset is partially or wholly used or lost.

Revenues and expenditures

Revenues are comprised of grants, contributions, user fees, management fees, regulatory fees and revenue from other Authority services. Revenues are recorded in the period in which the transactions or events occurred that gave rise to the revenues. Expenditures are recorded in the period that the goods or services are acquired, whether or not revenues for those expenditures are raised in the current or following periods.

Government transfers

Government transfers are recognized in the financial statements as revenues in the period in which the events giving rise to the transfer occur, providing the transfers are authorized, any eligibility criteria have been met and reasonable estimates of the amounts can be made.

Donations

Donations are recorded in income in the period they are received, unless designated for a specific purchase that is to occur in a later period at which time the related revenue will be recognized. Donated tangible capital assets, materials and services are recorded at fair market value when fair value can be reasonably estimated.

Hamilton Region Conservation Authority

Notes to the Financial Statements

December 31, 2023

2. Summary of significant accounting policies – continued

Cash and cash equivalents

Cash and cash equivalents includes cash on hand and balances held in the bank.

Pension plans

The Authority maintains a defined contribution plan for employees with more than one year service and who were hired subsequent to January 1, 2006.

Under the plan, the Authority matches employee contributions to a maximum of 6% of gross income.

Tangible capital assets

Tangible capital assets are comprised of property, plant and equipment and are recognized as assets in the period they are acquired. Tangible capital assets are recorded at cost which includes all amounts directly attributable to acquisition, construction, development or betterment of the asset. Amortization is provided on a straight-line basis, declining balance for vehicles, over the estimated useful life for all assets except land which is not amortized. Work in progress assets are not amortized until the asset is available for productive use.

Service life of tangible capital assets is estimated as follows:

Land improvements	10 - 20 years
Infrastructure	20 - 75 years
Building & building improvements	40 years
Machinery, equipment	3 - 10 years
Vehicles (light and heavy duty)	15 - 35 percent

The Authority has a collection of art and historical buildings which now include a multitude of artifacts and chattels which came with the acquisition of the Westfield Heritage Village. None of these are included as part of the tangible capital assets due to the lack of any objective value comparatives.

Inventory

Inventories for resale are valued at the lower of cost or net realizable value.

Financial instruments

The Authority initially measures its financial assets and financial liabilities at fair value and subsequently measures all its financial assets and financial liabilities at amortized cost.

Financial assets measured at amortized cost include cash and cash equivalents, accounts receivable and amounts due from Confederation Beach Park.

Hamilton Region Conservation Authority

Notes to the Financial Statements

December 31, 2023

2. Summary of significant accounting policies – continued

Financial instruments (continued)

Financial Liabilities measured at amortized cost include accounts payable and accrued liabilities, due to Confederation Beach Park and due to Hamilton Conservation Foundation.

Use of estimates

The preparation of financial statements in conformity with PSAS accounting standards requires management to make estimates and assumptions that affect the reported amounts of assets and liabilities and disclosure of contingent assets and liabilities as at the date of the financial statements, and the reported amounts of revenues and expenditures during the period. Actual results could differ from those estimates.

Contaminated sites

Contaminated sites are the result of contamination being introduced in air, soil, water or sediment of a chemical, organic or radioactive material or live organism that exceeds an environmental standard. A liability for remediation of contaminated sites is recognized, net of any expected recoveries, when all of the following criteria are met: a) an environmental standard exists; b) contamination exceeds the environmental standard; c) the Authority is directly responsible or accepts responsibility for the liability; d) future economic benefits will be given up; and e) a reasonable estimate of the liability can be made. Changes in this estimate are recorded in the Authority's statement of operations.

3. Change in accounting policy

Effective January 1, 2023, the Authority adopted new Public Sector Accounting Standards Sections PS3450 Financial Instruments, PS1201 Financial Statement Presentation and Section PS 2601 Foreign Currency Translation along with related amendments. New Section PS3450 requires the fair value measurement of derivatives and portfolio investments in equities quoted in an active market. All other financial assets and liabilities are measured at cost or amortized cost (using the effective interest method), or, by policy choice, at fair value when the entity defines and implements a risk management or investment strategy to manage and evaluate the performance of a group of financial assets, liabilities, or both on a fair value basis.

The measurement requirements were applied prospectively. There were no adjustments required and there are no remeasurement gains or losses or embedded derivatives requiring the presentation of a statement of remeasurement gains or losses.

In accordance with PS 2601 Foreign Currency, the Authority has made the irrevocable election to directly recognize foreign exchange gains/losses in the statement of operations.

Hamilton Region Conservation Authority

Notes to the Financial Statements

December 31, 2023

4. Confederation Beach Park

These statements do not include the operating revenues and expenditures relating to Confederation Beach Park which is a separate and distinct operation owned by the City of Hamilton and managed by the Authority under a formal management agreement with the municipality.

All existing real and personal Confederation Beach Park property as at January 1, 1980, all subsequently acquired properties, and any surpluses or deficits generated during a fiscal year will remain the exclusive property of the City of Hamilton.

Under the terms of the management agreement, the Hamilton Region Conservation Authority has exclusive authority to manage specifically defined areas of Confederation Beach Park for the City of Hamilton. In payment for the management function, the Authority receives a management fee of 15% of operating expenditures. This management fee accrues to the Authority for its own purposes. The newest version of the management agreement has been agreed to and signed by both the City of Hamilton and the Hamilton Region Conservation Authority and runs from January 1st, 2017 until December 31st, 2026, inclusive.

5. Restricted cash

Included in cash and cash equivalents is \$217,969 (2022 – \$207,377) that was received as an endowment fund which has been externally restricted by the organization that contributed the amount.

6. Government remittances payable

Included in accounts payable and accrued liabilities are government remittances payable of \$28,619 (2022 – \$103,429).

7. Related party transactions

	<u>2023</u>	<u>2022</u>
Municipal funding recognized as revenue in the current year		
City of Hamilton	\$ 7,089,400	\$ 6,715,792
Township of Puslinch	30,600	32,800
Funding from the Hamilton Conservation Foundation	854,864	738,410
Management fees from Confederation Beach Park	535,566	438,067
Receivable from (Payable to) the City of Hamilton	3,443,248	(20,380)
Municipal taxes paid to the City of Hamilton and Township of Puslinch	(134,577)	(141,109)

Hamilton Region Conservation Authority

Notes to the Financial Statements

December 31, 2023

8. Employee future benefit costs

	<u>2023</u>	<u>2022</u>
Accumulated Sick Leave Liability	\$ 20,477	\$ 22,730
Supplemental early retirement package	99,898	85,199
Post-retirement benefits	<u>34,217</u>	<u>43,766</u>
	<u>\$ 154,593</u>	<u>\$ 151,695</u>

Under the Authority's sick leave plan, certain employees hired prior to January 1, 1993 become entitled to a cash payment when they leave the Authority's employment. The liability for these accumulated days, to the extent they are vested and could be taken in cash by employees on termination, is funded by operations.

The Authority committed in October 2002 to pay a former general manager a supplemental early retirement package. At the end of the current year, the cost of an annuity to satisfy this obligation was \$99,898 (2022 - \$85,119) based on competitive quotes received from several insurance companies.

The Authority is committed to provide full health, life and vision coverage for all employees who have retired prior to the age of 65 for the period until they reach 65 years of age. A liability has been set up based on the current benefit rates for those retirees eligible for this coverage. The estimated value of these benefits in the current year is \$34,217 (2022 - \$43,766).

9. Deferred revenues

Revenue received but not earned at year-end is as follows:

	<u>2023</u>	<u>2022</u>
Storage fees and deposits	\$ 897,235	\$ 928,159

10. Accumulated surplus

	<u>2023</u>	<u>2022</u>
Reserve Funds		
Acquisitions of provincially significant lands or eligible water related projects	\$ 2,504,080	\$ 3,561,449
Future projects and operating areas	7,804,270	7,257,919
Tangible Capital Assets	58,910,226	53,212,454
Operating surplus	<u>1,992,512</u>	<u>1,736,040</u>
Accumulated surplus	<u>\$ 71,211,088</u>	<u>\$ 65,767,862</u>

Hamilton Region Conservation Authority

Notes to the Financial Statements

December 31, 2023

11. Donations in kind

During the year, in addition to cash donations, the Authority was the beneficiary through donations in kind of tangible capital assets with a total appraised value of \$1,644 (2022 - \$1,488).

12. Defined contribution pension plan

Employer contributions to the Authority's defined contribution pension plan for the year was \$348,820 (2022 - \$358,227). The Plan is designed whereby employee contributions, ranging from 2% to 6% of gross salary, are matched by the employer.

13. Miscellaneous expense breakdown

	<u>2023</u>	<u>2022</u>
Computer software, hardware & support	\$ 296,768	\$ 166,874
Property taxes	134,577	147,121
Memberships & subscriptions	105,256	141,109
Mechanical & garage supplies	102,006	102,584
Postage, printed material & supplies	89,927	72,012
Communications & advertising	78,711	54,077
Third party equipment rental	21,305	30,993
Interest & banking	16,359	15,088
All other	129,291	63,785
	<u>\$ 974,199</u>	<u>\$ 793,643</u>

14. Contingent liabilities

The Authority is involved from time to time in litigation, which arises in the normal course of business. In respect of any outstanding claims, the Authority believes that insurance coverages are adequate, and that no material exposure exists on the eventual settlement of such litigation.

15. Contractual obligations and commitments

As at December 31, 2023, the Authority is committed to \$15,898 (2022 - \$11,559) with respect to ongoing contracts for equipment in the following years:

2024	\$ 5,438
2025	4,680
2026	2,160
2027	2,160
2028	1,460
	<u>\$ 15,898</u>

Hamilton Region Conservation Authority

Notes to the Financial Statements

December 31, 2023

16. Budget figures

The budgeted figures are presented for comparison purposes and were adopted by the Authority on November 3rd, 2022. The adopted budget conforms to the Canadian Public Sector Accounting Standards except for the effect of the acquisition and amortization of tangible capital assets and principal repayment on debt. A reconciliation of the adopted and reported budgets is as presented below.

Adopted budget:	
Budgeted annual surplus for the year	\$ (8,000)
Adjustments to adopted budget:	
Amortization of tangible capital assets	(1,200,000)
Block funding for major maintenance and capital projects	2,300,000
Removal of intercompany and funding from reserves	<u>(22,216)</u>
Restated budgeted surplus	<u>\$ 1,069,784</u>

17. Financial Instruments

Transactions in financial instruments may result in an entity assuming or transferring to another party one or more of the financial risks described below. The following disclosures provide information to assist users of the financial statements in assessing the extent of risk related to the Authority's financial instruments. The maximum exposure to credit risk for the financial assets would be the carrying values shown on the statement of financial position.

Credit risk

The Authority is exposed to credit risk resulting from the possibility that parties may default on their financial obligations. The Authority's maximum exposure to credit risk represents the sum of the carrying value of its cash and cash equivalents and accounts receivable. The Authority's cash and cash equivalents are with a Canadian chartered bank and as a result management believes the risk of loss to be remote. The Authority provides credit to its customers in the normal course of operations. Management believes that the Authority's credit risk with respect to accounts receivable is limited. The Authority manages its credit risk by reviewing accounts receivable aging and following up on outstanding amounts.

Liquidity risk

Liquidity risk refers to the adverse consequence that the Authority will encounter difficulty in meeting obligations associated with financial liabilities, which are comprised of accounts payable and accrued liabilities, due to Confederation Beach Park and due to Hamilton Conservation Foundation. The Authority manages liquidity risk by monitoring its cash flow requirements on a regular basis. Management believes its overall liquidity risk to be minimal as the Authority's financial assets are considered to be highly liquid.

Hamilton Region Conservation Authority

Notes to the Financial Statements

December 31, 2023

17. Financial Instruments – continued

Liquidity risk (continued)

The following table sets out the expected maturities, representing undiscounted cash flows of its financial liabilities.

	Within 1 year	1 to 2 years	2 to 5 years	Over 5 years	Total
Due to Hamilton Conservation Foundation	\$ 1,435	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 1,435
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	\$ 1,064,863	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 1,064,863

Market risk

Market risk is the risk that the fair value or future cash flows of a financial instrument will fluctuate due to changes in market prices. Market risk is comprised of currency risk, interest rate risk, and other price risk.

It is management's opinion that unless otherwise noted, the Authority is not exposed to significant market risk arising from its financial instruments.

Interest rate risk

Interest rate risk is the risk that the fair value or future cash flows of a financial instrument will fluctuate because of changes in market interest rates. The Authority's cash and cash equivalents earn interest at prevailing market rates and management believes the interest rate exposure related to these financial instruments is negligible.

Changes in risk

There have been no significant changes in the Authority's risk exposures from the prior year.

18. Comparative figures

The financial statements have been reclassified, where applicable, to conform to the presentation used in the current year.

Hamilton Region Conservation Authority Schedule of Tangible Capital Assets

	Land	Land Improvements	Infrastructure	Building & Building Improvements	Machinery & Equipment	Vehicles	Work In Progress (WIP)	December 31 2023	December 31 2022
Cost									
Beginning of year	\$ 31,711,747	\$ 6,471,840	\$ 22,411,171	\$ 9,916,220	\$ 2,859,512	\$ 3,246,270	\$ 1,683,889	\$ 78,300,648	\$ 70,778,733
Additions	5,099,101	-	192,245	129,260	84,259	350,896	1,360,111	7,215,872	8,384,030
Disposals	(34,196)	-	(41,058)	(70,058)	(14,256)	(352,970)	-	(512,537)	(862,115)
Transfer from WIP	-	402,479	1,187,580	139,078	-	-	(1,729,137)	-	-
End of year	<u>36,776,652</u>	<u>6,874,318</u>	<u>23,749,938</u>	<u>10,114,500</u>	<u>2,929,515</u>	<u>3,244,196</u>	<u>1,314,862</u>	<u>85,003,982</u>	<u>78,300,648</u>
Accumulated Amortization									
Beginning of year	-	3,031,634	13,771,162	4,717,600	1,258,027	2,309,773	-	25,088,195	24,309,445
Annual amortization	-	207,371	447,153	226,860	263,594	240,505	-	1,385,482	1,258,911
Disposals	-	-	(17,244)	(876)	(11,241)	(350,560)	-	(379,921)	(480,162)
End of year	<u>-</u>	<u>3,239,004</u>	<u>14,201,071</u>	<u>4,943,584</u>	<u>1,510,380</u>	<u>2,199,717</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>26,093,756</u>	<u>25,088,194</u>
Net book value	<u>\$ 36,776,652</u>	<u>\$ 3,635,314</u>	<u>\$ 9,548,867</u>	<u>\$ 5,170,915</u>	<u>\$ 1,419,135</u>	<u>\$ 1,044,479</u>	<u>\$ 1,314,862</u>	<u>\$ 58,910,226</u>	<u>\$ 53,212,454</u>

*Retirements - Computer hardware and software, once fully amortized, are removed from both assets and accumulated amortization

Hamilton Region Conservation Authority

Schedule of Corporate Support

For the Year Ended December 31	2023	2023	2022
	<u>Budget</u>	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Actual</u>
Revenues			
Municipal levy & special projects	\$ 1,943,275	\$ 2,494,159	\$ 2,676,663
Interest	235,000	774,296	360,970
Management fees	500,000	535,566	438,067
Rentals	536,090	463,531	489,858
Hamilton Conservation Foundation	187,800	215,614	152,108
Admissions, product, service & program fees	74,000	85,217	101,875
Federal grant recovery	-	-	(892,588)
Other income	-	8,439	5,324
	<u>3,476,165</u>	<u>4,576,822</u>	<u>3,332,277</u>
Expenditures			
Wages & benefits	3,428,675	2,905,487	2,449,392
Staff expenses	130,400	728,639	636,361
Utilities	405,925	422,013	368,691
Contractors / consultants	183,250	184,269	213,691
Professional fees	213,050	224,791	229,308
Materials & supplies	106,850	49,185	71,544
Miscellaneous expense (Note 12)	1,304,050	589,863	516,444
	<u>5,772,200</u>	<u>5,104,247</u>	<u>4,485,430</u>
Amortization	312,000	372,804	333,340
	<u>6,084,200</u>	<u>5,477,051</u>	<u>4,818,770</u>
Annual deficit	<u>\$ (2,608,035)</u>	<u>\$ (900,229)</u>	<u>\$ (1,486,493)</u>

Hamilton Region Conservation Authority

Schedule of Watershed Management Services

For the Year Ended December 31	2023	2023	2022
	<u>Budget</u>	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Actual</u>
Revenues			
Municipal levy & special projects	\$ 2,266,584	\$ 1,702,020	\$ 1,448,324
Regulatory fees	380,000	309,094	301,194
Federal & Provincial grants	240,996	198,185	292,378
Hamilton Conservation Foundation	-	9,700	-
Private and In-Kind donations	1,470	179	5,353
Other income	-	3,645	5,409
	<u>2,889,050</u>	<u>2,222,821</u>	<u>2,052,658</u>
Expenditures			
Wages & benefits	2,573,016	1,650,742	1,533,944
Contractors / consultants	29,500	237,891	239,741
Staff expenses	28,100	228,730	205,624
Professional fees	52,200	95,628	45,317
Materials & supplies	114,750	68,333	54,519
Utilities	23,500	29,431	22,660
Miscellaneous expense (Note 12)	64,900	87,034	58,531
	<u>2,885,966</u>	<u>2,397,788</u>	<u>2,160,335</u>
Annual surplus (deficit)	<u>\$ 3,084</u>	<u>\$ (174,967)</u>	<u>\$ (107,677)</u>

Hamilton Region Conservation Authority

Schedule of Land Management Operations

For the Year Ended December 31

2023

2023

2022

	<u>Budget</u>	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Actual</u>
Revenues			
Municipal levy & special projects	\$ 2,300,000	\$ 2,300,000	\$ 2,000,000
Admissions, product, service & program fees	6,933,886	7,337,387	6,833,053
Gain (loss) on sale of tangible capital assets	-	1,341,905	(375,952)
Federal & Provincial grants	-	1,250,000	-
Hamilton Conservation Foundation	500	528,750	586,302
Rentals	361,400	364,586	385,941
Other income	51,650	35,400	50,286
	<u>9,647,436</u>	<u>13,158,029</u>	<u>9,479,630</u>
Expenditures			
Wages & benefits	3,315,555	3,170,244	2,784,847
Materials & supplies	325,427	456,289	382,081
Professional fees	431,075	442,447	435,892
Contractors / consultants	147,004	416,240	697,213
Utilities	383,150	375,859	336,884
Staff expenses	40,500	368,187	313,008
Products for resale	297,200	297,401	297,108
Miscellaneous expense (Note 12)	202,790	235,287	180,914
	<u>5,142,701</u>	<u>5,761,953</u>	<u>5,427,947</u>
Amortization	<u>830,000</u>	<u>919,020</u>	<u>844,758</u>
	<u>5,972,701</u>	<u>6,680,973</u>	<u>6,272,705</u>
Annual surplus	<u>\$ 3,674,735</u>	<u>\$ 6,477,056</u>	<u>\$ 3,206,925</u>

Hamilton Region Conservation Authority

Schedule of Westfield Heritage Village

For the Year Ended December 31	2023	2023	2022
	<u>Budget</u>	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Actual</u>
Revenues			
Municipal contributions	\$ 623,821	\$ 623,821	\$ 623,605
User fees	239,000	292,382	227,697
Hamilton Conservation Foundation	2,500	100,800	13,600
Food and novelty	6,000	17,495	8,993
Donations	-	1,644	1,488
Federal and Provincial grants	10,000	-	76,000
Other Authority generated	-	15,526	12,398
	<u>881,321</u>	<u>1,051,668</u>	<u>963,781</u>
Expenditures			
Wages & benefits	628,671	585,427	507,310
Staff expenses	1,500	74,822	61,366
Materials & supplies	32,650	59,516	51,533
Utilities	59,750	55,979	59,234
Contractors / consultants	6,500	40,830	61,342
Professional fees	22,425	24,057	33,032
Products for resale	4,000	13,998	4,615
Miscellaneous expense (Note 12)	67,825	62,015	37,754
	<u>823,321</u>	<u>916,644</u>	<u>816,184</u>
Amortization	<u>58,000</u>	<u>93,658</u>	<u>80,813</u>
	<u>881,321</u>	<u>1,010,302</u>	<u>896,997</u>
Annual surplus	<u>\$ -</u>	<u>\$ 41,366</u>	<u>\$ 66,783</u>

This page intentionally left blank.

Report

TO: Budget & Administration Committee

FROM: Scott Fleming, Director of Finance and Central Support Services

DATE: June 17, 2024

RE: 2023 Reserve Funds Balances & 2023 Operating Surplus Reserves Allocation

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

THAT the Budget & Administration Committee recommend approval by the Board of Directors the allocation of the 2023 operating surplus of \$1.99M be directed as follows:

- \$1,000,000 to the General Land Acquisition reserve,
- \$507,000 to the East Mountrain (Saltfleet) reserve,
- \$350,000 to Construction Capital & Major Maintenance reserve,
- \$60,000 to the Major Equipment Replacement reserve,
- \$50,000 to the Climate Change Initiative reserve,
- and \$26,000 to the Records Management & IT reserve.

This page intentionally left blank.

Reserve Fund		2023	2023	2023	2023	2023	2024
		Opening	+ Transactions	+ Reallocations	+ Operating Surplus	= Closing	= Opening
a.	Construction Capital and Major Maintenance projects	✓ \$ 1,701	\$ 418		\$ 350	\$ 2,469	\$ 2,469
b.	Watershed Engineering projects	598	(227)		-	371	\$ 371
c.	Fifty Point Wetland	✓ 900	(52)	(300)	-	548	\$ 548
d.	East Mountain wetland construction/land acquisition funds	✓ 2,136	(898)	377	507	2,122	\$ 2,122
e.	General land acquisition funds	✓ 1,500	(1,500)		1,000	1,000	\$ 1,000
f.	Major equipment replacement funds	✓ 340			60	400	\$ 400
g.	Westfield FOW & endowment fund	✓ 247	11		-	258	\$ 258
h.	Seasonal operating shortfall protection	3,077		(77)	-	3,000	\$ 3,000
i.	Human resources protection fund	✓ 500			-	500	\$ 500
j.	Legal issues	✓ 300			-	300	\$ 300
k.	Unscheduled capital	✓ 700			-	700	\$ 700
l.	Climate Change Initiatives	✓ 75			50	125	\$ 125
m.	Records management & IT	✓ 482	-	-	26	508	\$ 508
		\$ 12,556	\$ (2,248)	\$ -	\$ 1,993	\$ 12,301	\$ 12,301

- a. Carryforward list and surplus monies added to support VL lookout tower, trail wayfinding signage and WMS office renovations / furniture
- b. Completed Christie Lake Dam Safety Measures, work on Lake Ontario Shoreline Management Plan and Red Hill Floodplain Mapping
- c. Fifty Point Wetland tender came under budget and reallocating unused to East mountain wetland construction
- d. Top up from surplus to support design work for third wetland complex and upcoming tender for second wetland construction; final property purchased in 2023
- e. funds used to support East mountain land acquisition and replenishment from surplus
- f. Surplus allocated to maintain reserve to replace major construction equipment when needed
- g. Maintaining reserve
- h. Reallocating to East Mountain wetland construction to smooth amount
- i. Maintain for HR issues
- j. Maintain for unexpected legal challenges
- k. Maintain reserve for capital items unanticipated
- l. Surplus monies allocated to support climate change initiatives throughout organization
- m. Maintain for software purchases / storage requirements / IT infrastructure and surplus for content mgmt service and e-permitting for WMS

This page intentionally left blank.

Report

TO: Conservation Advisory Board

FROM: Lisa Burnside, Chief Administrative Officer (CAO)

RECOMMENDED & PREPARED BY: T. Scott Peck, MCIP, RPP, Deputy CAO/Director, Watershed Management Services

MEETING DATE: June 13, 2024

RE: HCA Draft Conservation Area Strategy and Draft Watershed-based Resource Management Strategy

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

THAT the Conservation Advisory Board recommends to the Board of Directors of the Hamilton Conservation Authority that staff be directed to undertake public and stakeholder consultation regarding the Draft HCA Conservation Area Strategy and the Draft HCA Watershed-based Resource Management Strategy.

BACKGROUND & PURPOSE

Ontario Regulation 686/21: Mandatory Programs and Services, under the *Conservation Authorities Act* was enacted on October 7, 2021. Section 9 of the regulation requires an authority to prepare a Conservation Area Strategy and Section 12 of the regulation requires an authority to prepare a Watershed-based Resource Management Strategy. Both strategies must be completed on or before December 31, 2024. The regulation also requires, for both strategies, that “the authority shall ensure stakeholders and the public are consulted during the preparation of the strategies in a manner that the authority considers advisable.”

In Spring 2023, the Conservation Advisory Board (CAB) and Board of Directors endorsed an approach to complete all the required strategies.

The purpose of this report is to provide the Draft Conservation Area Strategy and the Draft Watershed-based Resource Management Strategy to CAB and Board for their information and for direction for staff to undertake consultation with stakeholders and the public regarding the draft strategies as required by the regulation.

STAFF COMMENT

HCA staff have completed a draft of both the Conservation Area Strategy and the Watershed-based Resource Management Strategy and they are attached for Conservation Advisory Board and the Board of Directors information. It is proposed that these draft documents be made available to stakeholders and the public for their review and comment. Based on input received through the consultation process, the draft strategies will be revised as appropriate and finalized for review at the October 10, 2024 CAB meeting with proposed final approval of the strategies at the November 7, 2024 Board of Directors meetings.

The development of the strategies and plans has been led by Watershed Management Services with the assistance of a working group for the strategies. The following working groups helped facilitate the development of the strategies:

1. Conservation Area Strategy and Land Inventory - Scott Peck (WMS), Scott Fleming (Finance), Matt Hall (CAPSS), Gord Costie (CAS), Jaime Tellier (CAO's Office) and Lisa Burnside (CAO)
2. Watershed-Based Resource Management Strategy – Scott Peck, Mike Stone and Jonathan Bastien (WMS), Scott Fleming (Finance) and Lisa Burnside (CAO)

Both strategies have been developed based on the completed HCA Inventory of Programs & Services and the Agreement for Services with the City of Hamilton and the Township of Puslinch as well as the direction from the HCA Strategic Plan.

Conservation Area Strategy

The Conservation Area Strategy identifies broad objectives for the Hamilton Conservation Authority's (HCA) Conservation Areas and related programs and services. The strategy meets the requirements as outlined in the Conservation Authorities Act and Ontario Regulation 686/21 and is intended to provide guidance for the management and operation of the HCA's conservation areas.

The Conservation Area Strategy addresses the following subject areas:

1. Introduction/Purpose/Framework
2. Strategic Direction
3. Program and Services Review
4. Conservation Area Assessment
 - a. How HCA lands augment natural heritage
 - b. How HCA lands integrate with provincial and municipal lands
5. Conservation Area Land Use Categories
6. Public Engagement and Public Review
7. Future Considerations

Ontario Regulation 686/21 also requires that an authority complete a land inventory by December 31, 2024. The Conservation Area Strategy and Land Inventory are related as the Land Use Categories identified through the Conservation Area Strategy will be applied, as outlined in the strategy, to the various parcels in the Land Inventory. The Land Inventory is currently being completed and will be finalized for consideration at the October 10, 2024 CAB meeting with endorsement proposed for the November 7, 2024 Board of Directors meeting.

Watershed-based Resource Management Strategy

The Watershed-based Resource Management Strategy has been undertaken to meet requirements as outlined in the Conservation Authorities Act and Ontario Regulation 686/21. The WBRMS will provide HCA with guidance regarding continued programs and projects and the development and implementation of resource management programs on a watershed basis.

The Watershed-based Resource Management Strategy addresses the following subject areas:

1. Introduction/Purpose/Framework
2. Strategic Direction
3. Watershed Characterization
4. Watershed Challenges
5. Program and Services review
6. Future Considerations
7. Public Engagement and Public Review

Stakeholder and Public Consultation

In January 2024, the HCA developed 2 webpages to provide an overview of the purpose and intent of both the Conservation Area Strategy and the Watershed-based Resource Management Plan. These webpages were in addition to the Conservation Talk HCA engage platform. The links for this information are as follows.

<https://conservationhamilton.ca/conservation-area-strategy/>
<https://conservationhamilton.ca/watershed-based-resource-management-strategy/>
<https://conservationtalkhca.ca/>

To obtain comment on the strategies, these webpages will be updated to include the draft strategies. This will be communicated through the HCA website as well as HCA social media. Further, the draft strategies will be provided directly to the City of Hamilton, Township of Puslinch, Six Nations of the Grand River and the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nations.

STRATEGIC PLAN LINKAGE

HCA's Strategic Plan 2019 – 2023 outlines its major strategic priority areas and related initiatives for advancing HCA's Vision to provide a healthy watershed for everyone. HCA implements a wide variety of programs to fulfill this mandate. The completion of the noted strategies and plans will provide information that will assist in the achievement of these program objectives and HCA's Strategic Plan more generally.

AGENCY COMMENTS

N/A

LEGAL/FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Staff time required to develop the strategies and plans has been covered within existing budget allocations and dedicated focus by the Deputy CAO during the first quarter of 2024.

CONCLUSIONS

The development and approval of the noted strategies is a legislated requirement. HCA staff have completed the Draft Conservation Area Strategy and the Draft Watershed-based Resource Management Strategy. These draft documents will be made available to stakeholders and the public for their review and comment. Based on input received through the consultation process, the draft strategies will be revised as appropriate and finalized for review at the October 10, 2024 CAB meeting with proposed final approval of the strategies at the November 7, 2024 Board of Directors meetings.



Hamilton Conservation Authority

Watershed-based Resource Management Strategy

Draft - June 2024



This page intentionally left blank.

Table of Contents

1.0	Introduction	2
1.1	Purpose and Regulatory Framework	2
1.2	The Hamilton Conservation Authority	2
2.0	Strategic Direction	3
2.1	HCA’s Strategic Plan	3
2.2	Watershed-based Resource Management Guiding Principles	4
2.3	Watershed-based Resource Management Objectives	5
3.0	Watershed Characterization	6
3.1	Physical Geography.....	6
3.2	Climate	8
3.3	Surface Water	9
3.4	Groundwater.....	9
3.5	Flooding and Erosion.....	10
3.6	Water Control Structures.....	10
3.7	Drought/Low Flow	10
3.8	Natural Heritage.....	10
3.9	Land Use.....	11
3.10	Infrastructure	11
3.11	Protected Areas	12
4.0	Watershed Challenges	12
5.0	Programs and Services	13
5.1	Natural Hazard Management	14
5.2	Water Quality and Quantity Monitoring.....	15
5.3	Source Water Protection	16
5.4	Monitoring and Stewardship Programs.....	16
5.5	Conservation Area Lands	17
6.0	Future Considerations	18
7.0	Public Engagement	19
8.0	Periodic Review	20
	Appendix 1 – Summary of Existing Technical Studies, Monitoring Programs and Other Information ...	22
	Resources	28

This page intentionally left blank.

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Purpose and Regulatory Framework

The Watershed-based Resource Management Strategy (WbRMS) was undertaken by the Hamilton Region Conservation Authority (HCA) to meet requirements as outlined in the [Conservation Authorities Act](#) (CA Act) and [Ontario Regulation 686/21](#) (Regulation). The WBRMS will provide HCA with guidance regarding continued programs and projects and the development and implementation of resource management programs on a watershed basis.

The Regulation, specifically, subsection 12(1), paragraph 3 outlines that all conservation authorities must complete a WbRMS. The main requirements of the WbRMS per Section 12(4) of Ontario Regulation 686/21 are outlined in Figure 1.

1. Guiding principles and objectives that inform the design and delivery of the programs and services that the authority is required to provide under section 21.1 of the Act.
2. 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.
3. A review of the authority's programs and services provided under section 21.1 of the Act for the purposes of,
 - i. determining if the programs and services comply with the regulations made under clause 40 (1) (b) of the Act,
 - ii. identifying and analyzing issues and risks that limit the effectiveness of the delivery of these programs and services, and
 - iii. 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.
4. 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.

Figure 1 - Main Requirements

1.2 The Hamilton Conservation Authority

The Spencer Creek Conservation Authority, the forerunner of the HCA, was created in 1958. Subsequently, Red Hill Creek, Stoney Creek, Battlefield Creek and the Numbered watercourse in the former City of Stoney Creek and City of Hamilton were added and the Hamilton Region Conservation Authority (HCA) was formed in 1966 pursuant to the CA Act. The HCA is located at

the western end of Lake Ontario and has a watershed area of 479km². The HCA watershed is in the Treaty Lands and Territory of the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation and traditional territory of the Haudenosaunee. The majority of the HCA's watershed is included within the City of Hamilton with the headwaters of Spencer Creek and Fletcher Creek located in the Township of Puslinch. A small portion of the Town of Grimsby is located at the east end of the HCA's watershed.

The HCA operates under the requirements of the CA Act. Section 0.1 of the CA Act states that:

“The purpose of this Act is to provide for the organization and delivery of programs and services that further the conservation, restoration, development and management of natural resources in watersheds in Ontario.”

The Board of Directors of the HCA is comprised of 11 Directors representing 2 municipalities. Seven Councillors and 3 citizen appointees represent the City of Hamilton while 1 appointee represents the Township of Puslinch. The HCA works closely with our municipal partners as well local groups and agencies and both the Federal and Provincial governments.

2.0 Strategic Direction

2.1 [HCA's Strategic Plan](#) **Note: The HCA is currently undertaking the development of a Strategic Plan for 2025-2029. This is expected to be completed in the fall of 2024. This section will be updated pending completion of the 2025-2029 Strategic Plan.**

HCA's [Strategic Plan 2019-2023](#) details the HCA's vision, mission, commitment and corporate values as well as our strategic priorities.

HCA's vision, where we want to be is “A healthy watershed for everyone”.

HCA's mission, what we do is “To lead in the conservation of our watershed and connect people to nature.”

The Strategic Plan highlights the HCA's commitment and corporate values as follows:

- Provide excellent customer service and a solution-oriented approach;
- Be accountable, transparent and responsible in the use of resources;
- Embrace new technologies to help develop new ways of doing business and foster innovation;
- Promote teamwork internally and externally to achieve common goals, support existing relationships and build new partnerships;
- Maintain trust, act with integrity and treat others with respect; and

- Value knowledge to continually learn and improve, in an effort to achieve best solutions.

The HCA's Strategic Plan highlighted 5 Strategic Priority Areas.

1. Organizational Excellence
2. Water Management
3. Natural Heritage Conservation
4. Conservation Area Experience
5. Education and Environmental Awareness

For each Strategic Priority Area, several initiatives are included, and these priority areas and associated initiatives guide programs and services and the development of department work plans, budgets and approaches.

2.2 Watershed-based Resource Management Guiding Principles

Section 12(4) of Ontario Regulation 686/21 notes that a WbRMS shall include "Guiding principles and objectives that inform the design and delivery of the programs and services that the authority is required to provide under section 21.1 of the Act".

Through a review of background documentation and input through the consultation process, the following guiding principles have been developed to meet the requirements of the CA Act and Ontario Regulation 686/21 and to inform the design and delivery of HCA's programs and services.

- The conservation, restoration, development, and management of natural resources is best implemented on a watershed basis.
- Water and other natural resources are vital natural assets, which provide critical functions and services such as buffering the impacts of climate change, mitigate natural hazards, filter contaminants, assimilate waste, sustain biodiversity, and provide green spaces for recreation, among other community benefits.
- The management of water and other natural resources is a shared responsibility among Conservation Authorities, Municipalities, government agencies, First Nations, the public and other stakeholders.
- Resource management decisions are integrated and transparent and take into consideration a broad range of community uses, needs, and values, including ecosystem needs.

- Understanding existing and emerging issues by engaging, collaborating and being transparent builds solid relationships and partnerships for strong watershed ideas, actions and outcomes.
- Safe drinking water is expected by our watershed residents.
- Conservation lands are critical for the maintenance of natural heritage features and landscapes and the health of communities. They provide environmental, economic, social, mental and physical health benefits.
- The majority of the HCA's watershed is privately owned. Stewardship of these lands is critical to the health of the watershed now and in the future.

2.3 Watershed-based Resource Management Objectives

The HCA's strategic plan highlights 5 strategic priority areas with associated initiatives. These priority areas and initiatives guide the delivery of programs and services with associated budget allocations.

- Organizational Excellence
- Water Management
- Natural Heritage Conservation
- Conservation Area Experience
- Education and Environmental Awareness

Flowing from this direction and the principles identified above, the following objectives have been developed.

- To avoid, reduce or mitigate potential risk to public health and safety, and to property damage from flooding and other natural hazards and the impacts of a changing climate.
- To work with Conservation Halton and the City of Hamilton to mitigate potential risk to drinking water sources and ensure a sustainable and clean water supply for the watershed community.
- To characterize groundwater and surface water resource systems, aquatic and terrestrial resources, which regulate natural hazard processes, provide drinking water sources and healthy ecosystems, while supporting the hydrological and ecological integrity of the watershed.
- To protect and maintain Conservation Authority owned lands for public safety, natural heritage protection, outdoor recreation, and socio-economic health.

- To identify and understand key resource issues and the primary stressors that cause them.
- To research and identify potential solutions for addressing key resource issues and adapting/developing programs and services as required.
- To educate and engage the watershed community to promote awareness of natural hazards and watershed health, and to encourage the protection and restoration of land and water resources through stewardship action.

The above noted principles and objectives will help guide the implementation of HCA programs and services and the development of policy and plan documents.

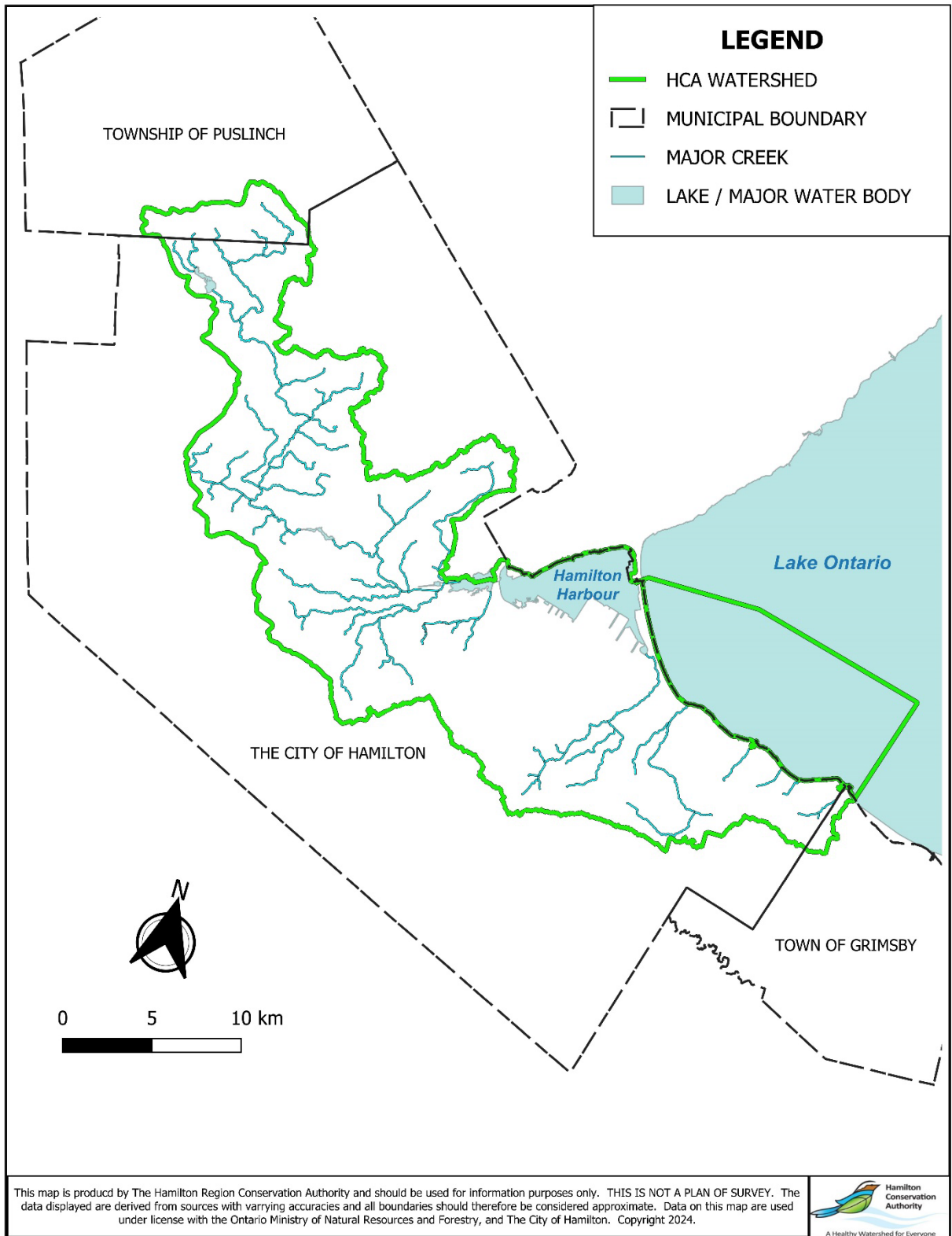
3.0 Watershed Characterization

The HCA is located at the western end of Lake Ontario within the Treaty Lands and Territory of the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation and traditional territory of the Haudenosaunee. The HCA has a watershed area of 479km² and reaches from Fifty Point and the west limit of the Town of Grimsby, across the City of Hamilton, to the Township of Puslinch in Wellington County. HCA's jurisdictional area includes the major watersheds of Spencer Creek, Borers Creek, Chedoke Creek, Redhill Creek, Stoney Creek, Battlefield Creek and the Stoney Creek Number Watercourses, as well as portions of the Hamilton Harbour and Lake Ontario shoreline (Map 1).

The 1960 Spencer Creek Conservation Report and the 1968 Hamilton Conservation Report describes the HCA's watershed. Further, watershed characterization and assessment work was completed for the Halton-Hamilton Source Water Protection Area which includes the HCA's watershed. The following highlights background information as it relates to the HCA watershed.

3.1 Physical Geography

The present-day landscape of the HCA watershed and surrounding Great Lakes region is primarily the result of glacial activity that took place in the Late Wisconsinan period, which ended about 10,000 years ago. The advancement and retreat of major ice sheets during this period has helped to shape the landscape that exists today. Glacier advancement resulted in erosion of the bedrock, and the movement and mixing of eroded rock and soil (known as till). Further scouring and smoothing of bedrock surfaces occurred during deglaciation, leaving behind large amounts of rock, sand, silt, and clay debris that was carried in the ice. Glacial meltwater flowed through channels, eroding the underlying bedrock, also depositing significant amounts of sand and gravel on the landscape, and filling depressions in the surface to form ponds. This period of activity resulted in the formation of a number of distinct physiographic regions and features in southern Ontario, a number of which are represented in the watershed today. This includes escarpment, moraines, beaches, and sand, clay shale and limestone plains.



Map 1 – HCA Watershed

The Niagara Escarpment is the most prominent physiographic feature in the watershed, running throughout the east and central portions of the watershed, generally paralleling the Lake Ontario shoreline. The escarpment has formed over millions of years, and is the result of differential erosion, where softer, older, rock has eroded away, leaving behind a ridge of more erosion resistant harder dolostone rock.

The Dundas Valley and Red Hill Valley are two other prominent landscape features within the watershed. These ancient river valleys, also referred to as re-entrant valleys, formed prior to the last glaciation, when flowing water cut channels through the escarpment bedrock and into the lower softer shale formations below. The Dundas Valley is thought to have formed part of a larger pre-glacial drainage system that extended to Lake Huron, with its eastern end now located deep beneath Cootes Paradise and Hamilton Harbour. During the last glacial period the valley was further eroded and infilled with sediment, and today extends from Copetown to Cootes Paradise, and is up to 4km wide in places. The Red Hill Valley re-entrant extends about eight kilometres between the Niagara Escarpment and Lake Ontario. Portions of the valley below the escarpment have been completely filled with sediment deposited from glacial activity. The valley today is comprised of a natural corridor and the Red Hill Valley Parkway. The re-aligned Red Hill Creek currently flows through the valley from waterfalls at the escarpment edge to Windemere Basin adjacent to the Hamilton Harbour.

The Iroquois Plain, extending from the base of the Niagara Escarpment to Hamilton Harbour and Lake Ontario, marks the area of glacial Lake Iroquois and is comprised of fine silty sands that occupied the former lake bottom. Former beaches of Lake Iroquois now form barrier bars, including the Burlington Barrier Bar (commonly referred to today as the Beach Strip) which separates Hamilton Harbour from Lake Ontario and the Hamilton Barrier Bar which separates Cootes Paradise from Hamilton Harbour.

3.2 Climate

Climate varies significantly within the HCA's watershed. The average annual temperature in the region is 9 degrees Celsius. Climate records indicate a decreasing trend in precipitation as one moves from the northwest to the southeast through the watershed. Annual average precipitation rates range from approximately 950 mm/year in the northwest to 850 mm/year in the southeast (LIO 2008). The topographic change associated with the Niagara Escarpment plays a large role in this trend, with climate stations above the Escarpment receiving significantly higher amounts of precipitation than climate stations located below the Escarpment. Evapotranspiration estimates for Spencer Creek range from 500 to 600 mm/year (MNR 1984), with higher evapotranspiration rates seen in the northern part of the watershed above the Escarpment.

3.3 Surface Water

The HCA's watershed can be divided into two areas.

Four watersheds flow into Cootes Paradise and Hamilton Harbour and ultimately into Lake Ontario:

1. Spencer Creek
2. Chedoke Creek
3. Borer's Creek
4. Red Hill Creek

Three watersheds flow directly into Lake Ontario:

1. Stoney Creek
2. Battlefield Creek
3. Numbered Stoney Creek Watercourses

Lake Ontario and Hamilton Harbour are the largest lakes within the watershed. Cootes Paradise, which drains into Hamilton Harbour, is a large coastal wetland that is fed by Spencer Creek, Chedoke Creek and Borer's Creek. Valens Lake and Christie Lake are reservoirs located on Spencer Creek and have an area of 185 acres and 176 acres respectively for summer storage.

3.4 Groundwater

Within the HCA Watershed, the lowest elevation toward which groundwater is moving is Lake Ontario. The Dundas Valley has a significant influence on groundwater flow direction. As such, northwest of the Dundas Valley, groundwater flow direction is primarily toward the valley to the southeast. The Provincial Groundwater Monitoring Network data indicate stable or increasing groundwater levels since monitoring began in about 2002. It also indicates seasonal fluctuations varying between 0.5 and 2 metres. Seasonal low values typically occur in September. Groundwater flows at a greater rate through the more permeable areas of the dolostone bedrock above the escarpment. The bottom of the upper dolostone formations is at a higher elevation than the bedrock surface below the escarpment. The dolostone is underlain by the Cabot Head aquitard, which limits the vertical movement of groundwater through the rock. Therefore, groundwater moves laterally and seeps from the escarpment face, or water moves through the rock debris at the edge of the escarpment to the base of the slope. Some watercourses are supported by this groundwater discharge. Below the escarpment, water moves through the surface soils and the weathered zone of the underlying shale of the Queenston Formation. The Dundas and Red Hill Valleys influence this flow. Groundwater discharges into the Dundas Valley support cold and cool water fisheries habitat in many reaches. Local impacts on groundwater levels occur in the vicinity of pumping wells, particularly those pumping large volumes of water for many hours each day. These wells include municipal water wells and quarries that are dewatering.

3.5 Flooding and Erosion

Flooding is a natural process that takes place within the HCA watershed, specifically along Spencer Creek in Dundas, Stoney and Battlefield Creeks in Stoney Creek, the Red Hill Creek in Hamilton and sections of the Lake Ontario shoreline. Flooding events and periods of high water can result in increased streambank and shoreline erosion and potential impact to life and property. Floods can occur at any time of the year and are caused by heavy rainfall, rapid melting of snow pack or ice jams, and, in the case of the Lake Ontario, winds and wave action. For the Lake Ontario shoreline, the potential for flooding and erosion is greater in the fall and spring due to high winds from the east. HCA's watercourses experience flooding mainly in the spring from snowmelt and frazil ice formation in lower Spencer Creek.

3.6 Water Control Structures

The water control and erosion control structures that HCA operates are the Christie Lake Dam, Valens Lake Dam, Mineral Springs Detention Reservoir, and Saltfleet Conservation Area Wetlands (BC-1). Christie Lake Dam and Valens lake Dam are located on Spencer Creek, while Mineral Springs Detention Reservoir is located on Sulphur Creek. The Saltfleet Conservation Area Wetlands (BC-1) are located on Battlefield Creek. The primary goal of these water control structures is to provide flood control for the downstream watershed areas. The Christie Lake Dam and Saltfleet Conservation Area Wetlands (BC-1) also provide some benefit for low flow augmentation. In addition to this, Christie Lake Dam, Valens Lake Dam and the Saltfleet Conservation Area Wetlands are within HCA owned conservation areas, and provide natural habitat enhancements and recreational opportunities for the public.

3.7 Drought/Low Flow

Drought conditions in the HCA watershed are weather dependent and are cyclical in nature. Spencer Creek, Red Hill Creek, Stoney and Battlefield Creeks and the Numbered Watercourses in Stoney Creek are more susceptible with occurrences of these watercourses running dry during drought conditions. The Hamilton Low Water Response Team comprises of water users in the watershed, including agricultural representatives, golf courses, nursery operators, quarry operations, industrial users, and provincial and municipal representatives. HCA staff act as co-chair for this team and are responsible for regularly evaluating watershed conditions, which provides evidence to support declaring low water conditions.

3.8 Natural Heritage

The HCA watershed contains a diverse natural heritage system that includes forests, wetlands, prairies, riverine systems, the Niagara Escarpment, Cootes Paradise, Hamilton Harbour and the Lake Ontario shoreline. Over 100 areas within the City of Hamilton have been identified for their environmental significance with a number of these areas being designated as environmentally significant areas in the City of Hamilton and County of Wellington Official Plans. A number of HCA conservation areas such as the Dundas Valley, Niagara Escarpment

lands, Beverly Swamp, Fletcher Creek, Valens Lake, Christie Lake and the Spencer Gorge are located within these environmentally significant lands. The HCA watershed is also located within the Carolinian Canada zone which includes a variety of species found more typically in more southerly areas. These species are in addition to species more broadly found within Ontario.

3.9 Land Use

The HCA's watershed can be divided into two halves, the east area and the west area. The east area would include the Hamilton urban area, Stoney Creek urban area, the Ancaster and Dundas urbans area and Waterdown. Historically and to present day, the bulk of development has occurred in this area and has resulted in a generally continuous urban area. These areas contain predominately residential, commercial and industrial uses. The lands located above the Niagara Escarpment in Stoney Creek and Glanbrook are a mix of residential and agricultural uses. Large natural areas such as the Niagara Escarpment, Cootes Paradise and the Dundas Valley are located within the east area of the watershed.

The west area of the watershed includes Flamborough and the Township of Puslinch. This area is predominately rural in nature with a mix of agricultural and residential uses. There are two quarries in this area. Forests and wetlands occupy a significant portion of the west area with the Beverly Swamp, Hayesland Swamp, Fletcher Creek Swamp Forest and Spencer Creek the main natural areas.

The population of the City of Hamilton in 579,200 (2017 Census) and is projected to be 820,000 by 2051.

There are no First Nations reserves located within the HCA's watershed. However, the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation and Six Nations of the Grand River First Nation are located west of the HCA watershed area

3.10 Infrastructure

There are 2 municipal drinking water systems within the HCA watershed, one Lake Ontario and one well-based system. The Woodward municipal system draws water from Lake Ontario and supplies water to the urban areas of Hamilton, Dundas, Ancaster, and Waterdown. This lake system also supplies areas of Halton Region and parts of the communities of Caledonia, Cayuga, and York in Haldimand County, which are all located outside of the HCA's watershed. The municipal groundwater system supplies water to a portion of the settlement of Greenville, located just north of Dundas. There are seven non-municipal residential systems, 60 small drinking water systems that operate in the HCA's watershed. The rural areas of the HCA watershed are serviced by private water wells. The urban areas of the watershed are serviced by municipal sewage systems while rural and un-serviced areas rely on private sewage systems.

The east area of the watershed contains several provincial highways that provide connections to areas of southern and central Ontario and the United States, with Highway 5, Highway 6, Highway 403, the Queen Elizabeth Way, Lincoln Alexander Parkway, the Red Hill Expressway and Canadian Pacific and Canadian National Rail lines, 3 in total, crossing the watershed. Additionally, there are numerous regional and local road systems in the HCA watershed.

Hamilton Harbour is a major deep-water port in the Great Lakes system. The harbour supports heavy industry and facilitates the storage and movement of a variety of commodities through water, highway and rail transportation routes.

There are a series of pipelines located in throughout the watershed connecting supplies, storage and refineries across Canada and the United States. The following pipeline companies operate in the HCA watershed - Enbridge – Union Gas, Imperial Oil, Trans-Northern Pipeline, Trans Canada Pipeline and Sun Canadian.

3.11 Protected Areas

The HCA owns or manages 4,732 hectares (11,695 acres) of land which represents over 10% of the HCA's watershed area. These lands are locally, provincially and in some cases, internationally significant and include features such as forests, prairie, wetlands, watercourses, karst, Lake Ontario shoreline and the Niagara Escarpment. Other protected areas within the HCA watershed include lands owned by the City of Hamilton, Royal Botanical Gardens, McMaster University and the Hamilton Naturalists Club. There are no Provincial Parks or federally protected land within the HCA watershed.

4.0 **Watershed Challenges**

Through watershed knowledge and a review of background information, the following watershed challenges were identified that should be considered as part of the HCA's program and services delivery in the coming years.

Continued Development Pressure and Population Growth

A key challenge is current and projected growth and need for housing within the Greater Toronto Hamilton Area. With this growth, there is a priority on increasing housing to accommodate existing housing needs and the projected increase in population. Development within the designated Greenbelt Plan area will be limited. Growth will be focussed to designated urban areas with increase pressure to development in and adjacent to natural hazard and natural heritage lands. Information from the City's Engage Hamilton website notes that "Over the next 25-30 years, the population of Hamilton is expected to grow significantly, from 584,000 in 2021 to at least 820,000 by 2051." This has the potential to impact overall watershed health through loss of natural areas features and functions as well as visitor experience and natural heritage impacts through use of conservation areas.

Climate Change

Climate change is happening and there is a need to work to mitigate and adapt to the effects. This will involve working with the City of Hamilton, Bay Area Climate Change Council and implementing the HCA's Climate Change Strategy.

Invasive Species

Invasive species are a major threat within Ontario and the HCA's watershed. These species outcompete native species and impact our watersheds natural heritage system and features. The HCA has an Invasive Species Strategy (2016) which is currently being updated. The strategy provides guidance regarding management of invasive species.

Species at Risk, Biodiversity and Habitat Loss

The loss of habitat, increased numbers of species at risk and loss of biodiversity presents a major threat to the function and health of watershed natural areas and a healthy ecosystem. The HCA has partnered with the City of Hamilton, Hamilton Naturalists Club and other agencies regarding a natural areas inventory for Hamilton. Further, working with multiple partners, the HCA is part of the City Biodiversity Action Plan.

Water Quality

As detailed, water quality in the HCA watershed is a concern as it relates to urban and rural watercourses. The sources of these impacts vary, however, the impact of development, sewage cross connections, infrastructure, impervious surfaces, agricultural practices and climate change on water quality continues to be at issue.

5.0 Programs and Services

Ontario Regulation 687/21: Transition Plans and Agreements for Programs and Services detail requirements for Transition Plans and Agreements for Programs and Services. As per the CA Act and Ontario Regulation, on March 2, 2023 the HCA's Board of Directors approved the HCA's Inventory of Programs and Services. The approved Inventory of Programs and Services details HCA Mandatory Programs and Services (Category 1), Municipal Programs (Category 2) undertaken by the HCA under agreement with the partner municipality and Other Programs and Services (Category 3) the HCA undertakes. The required agreements for Category 2 and Category 3 Programs and Services was completed with the City of Hamilton and the Township of Puslinch on November 17, 2023. The costs associated for all Category 1, 2 and 3 programs and services are included in the Inventory of Programs and Services.

A summary of the programs and services is provided in the following sections. The final version of the Inventory of Programs and Services is provided at this [link](#).

5.1 Natural Hazard Management

Natural hazard management is a key program area for the HCA. The priority in this regard is the protection of life and property from flooding and erosion hazards. This is a mandatory, watershed wide program that applies to the Lake Ontario and Hamilton Harbour shoreline as well as area flood plains, valley and stream systems, wetlands and hazardous lands such as karst topography.

This program includes:

- Flood forecasting and warning – HCA’s flood forecasting and warning program monitors watershed conditions to provide agency and public awareness of flood conditions and to provide an early warning regarding possible flood risks. The HCA provides the City of Hamilton and the Township of Puslinch, other agencies and the public notice of potential flood events and associated issues to allow time to prepare and respond. This program involves collection and interpretation of rain and watercourse flow data, weather forecasts, watershed conditions, snow surveys, frazil ice, wind direction related to Lake Ontario, site conditions, watershed knowledge of susceptible areas, provincial forecasts. This information is utilized to provide safety notices and flood warnings and to liaise with provincial and municipal department and the public.
- Municipal plan input and review and regulation – Municipal Plan Input and Review is a preventative program that aims to ensure that new development will not result in increased risks to public safety or property damage from natural hazards. HCA undertakes the municipal plan input and review program to provide advice to its member municipalities and watershed residents, both through the commenting process under the *Planning Act* and through general inquiries and pre-consultation meetings. This program includes municipal official plan related comments and proponent driven applications such as subdivisions, condominiums, severances, official plan and zoning by-law amendments, minor variances, and site plan control.

The HCA also regulates development under Section 28 of the CA Act and Ontario Regulation 41/24, Prohibited Activities, Exemptions and Permits. The intent of the regulation is to direct new development away from natural hazards to ensure that development is not impacted by flooding and erosion and that new development does not aggravate or create new hazards or create conditions which would jeopardize health and safety of people or result in damage to property. The HCA regulates the Lake Ontario and Hamilton Harbour shorelines, dynamic beaches, watercourses, ravine and stream systems, wetlands and karst features.

- HCA Owned Flood and Erosion Control Infrastructure – HCA operates the Christie Lake Dam, Valens Lake Dam and Mineral Springs detention reservoir, and Saltfleet wetland berms (BC-1).

The Christie Lake Dam is located on Spencer Creek, upstream of Dundas within the Christie Lake Conservation Area. Constructed in 1972, the dam provides flood control and low flow augmentation. In addition, the dam reservoir provides recreational opportunities and fish habitat.

The Valens Lake Dam is located on Spencer Creek, near the community of Valens, Ontario within the Valens Conservation Area. Constructed in 1966, the dam provides recreational opportunities and fish habitat, but does also provide some flood control.

The Mineral Springs detention reservoir is located on Sulphur Creek and created as a result of the crossing at an unpaved section of Martin Road. Unlike the other three infrastructures, the Mineral Springs detention reservoir is designed to overtop Martin Road for storm events near and larger than the 10-year design storm.

The Saltfleet wetland berms (BC-1) are two separate wetland containment berms (East and West) that are located in HCA's Saltfleet Conservation Area at 444 First Road East. The BC-1 East and West wetlands are part of the larger Saltfleet wetlands system, that will include several locations along Battlefield Creek and Stoney Creek. The BC-1 East and West wetlands provide flood and erosion control as well as low flow augmentation to downstream reaches of Battlefield Creek.

- Flood plain mapping – The HCA has undertaken flood plain mapping updates for Lower Spencer Creek, the Numbered watercourses in Stoney Creek, Battlefield Creek and Stoney Creek as well as Red Hill Creek. Further flood plain mapping will be undertaken for the remaining watercourses in the urban areas of the watershed and as required in the rural areas.
- Low water response – The HCA delivers the provincial Low Water Response Program for the HCA watershed. This includes a Low water Response Committee that consists of municipal, agriculture, industry, business, recreation, government representatives and other decision makers from the watershed

5.2 Water Quality and Quantity Monitoring

- The HCA undertakes surface water monitoring throughout the watershed through chemical analysis as part of the Province of Ontario Provincial Surface Water Quality Monitoring Network (PWQMN). The PWQMN water quality monitoring program is a long-standing HCA and Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks (MECP) partnership for stream water quality monitoring. The HCA undertakes the field work to gather the water samples at 6 sites. The samples are submitted to the MECP provincial lab for analysis and data management. The results of water sampling are available to the HCA and is used as part of the HCA's watershed report card and overall watershed health monitoring.

- The Provincial Groundwater Monitoring Network (PGMN) is a partnership with the MCEP for groundwater level and water quality monitoring at 7 stations across the HCA watershed. This program is similar for all conservation authorities with HCA costs being data collection, shipping, minor equipment repairs/purchases, data management, and reporting. The MECP funded the installation of the network and continues to fund equipment replacements. The results of water sampling are available to the HCA.
- The HCA undertakes a Water Quality Monitoring Program in partnership with the City of Hamilton. This includes water quality and erosion site monitoring, City of Hamilton Groundwater Monitoring Well Inspections, City of Hamilton Groundwater Monitoring Well Water Quality Sampling, City of Hamilton E. Coli Sampling Program at PWQMN Sites and Greensville Surface Water Monitoring. The data from HCA water monitoring program as well as City programs is shared between the HCA and the City.
- As part of the Hamilton Harbour Remedial Action Plan, the HCA undertakes a water quality monitoring associated with tributaries to Cootes Paradise (Spencer Creek, Chedoke Creek, Ancaster Creek and Borer's Creek). This monitoring programs identifies long term trends related to water quality and watershed health.

5.3 Source Water Protection

- HCA's watershed is within the Halton-Hamilton Source Protection Region. The Halton Region Conservation Authority (HRCA) is designated as the lead; however, the HCA and HRCA manage the program jointly with the HRCA managing the programs budget. Both the HCA and HRCA are identified as source protection authorities in the Clean Water Act, 2006. They coordinate the program and are guided by a source protection committee, and support municipalities and other involved or affected stakeholders in the Region.

5.4 Monitoring and Stewardship Programs

The Hamilton Watershed Stewardship Program is an HCA program that undertakes activities in three key project areas:

- Landowner Outreach – including contact and site with watershed landowners to educate and communicate the benefits of using best management practices for addressing water quality and habitat issues.
- Educational Opportunities – including the development and hosting of educational workshops and information sessions for watershed landowners.
- Water Quality and Habitat Improvement Projects – where HWSP staff work with landowners to develop and implement stewardship projects on-the-ground.

The HCA's Hamilton Watershed Stewardship Program also delivers a well decommissioning program on behalf of the City of Hamilton in HCA's watershed to assist landowners with the cost of decommissioning their abandoned water wells

The HCA undertakes terrestrial and aquatic resource monitoring programs. These are monitoring programs that takes place on HCA lands and as it relates for some sites in the aquatic program, on non-HCA lands. These overall programs are utilized by HCA, City of Hamilton and consultants and helps identify terrestrial and aquatic health on a watershed basis.

5.5 Conservation Area Lands

The Hamilton Conservation Authority own or manages 4,732 ha (11,695 acres) of land within our watershed jurisdiction. This represents over 10% of the HCA's watershed area. There is a total of 147 kilometres of trails located on HCA lands. This includes the Westfield Heritage Village Conservation Area and portions of the Chippawa Rail Trail and TH&B Rail Trail that are located outside of the HCA's watershed.

HCA lands comprise major components of the City of Hamilton's natural heritage system and are integral to the features, function and biodiversity of the natural heritage system. HCA lands play a critical role in the watershed natural heritage system as well as providing passive and active recreation lands within the watershed. HCA lands augment natural heritage features within the HCA's watershed and secure these lands for current and future generations. Further, these lands play a critical role in providing critical habitat in an increasing urban area, provides a natural land area to maintain and increase biodiversity while also mitigating the effects of climate change. Outdoor environmental education and cultural heritage education occurs on the lands, specifically the Dundas Valley Conservation Area and the Westfield Heritage Village Conservation Area.

The HCA has three conservation area classifications that relate to the management and use of these lands. It is highlighted that the overarching intent for management of the lands owned and managed by the HCA is to ensure the conservation of the natural heritage and natural hazard features and functions found on these lands. Other uses should ultimately be complimentary to this overarching purpose and not negatively impact on these features. Active and passive conservation areas generally require payment for access through an automated gate system or admission fee.

1. Conservation Areas (Active Recreation, Accessible to the Public)

This land use category would also include such uses as camping, roofed accommodation, marina, picnic pavilions, active day use areas such as beaches, trails and open space areas. This land use category would apply to the following HCA owned and managed lands – Fifty Point Conservation Area, Confederation Beach Park, Christie Lake Conservation Area, Valens Lake Conservation Area and Westfield Heritage Village Conservation Area. As it relates to Valens Lake and

Christie Lake Conservation Areas, this would include operation and maintenance of the dam structures located on site.

2. Conservation Areas (Passive Recreation, Accessible to the Public)

This land use category would also include such uses as walking, hiking, cycling, nature interpretation. These lands contain significant natural heritage and physical landforms, and in some cases cultural heritage features. The intent with this land use category is to conserve the natural heritage and natural hazard features found on site while connecting people to nature and to instill a conservation ethic in conservation area visitors and the broader public. This land use category would apply to the following HCA owned and managed lands – Devil’s Punch Bowl Conservation Area, Saltfleet Conservation Area, Eramosa Karst Conservation Area, Felker’s Falls Conservation Area, Mount Albion Conservation Area, Iroquoia Heights Conservation Area, Meadowlands Conservation Area, Dundas Valley Conservation Area, Borer’s falls Conservation Area, Spencer Gorge Conservation Area and Crooks Hollow Conservation Area.

3. Conservation Areas (Management Lands)

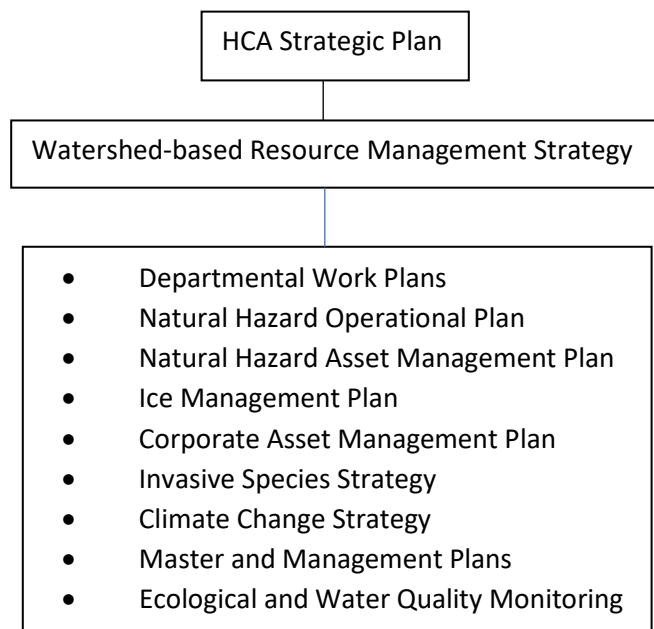
The primary land use on these lands is natural heritage and natural hazard conservation. These lands are larger or more isolated parcels that have limited facilities and access and, in most cases, do not experience large numbers visitation numbers. There may be HCA maintained trails, limited trails or a through trail such as the Bruce Trail that is not part of an existing HCA trail located on these lands. This land use category would apply to the following HCA owned and managed lands – Vinemount Swamp Conservation Area, Winona Conservation Area, Beverly Swamp Conservation Area and Fletcher Creek Ecological Preserve.

6.0 Future Considerations

The HCA is the area’s largest environmental management agency and is dedicated to the conservation and enjoyment of watershed lands and water resources. The HCA undertakes critical work that relates to natural hazard planning and management, watershed monitoring to identify trends and restoration opportunities and conservation area management to protect natural heritage features and connect people to nature.

Through the development and approval of the HCA’s Inventory of Programs and Services, Agreement for Services with the City of Hamilton and Township of Puslinch and the development of WbRMS, issues, costs and risks related to these programs were considered (see Appendix 1). These programs include natural hazard management, conservation areas and lands, drinking water source protection and water quality and quantity monitoring. The HCA’s programs and services comply with regulatory requirements and provide value and experiences for the City of Hamilton, Township of Puslinch, watershed residents and landowners and people from outside the watershed.

Times change, issues evolve, and new issues arise, and these changes will result in pressures related to natural hazards, natural heritage and the watershed community at-large. There will be opportunities as well through increased partnerships with municipalities to enhance subwatershed planning and monitoring programs, as examples. Ultimately, the HCA’s Strategic Plan will provide overall guidance regarding programs and services. The WbRMS will provide a finer level of guidance and will be updated based on HCA’s overall strategic priorities to address these changes, opportunities and effectiveness of programs as required. Lastly, issue specific strategies and plans will be maintained based on the HCA Strategic Plan and WbRMS to provide a greater level of direction and guidance related to these specific issues. The following highlights the hierarchy of this approach.



HCA’s successes since 1958 are the result of diligent Board of Director and staff commitment to conserving and restoring the HCA watershed. These efforts have included effective partnerships with governments and agencies at the federal, provincial and municipal level, local businesses, residents and landowners, conservation area visitors and groups like Friends of Eramosa Karst and Friends of Westfield. Moving forward, these relationships and partnerships will need to continue and be enhanced with a focus on greater consultation and engagement with the Mississauga of the Credit First Nation and Six Nations of the Grand River First Nation.

7.0 Public Engagement

Public engagement for the WbRMS was undertaken in two phases. The first phase involved posting information regarding the development of the strategy and the associated regulatory

requirements of Ontario Regulation 686/21 on the HCA's dedicated website for the WbRMS and the public consultation webpage "Bang the Table". Further, the process and intent of the WbRMS was reviewed at a high level in meetings with the Mississauga of the Credit First Nation and the Six Nations of the Grand River First Nation.

The second phase of the consultation process involved the circulation of the draft WbRMS. At this stage the strategy was reviewed by the HCA's Conservation Advisory Board and the HCA's Board of Directors prior to the strategy being made available for broader consultation. The intent of the circulation of the draft strategy was to provide an overview of the regulatory requirements and how HCA staff had completed the document to incorporate these requirements. At this stage, the document will benefit from a broader review and will incorporate comments received through the consultation to complete a final strategy.

8.0 Periodic Review

Ontario Regulation 686/21 requires a process for the periodic review and updating of the WbRMS including procedures to ensure stakeholders and the public are consulted during the review and update process. In this regard, the WbRMS should be reviewed within a year after the appointment of a new Board of Directors for the HCA. This timing allows for consideration of environmental, social and economic impacts while also aligning with the municipal election cycle in Ontario. A review can also be undertaken within the four-year period noted to address issues if they arise.

Stakeholder and public consultation will be undertaken during the above noted review periods to ensure awareness and transparency regarding the WbRMS.

This page intentionally left blank.

Appendix 1 – Summary of Existing Technical Studies, Monitoring Programs and Other Information

Program Area	Description	Category	Supporting Documents
Natural Hazard 1 Section 28.1 Permit Administration and compliance activities	Reviewing and processing permit applications, associated technical reports, site inspections, communication with applicants, agents, and consultants. Legal expenses for regulations and compliance.	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conservation Authorities Act • Ontario Regulation 41/24 • Hamilton Conservation Authority Planning & Regulation Policies and Guidelines, 2011 • Technical Guide River & Stream System: Flooding Hazard Limit, Ontario, 2002. • Lake Ontario Shoreline Management Plan (Draft)
Natural Hazard 2 and 3 Review under Other Legislation and Municipal Plan Input and Review	<p>Input to the review and approval processes under other applicable law, (e.g. Environmental Assessment Act, Drainage Act, Aggregate Resources Act, Niagara Escarpment Planning and Development Act proposals) with comments related to natural hazards, wetlands, watercourses and Sec 28 permit requirements.</p> <p>Technical information and advice to municipalities on circulated municipal land use planning applications (Official Plan and Zoning By-law Amendments, Subdivisions, Consents, Minor Variances). Input to municipal land-use planning documents (OP, Comprehensive ZB, Secondary plans) related to natural hazards, on behalf of MNRF (delegated to CAs in 1983)</p>	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conservation Authorities Act • Environmental Assessment Act, Drainage Act, Aggregate Resources Act, Niagara Escarpment Planning and Development Act, Greenbelt plan • Ontario Regulation 41/24 • Hamilton Conservation Authority Planning & Regulation Policies and Guidelines, 2011 • Technical Guide River & Stream System: Flooding Hazard Limit, Ontario, 2002. • Lake Ontario Shoreline Management Plan (Draft)
Natural Hazard 4 & 6 Flood Forecasting and Warning	Daily data collection and monitoring of weather forecasts, provincial & local water level forecasts and watershed conditions. Flood event forecasting. Flood warning and communications. Maintenance of equipment.	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data on precipitation, watercourse flows, reservoir levels from 6 stream flow gauges, 10 rainfall gauges and 4 snow courses • Weather forecasts Surface water Monitoring Centre alerts • Watershed observations and knowledge • Flood Plain mapping • Hydrologic and hydraulic models • HCA Infrastructure Operational Plan • HCA Infrastructure Asset Management Plan
Natural Hazard 5 Flood and Erosion Control Infrastructure Operation and Management	Water & erosion control infrastructure and low flow augmentation.	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HCA Infrastructure Operational Plan • HCA Infrastructure Asset Management Plan

Natural Hazard 6 Flood Plain Mapping	Data collection, analysis and identification of areas susceptible to riverine or coastal flooding to create mapping products to delineate flood-prone areas.	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technical Guide River & Stream System: Flooding Hazard Limit, Ontario, 2002.
Natural Hazard 7 Ice Management Services	Frazil ice formation forecasting in Spencer Creek in Dundas, including potential standby equipment.	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HCA Ice Management Plan
Natural Hazard 8 Low water response	Conditions monitoring/analysis. Technical & administrative support to the Water Response Team representing major water users and decision makers, who recommend drought response actions.	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data on precipitation, watercourse flows, reservoir levels from 6 stream flow gauges, 10 rainfall gauges and 4 snow courses • Watershed observations and knowledge • HCA Infrastructure Operational Plan
Natural Hazard 9 Natural Hazards Technical Studies and Information Management	Data collection and study of designs to mitigate natural hazards. Development and use of systems to collect and store data and to provide spatial geographical representations of data.	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HCA Watershed-based Resource Management Strategy • Technical Guide River & Stream System: Flooding Hazard Limit, Ontario, 2002.
Natural Hazard 10 Natural Hazards Communications, Outreach and Education	Promoting public awareness of natural hazards including flooding, drought, and erosion. Public events, materials. Social media services. Media relations.	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HCA Marketing and Communications Department
Conservation Lands 1 Section 29 Minister's regulation Rules for Conduct in Conservation Areas	Conservation areas enforcement/compliance Legal expenses for regulation and compliance	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ontario Regulation 688/21 Rules of Conduct in Conservation Areas
Conservation Lands 2 Conservation Area Strategy	Guiding principles, objectives, including for an authority's land acquisition and disposition strategy, land use categories on conservation authority owned land, recommended management principles for different land categories, etc.	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ontario Regulation 686/21
Conservation Lands 3 Land Inventory	Development of an inventory containing information for every parcel of land owned or controlled by the Authority.	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HCA Land Inventory
Conservation Lands 4 and 5 Management, operation and Maintenance of CA owned lands	Management and Maintenance of HCA owned lands Includes: Stewardship and restoration, Master and management plans, hazard tree and invasive species management and, Ecological monitoring Programs and services to maintain any facilities, trails or other amenities that support	1, 2 and 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ontario Regulation 688/21 Rules of Conduct in Conservation Areas HCA conservation area master plans and management plans • HCA Aquatic Resource Management Program

	<p>public access and recreational activities in conservation areas and that can be provided without the direct support or supervision of staff employed by the authority or by another person or body</p> <p>Management and maintenance of HCA owned lands to connect communities and residents with active outdoor recreation opportunities such as camp sites, marina, pavilions, boat rentals, concessions and other assets that can be provided with the direct support or supervision of staff employed by the authority or by another person or body</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HCA Terrestrial Resource Management Program • HCA Invasive Species Strategy
Conservation Lands 6 Outdoor Environmental Education	Program Development and Delivery	3	
Conservation Lands 7 Cultural Heritage Education and Experiences	Program Development and Delivery	2 and 3	
Conservation Lands 8 Land Lease and Agreement Management	Management of land leases and property agreements for agricultural leases and house rentals, as well as temporary third-party agreements on HCA owned or managed property for events, weddings, film shoots, day camps, group picnics, etc.	2 and 3	
Conservation Lands 9 Land Acquisition Program	Acquisition of lands containing important natural heritage features, or natural hazards or strategically aligned with existing HCA lands as identified in the Land acquisition and securement policy.	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conservation Authorities Act • HCA Land Securement Strategy • HCA Conservation Area Strategy • HCA land Inventory
Conservation Lands 10 Partnership Building and Volunteer Support	Development and management of mutually beneficial community partnerships, (e.g. “friends of” groups), agreements with First Nations (e.g. deer harvest) volunteer events (e.g. garbage pick-up, plantings, invasive species removal etc.) and collaboration and work with partners on shared goals and objectives (Cootes to Escarpment, Hamilton Burlington Trails Council, Bruce Trail Conservancy etc.).	3	

<p>Drinking Water Source Protection 1 and 2</p> <p>Source protection authority role as set out in the Clean Water Act – supporting Stewardship</p>	<p>Source Protection Area/Region, tech support, SPC support, SPA reports and meetings, activities required by the Clean Water Act and regulations. Assisting in the co-ordination and implementation of the source protection plan that applies to the authority’s source protection area. Where the authority considers it advisable, reviewing and commenting on any proposal made under another Act that is circulated to the authority for the purpose of determining, i. whether the proposal relates to a significant drinking water threat that is governed by the plan, or ii. the proposal’s potential impact on any drinking water sources protected by the plan.</p> <p>Well decommissioning</p>	<p>1 and 2</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clean Water Act • Assessment Report for the Hamilton Region Source protection Area • Halton-Hamilton Source Protection Plan
<p>Water Quality Quantity 1</p> <p>Provincial Water Quality Monitoring Network (PWQMN)</p>	<p>A long-standing (50+ year) CA/MECP partnership for stream water quality monitoring. CA takes water samples; MECP does lab analysis and data management</p>	<p>1</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PWQMN Program Requirements
<p>Water Quality Quantity 2</p> <p>Provincial Groundwater Monitoring Network (PGMN)</p>	<p>A long-standing (20+ year) CA/MECP partnership for groundwater level and quality monitoring. CA maintains equipment, data transfer to MECP, water sampling; MECP provides equipment, standards, data management.</p>	<p>1</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PGMN Program Requirements
<p>Water Quality Quantity 3</p> <p>Aquatic Monitoring Program – non-HCA lands</p>	<p>Aquatic monitoring on 3-year cycle basis (OBBN, temperature and fish collection.</p>	<p>2 and 3</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HCA Aquatic Resource Management Program
<p>Water Quality Quantity 4</p> <p>Water Quality Monitoring - City</p>	<p>Water quality and erosion site monitoring for City of Hamilton</p> <p>City of Hamilton Groundwater Monitoring Well Inspections</p> <p>City of Hamilton Groundwater Monitoring Well Water Quality Sampling</p> <p>City of Hamilton E. Coli Sampling Program at PWQMN Sites</p> <p>Greenville Surface Water Monitoring</p>	<p>2</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program Agreement and Requirement Outline

Water Quality Quantity 5 Water Quality Monitoring – COA and HHRAP	Water quality monitoring associated with tributaries to Cootes Paradise as part of COA and HHRAP monitoring	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program Agreement and Requirement Outline
Core Watershed 1 Watershed-based Resource Management Strategy	Develop guiding principles and objectives that inform the design and delivery of programs and services the CA is required to provide Collate/compile existing resource management plans, watershed plans, studies and data. Strategy development, Implementation & annual reporting A review of programs and services provide for the purposes of compliance with CA Act Develop a process for periodic review including procedures to engage/consult with stakeholders and the public. Strategy development must include a stakeholder and public consultation component The Watershed based resource management strategy must be made public on the CA website.	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ontario Regulation 686/21
Core Watershed 2 Sub-watershed planning	Partner developed plan which identifies streams, wetlands, forests, groundwater recharge areas, and other natural areas. It includes an inventory of plants, animals, birds, and other species. Information on stream flows, water quality, groundwater movement and other natural features is also included. The plan contains policies and implementation actions to protect, enhance and improve the health of the area.	2 and 3	
Core Watershed 3 Watershed Monitoring program	Planning and undertaking an ecological monitoring program on a watershed basis to support the objectives of both HCA and our two municipal partners. This includes the collection, storage, assessment and distribution of ecological data and information regarding watershed conditions and health and participation on any working groups.	2 and 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HCA conservation area master plans and management plans • HCA Aquatic Resource Management Program • HCA Terrestrial Resource Management Program • HCA Invasive Species Strategy
Core Watershed 4 Watershed Stewardship and	Apply for and manage external funding, promote private land stewardship, outreach, provide advice	2 and 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HCA conservation area master plans and management plans

Restoration (Urban, rural & Agriculture)	and design assistance to property owners. Implementation of watershed plan stewardship recommendations.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HCA Aquatic Resource Management Program • HCA Terrestrial Resource Management Program • HCA Invasive Species Strategy • HCA Stewardship Action Plans
Core Watershed 5 Climate change impact assessment /Planning and Policies	Identification of vulnerability or risk, and the development of mitigation and adaptation polices and corporate climate change initiatives	1, 2 and 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HCA Climate Change Strategy

Resources

1. Conservation Authorities Act - <https://www.ontario.ca/laws/statute/90c27>
2. Ontario Regulation 686/21 - <https://www.ontario.ca/laws/regulation/210686>
3. HCA Strategic Plan 2019-2023 - https://conservationhamilton.ca/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/HCA_StrategicPlan_Final_LR.pdf
4. 2023 Watershed Report Card - https://conservationhamilton.ca/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/HCA_Watershed-Report-Card-Final.pdf
5. Assessment Report – Hamilton Region Source Protection Area - https://www.protectingwater.ca/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2023/02/HamiltonARclean_221104.docx.pdf
6. Halton Hamilton Source Protection Plan - https://www.protectingwater.ca/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2023/02/HHSP-clean_221104.docx.pdf
7. Watershed Plan for the Hamilton Region Conservation Authority, Volume 1 and 2, June 1983.
8. Hamilton Natural Areas Inventory Project 3rd Edition, Site Summaries Document, 2014
9. Spencer Creek Conservation Report, 1960, Department of Commerce and Development, Conservation Branch
10. Hamilton Region Conservation Report, 1968, Department of Energy and Resources Management, Conservation Authorities Branch

This page intentionally left blank.



Hamilton Conservation Authority Conservation Area Strategy - DRAFT

June 2024



This page intentionally left blank.

Table of Contents

1.0	Introduction	5
1.1	Purpose and Regulatory Framework	5
1.2	About the Hamilton Conservation Authority.....	6
2.0	Strategic Direction	6
2.1	HCA’s Strategic Plan.....	6
2.2	Conservation Area Strategy Objectives	8
2.3	HCA Land Securement Strategy.....	9
2.4	HCA’s Annual Budget	10
3.0	Programs and Services	10
4.0	Conservation Area Assessment	11
4.1	Augment Natural Heritage within HCA Watershed.....	12
4.2	Integrate with Provincial and Municipal Lands/Other Publicly accessible Lands and Trails	19
4.2.1	Provincial Lands	19
4.2.2	City of Hamilton Lands.....	21
4.2.3	Royal Botanical Gardens Lands.....	21
4.2.4	McMaster Forest.....	21
4.2.5	Trail System.....	22
4.2.6	Cootes to Escarpment EcoPark System	22
4.2.7	HCA Trails.....	24
5.0	Conservation Land Use Categories	24
6.0	Public Engagement	27
7.0	Periodic Review	27
8.0	Future Considerations	27
9.0	Resources	30

This page intentionally left blank.

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Purpose and Regulatory Framework

The Conservation Area Strategy identifies broad objectives for the Hamilton Conservation Authority's (HCA) Conservation Areas and related programs and services. The strategy was undertaken by the HCA to meet requirements as outlined in the [Conservation Authorities Act](#) (CA Act) and [Ontario Regulation 686/21](#) (Regulation) and is intended to provide guidance for the management and operation of the HCA's conservation areas.

Section 21.1 of the CA Act sets out Mandatory Programs and Services that all conservation authorities must deliver within their watershed, with these requirements outlined in greater detail in the Regulation. Section 21.1.1 of the CA Act details Municipal Programs and Services that conservation authorities are permitted to provide under agreement to their municipal partners while Section 21.1.2 provides direction related to Other Programs and Services conservation authorities may deliver. The Regulation, specifically, subsection 9(1), paragraph 1 outlines that all conservation authorities must complete a Conservation Area Strategy. The main requirements of a Conservation Area Strategy per Section 10 of the Regulation are outlined in Figure 1.

1. 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.
2. 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.
3. Where the authority considers it advisable to achieve the objectives referred to in paragraph 1, an assessment of how the lands owned and controlled by the authority may,
 - i. augment any natural heritage located within the 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 the land inventory described in Section 11 based on the types of activities that are engaged in 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 conservation area strategy by the authority, including procedures to ensure stakeholders and the public are consulted during the review and update process.

Figure 1 – Conservation Area Strategy - Main Requirements

1.2 About the Hamilton Conservation Authority

The Spencer Creek Conservation Authority, the forerunner of the HCA, was created in 1958. Subsequently, Red Hill Creek, Stoney Creek, Battlefield Creek and the Numbered watercourse in the former City of Stoney Creek and City of Hamilton were added and the HCA was formed in 1966 pursuant to the CA Act. The HCA is located at the western end of Lake Ontario and has a watershed area of 479km². The HCA watershed is located in the Treaty Lands and Territory of the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation and traditional territory of the Haudenosaunee. As shown on Map 1, the majority of the HCA's watershed is included within the City of Hamilton with the headwaters of Spencer Creek and Fletcher Creek located in the Township of Puslinch. A small portion of the Town of Grimsby is located at the east end of the HCA's watershed.

The HCA operates under the requirements of the CA Act. Section 0.1 of the CA Act states that:

“The purpose of this Act is to provide for the organization and delivery of programs and services that further the conservation, restoration, development and management of natural resources in watersheds in Ontario.”

The Board of Directors of the HCA is comprised of 11 Directors representing 2 municipalities. Seven Councillors and 3 citizen appointees represent the City of Hamilton while 1 appointee represents the Township of Puslinch. The HCA works closely with our municipal partners as well as local groups and agencies and both the Federal and Provincial governments.

The HCA owns or manages 4,732 ha (11,695 acres) of land within our watershed jurisdiction. This includes the Westfield Heritage Village Conservation Area and portions of the Chippawa Rail Trail and the Toronto Hamilton & Brantford (TH&B) Rail Trail that are located outside of the HCA's watershed.

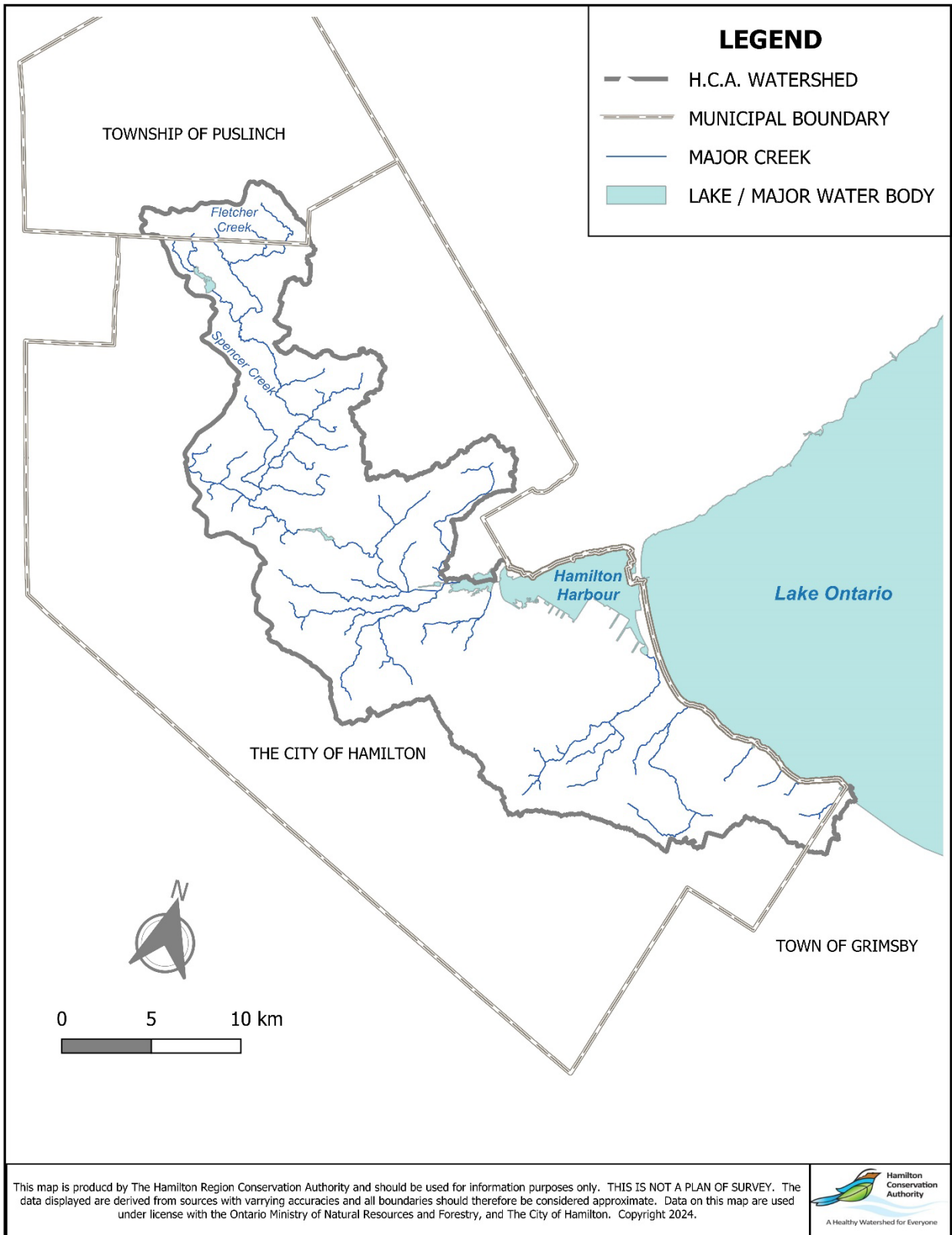
2.0 Strategic Direction

2.1 HCA's Strategic Plan **Note: The HCA is currently undertaking the development of a Strategic Plan for 2025-2029. This is expected to be completed by the end of June 2024. This section will be updated pending completion of the 2025-2029 Strategic Plan.**

HCA's [Strategic Plan 2019-2023](#) details the HCA's vision, mission, commitment and corporate values as well as our strategic priorities.

HCA's vision, where we want to be is “A healthy watershed for everyone”.

HCA's mission, what we do is “To lead in the conservation of our watershed and connect people to nature.”



Map 1 – HCA Watershed

The Strategic Plan highlights the HCA’s commitment and corporate values as follows:

- Provide excellent customer service and a solution-oriented approach
- Be accountable, transparent and responsible in the use of resources
- Embrace new technologies to help develop new ways of doing business and foster innovation
- Promote teamwork internally and externally to achieve common goals, support existing relationships and build new partnerships
- Maintain trust, act with integrity and treat others with respect
- Value knowledge to continually learn and improve, in an effort to achieve best solutions

The HCA’s Strategic Plan highlighted 5 Strategic Priority Areas.

- Organizational Excellence
- Water Management
- Natural Heritage Conservation
- Conservation Area Experience
- Education and Environmental Awareness

For each Strategic Priority Area, several initiatives are included and these priority areas and associated initiatives guide programs and services and the development of department work plans, budgets and approaches.

2.2 Conservation Area Strategy Objectives

Section 10(1) of Ontario Regulation 686/21 notes that a Conservation Area Strategy shall include “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”. For reference, Section 21.1 of the CA Act states the following:

“An authority shall provide the following programs or services within its area of jurisdiction:

1. Programs or services that meet any of the following descriptions and that have been prescribed by the regulations:
 - i. Programs and services related to the risk of natural hazards.
 - ii. Programs and services related to the conservation and management of lands owned or controlled by the authority, including any interests in land registered on title.
 - iii. Programs and services related to the authority’s duties, functions and responsibilities as a source protection authority under the Clean Water Act, 2006.

- iv. Programs and services related to the authority's duties, functions and responsibilities under an Act prescribed by the regulations."

Based on this direction, Section 21.1 ii) of the CA Act, staff input, a review of background documentation and input through the consultation process, the following objectives have been developed to meet the requirements of the CA Act and Ontario Regulation 686/21.

- a. *To ensure that all present and future HCA land holdings contribute to the vision and mandate of the HCA, and support an integrated watershed management approach;*
- b. *To pursue an active land securement program to increase the size of the HCA conservation lands and linkages to these lands;*
- c. *To protect and enhance the ecological integrity of the lands within the HCA's watershed and maintain and enhance a connected natural heritage system*
- d. *To undertake research, monitoring and evaluation of the natural heritage system, and organize current information to identify information gaps and strengthen knowledge of the HCA's watershed natural heritage system;*
- e. *To provide environmentally sustainable passive and active recreation opportunities, as appropriate, within the HCA's conservation areas;*
- f. *To determine the current public uses occurring on these lands, identify user groups and principle uses, and identify actions to meet future needs for these lands;*
- g. *To ensure that future management of the CA lands will be informed by stakeholder and public input.*
- h. *To maintain, enhance and build new partnerships to enhance connectivity of natural heritage lands and trail networks where possible.*

2.3 HCA Land Securement Strategy

At the December 19, 2019 Board of Directors meeting, the 2020 HCA Land Securement Strategy (LSS) was endorsed. The goal of the Land Securement Strategy is to focus on natural areas, linkages, infilling and creating larger core area conservation areas. Given the vast area of land within the HCA watershed, it is inconceivable that all potential lands would be secured by public agencies or land trusts. With existing funding levels and the ability to locate willing parties, the HCA will approach land acquisition based on a willing buyer-willing seller philosophy. Acquisition will be completed based on available opportunities to acquire targeted properties and will be considered on a case-by-case basis and subject to funding. Land disposition is not envisioned by the HCA. In the unlikely event that a property does not have existing or potential ecological significance, does not meet the noted securement criteria as

detailed in the LSS and has no pre-existing agreement to honour regarding disposal, the parcel may be considered for disposition from which proceeds would be directed towards the HCA’s land acquisition account to be used to secure additional lands.

2.4 HCA’s Annual Budget

The HCA undertakes an annual budget process with the Board of Directors approving the final budget. The budget is based on the approved HCA Strategic Plan, departmental work plans, master and management plans for HCA conservation areas as well as prioritized action items. To meet the requirements of the CA Act and associated regulations, the budget details programs and services as Mandatory (Category 1), Municipal (Category 2) and Other (Category 3).

3.0 Programs and Services

Section 10 (1) 2. of Ontario Regulation 686/21 outlines that the Conservation Area Strategy shall provide the “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.” The following tables highlight the mandatory and non-mandatory programs and services undertaken on land owned and controlled by the HCA. It is noted that this information has been obtained from the approved HCA Inventory of Programs and Services dated March 2, 2023. The Inventory of Programs and Services was utilized as part of the required municipal agreements with the City of Hamilton and the Township of Puslinch.

Mandatory (Category 1)

Program/Service	Sources of Funding
Section 29 Minister’s regulation Rules for Conduct in Conservation Areas (O. Reg. 688/21)	Municipal Levy and Self-Generated
Conservation Area Strategy – As required by O. Reg. 688/21	Municipal Levy
Land Inventory – As required by O. Reg. 688/21	Municipal Levy
Management, operation and Maintenance of CA owned lands – This includes Management and Maintenance of HCA owned lands Includes: Stewardship and restoration, Master and management plans, hazard tree	Municipal Block Funding and Self-Generated

and invasive species management and, Ecological monitoring	
Programs and services to maintain any facilities, trails or other amenities that support public access and recreational activities in conservation areas and that can be provided without the direct support or supervision of staff employed by the authority or by another person or body	

Municipal (Category 2)

Program/Service	Sources of Funding
Dofasco 200 Trail and LaFarge 2000 Trail	Municipal Block Funding and Self-Generated
Cultural Heritage Education and Experiences	Municipal Levy
Land Lease and Agreement Management	Mgmt. fee cost as per agreement with City of Hamilton for Confederation Beach Park

Other (Category 3)

Program/Service	Sources of Funding
Management, operation and maintenance of CA owned lands for active recreation	Self-Generated and Municipal Block Funding
Outdoor Environmental Education	Self-Generated
Land Lease and Agreement Management	Self-Generated
Land Acquisition Program	Self-Generated
Partnership Building and Volunteer Support	Self-Generated

The HCA implements a broad and successful range of programs and services related to the HCA's owned and managed conservation lands. Future considerations flowing from the Conservation Area Strategy is outlined in Section 8 of this strategy.

4.0 Conservation Area Assessment

Ontario Regulation 686/21 outlines that when an authority considers it advisable to achieve the objectives as required under Section 10(1) 1. of the Regulation and further detailed in Section 2.2 of this Conservation Area Strategy, an assessment of how the lands owned and controlled by the authority may be undertaken to show how the authority's lands; i) augment any natural heritage located within the authority's area of jurisdiction, and ; ii) integrate with

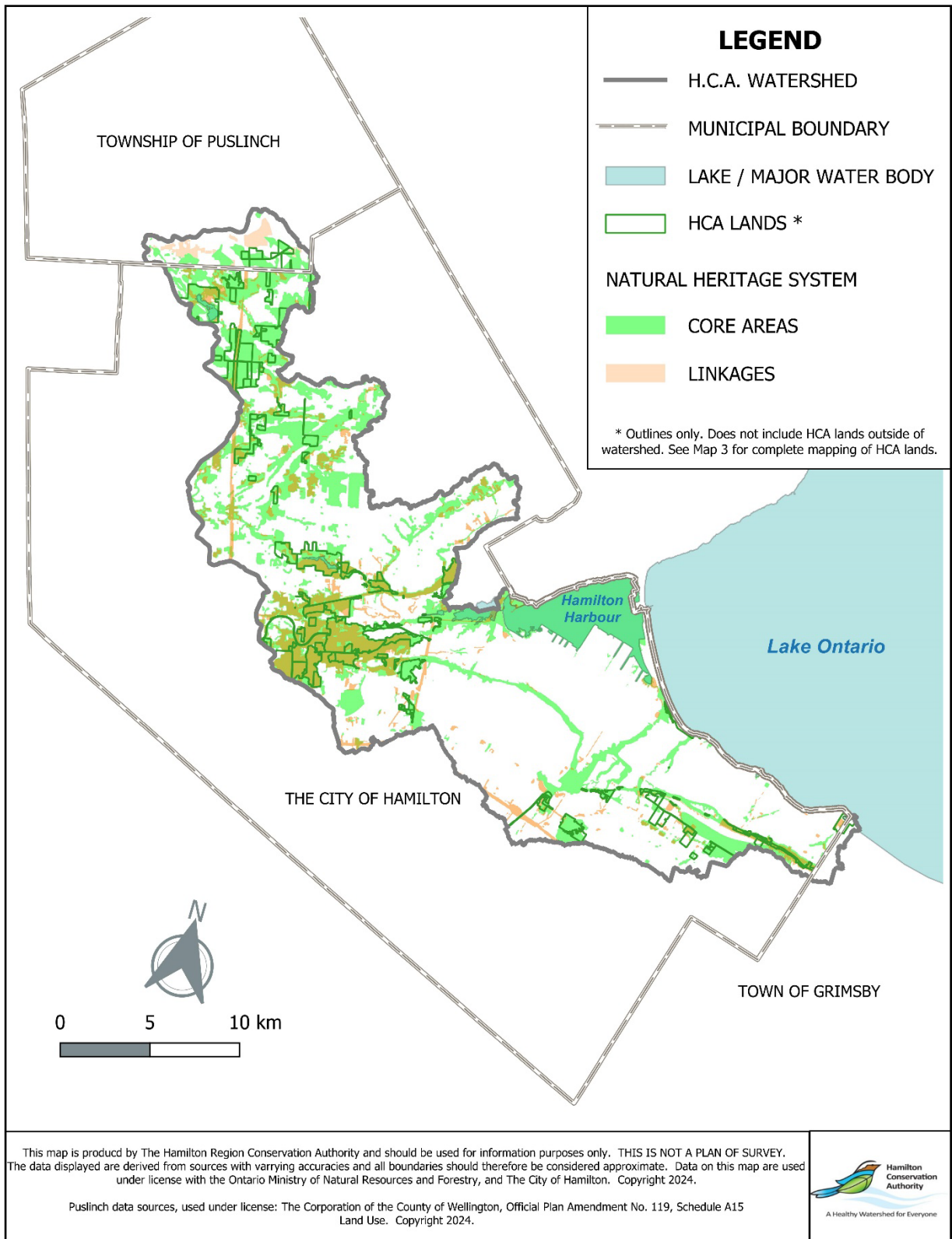
other provincially or municipally owned lands or other publicly accessible lands and trails within the authority's area of jurisdiction. Sections 4.1 and 4.2 outline the role of HCA lands within the watersheds natural heritage system as well as how HCA lands are connected and integrate with provincial and municipal lands and other publicly accessible lands and trails. It is noted that the HCA's watershed and ecological lands and the watersheds natural heritage system connects more broadly with adjoining Conservation Authority watersheds.

4.1 Augment Natural Heritage within HCA Watershed

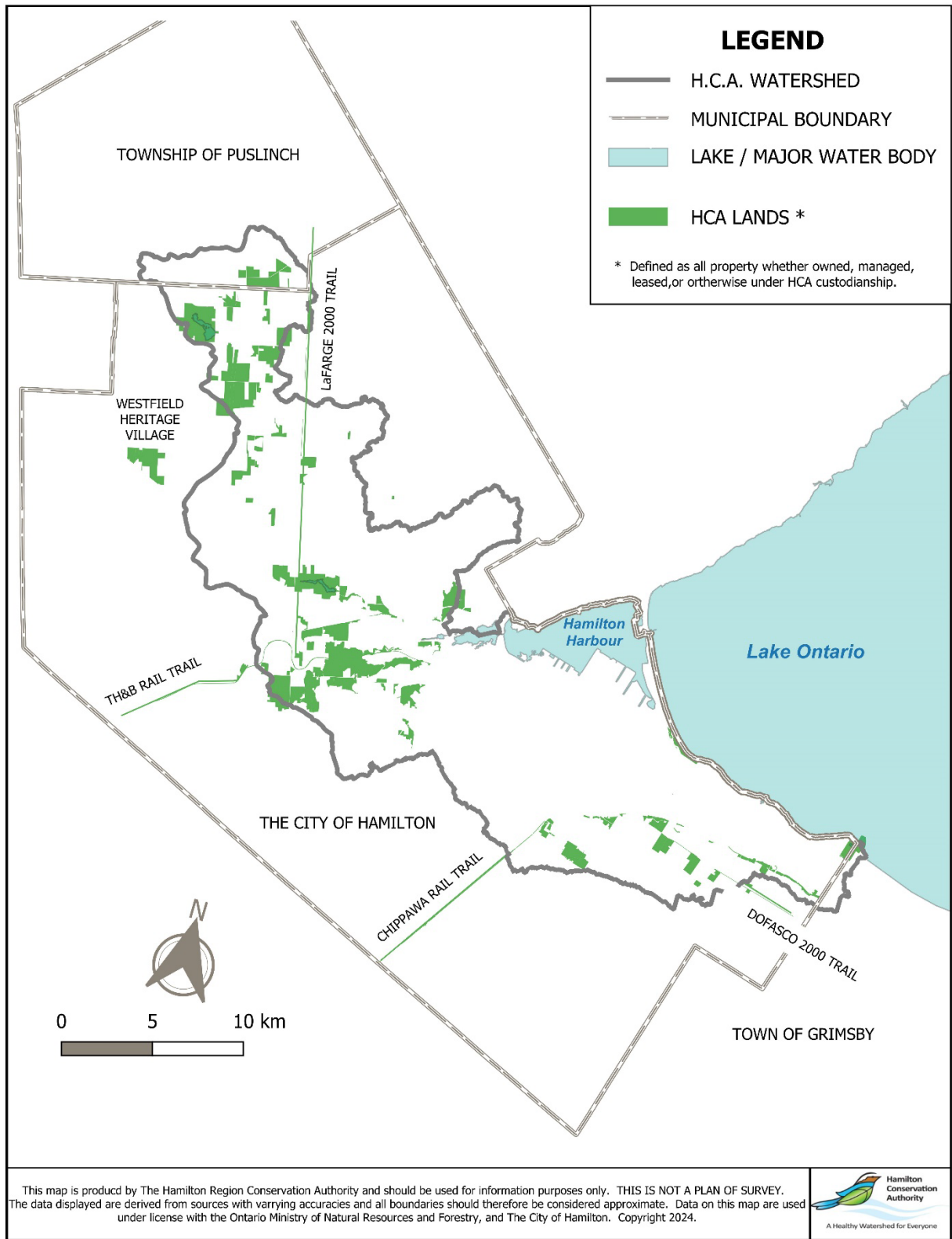
Starting in 1993, the HCA, City of Hamilton, the Hamilton Naturalists and other partners have undertaken a natural areas inventory (NAI) for the area of the City of Hamilton. There have been three editions of the NAI in total with the latest NAI being completed in 2014. The City of Hamilton has used the completed NAI information as part of the development of their Official Plan (Section C.2.0, City of Hamilton Rural Official Plan). Using this data and mapping, the City has designated in their Official Plan Core Areas and Linkages. The Core Areas serve to identify and protect the natural heritage lands identified in the NAI as well as the linkages that serve to connect these core areas. These Core Areas and Linkages serve as the City's identified natural heritage system. Map 2 illustrates the Natural Heritage System for the City of Hamilton and the Township of Puslinch as show in the respective Official Plans

As noted in Section 1.2, the HCA own or manages 4,732 ha (11,695 acres) of land within our watershed jurisdiction. This includes the Westfield Heritage Village Conservation Area and portions of the Chippawa Rail Trail and TH&B Rail Trail that are located outside of the HCA's watershed. HCA lands as noted are illustrated on Map 3.

The vast majority of HCA lands as illustrated in Map 3 comprise major components of the City's natural heritage system and are integral to the features, function and biodiversity of the natural heritage system. When considering the mapping highlighted in this section, it is evident that HCA lands play a critical role in the watershed natural heritage system as well as providing passive and active recreation lands within the watershed. HCA lands certainly augment natural heritage features within the HCA's watershed and secure these lands for current and future generations. Further, these lands play a critical role in providing critical habitat in an increasing urban area, provides a natural land area to maintain and increase biodiversity while also mitigating the effects of climate change.



Map 2 – Natural Heritage System City of Hamilton and County of Wellington

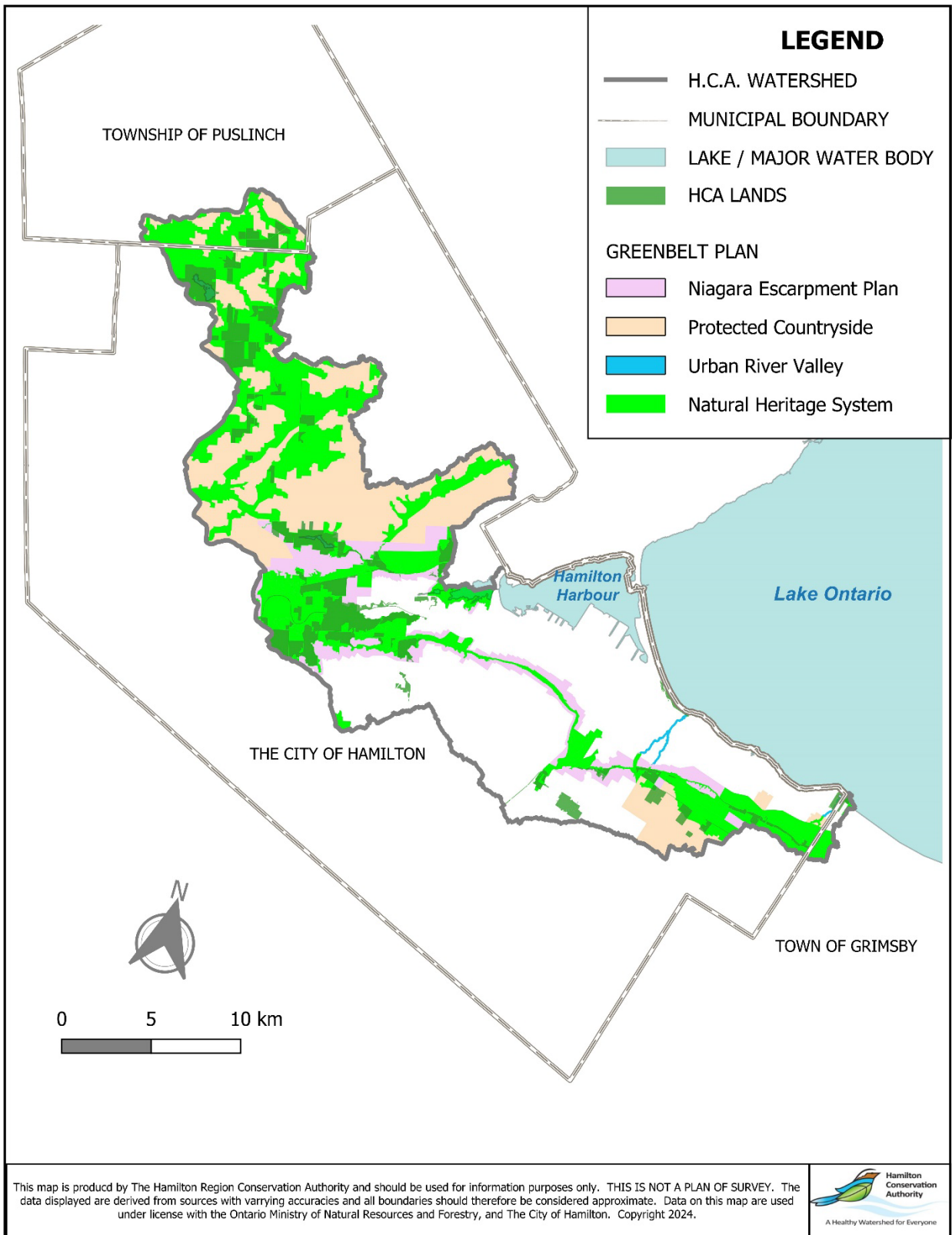


Map 3 – HCA Owned and Managed Lands

The Niagara Escarpment, portions of which are located in the HCA's watershed, is a significant topographic feature that extends from Queenston in the Niagara Region to Tobermory on the Bruce Peninsula. The Niagara Escarpment Plan which was established through the Niagara Escarpment Planning and Development Act "serves as a framework of objectives and policies to strike a balance between development, protection and the enjoyment of this important landform feature and the resources it supports." In addition to the policy framework for the broader Niagara Escarpment Plan area, "The Niagara Escarpment Plan has a system of parks and open spaces which are connected by the Bruce Trail. The system is identified as the Niagara Escarpment Parks and Open Space System (NEPOSS). NEPOSS provides opportunities for recreation, tourism, and play a fundamental role in the protection of cultural heritage resources and the Escarpment's natural heritage. Natural areas in the NEPOSS also help to mitigate and improve resilience to climate change by providing green infrastructure, capturing and storing carbon, recharging aquifers and protecting biodiversity and sensitive areas across the Escarpment." HCA master plans and projects within the NEPOSS system must comply with the requirements of the Niagara Escarpment Plan. The Niagara Escarpment Plan through the NEPOSS policies identifies the following HCA properties as being included in the NEPOSS system. In this regard, these lands augment natural heritage features at the HCA watershed scale as well as at a provincial landscape scale.

1. Spencer Gorge – Webster's Falls Conservation Area
2. Crooks Hollow Conservation Area
3. Christie Lake Conservation Area
4. Summit Bog Muskeg Preserve
5. Dundas Valley Conservation Area (A Nodal park within NEPOSS)
6. Tiffany Falls Conservation Area
7. Iroquoia Heights Conservation Area
8. Mount Albion Conservation Area
9. Felker's Falls Conservation Area
10. Devil's Punch Bowl Conservation Area
11. Vinemount Conservation Area
12. Winona Conservation Area

The Greenbelt Plan is a provincial plan with "an overarching strategy that provides clarity and certainty about urban structure, where and how future growth should be accommodated and what must be protected for current and future generations." "The Greenbelt Plan includes lands within, and builds upon the ecological protections provided by, the Niagara Escarpment Plan (NEP) and the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan (ORMCP)."

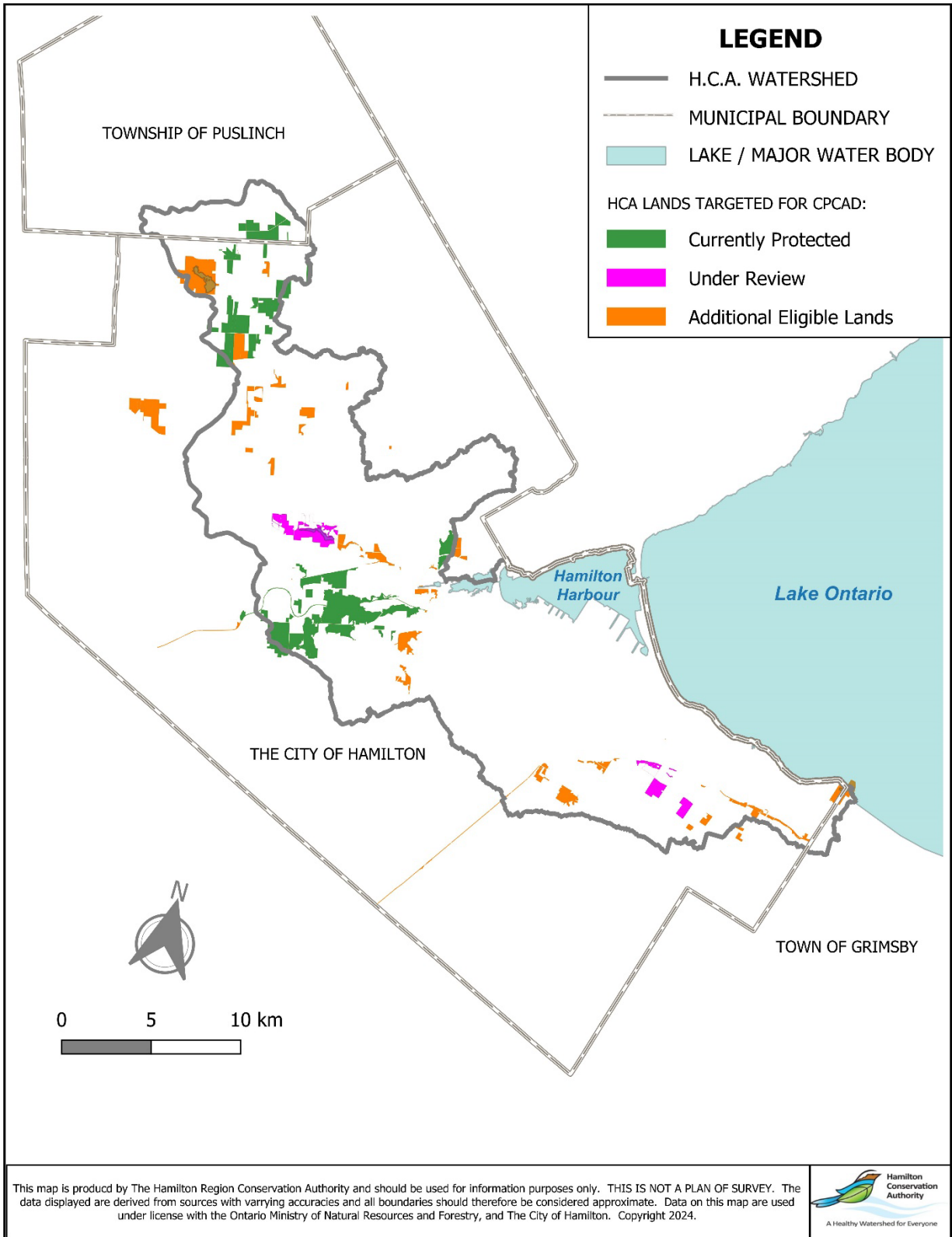


Map 4 – HCA Owned and Managed Lands in context with Niagara Escarpment Plan and Greenbelt Plan

The Greenbelt Plan provides for a Protected Countryside with the purpose to “enhance the spatial extent of agriculturally and environmentally protected lands covered by the NEP and the ORMCP while at the same time improving linkages between these areas and the surrounding major lake systems and watersheds. The Protected Countryside is made up of an Agricultural System and a Natural System, together with a series of settlement areas.” Specific policies are included in the Greenbelt Plan that provide protection for natural heritage in the Greenbelt plan area. Map 4 illustrates the boundaries of the Greenbelt Plan and the Niagara Escarpment Plan in addition to HCA lands within this area. As shown of Map 4, most of the lands owned by the HCA are located within this plan area and augment the Natural System on a Provincial scale.

At the 2022 UN Biodiversity Conference, Target 3 from the Kunming-Montreal Biodiversity Framework outlined “that by 2030 at least 30 per cent of terrestrial, inland water, and of coastal and marine areas, especially areas of particular importance for biodiversity and ecosystem functions and services, are effectively conserved and managed.” Canada has committed to meeting this target and through a database maintained by the Federal Department of Environment and Climate Change Canada tracks Canada’s progress to meeting this target. Working with the Ontario Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks and Ontario Nature, the HCA has submitted the required documentation and mapping for these lands to count towards meeting this target. Map 5 identifies HCA lands that have met the required criteria for these lands to be counted as protected lands or are under consideration to be counted. This speaks to the importance of these lands from a watershed, provincial, federal and international level as it relates to biodiversity conservation and how HCA lands augment natural heritage.

Historically, the HCA has completed and implemented master plans for the HCA’s conservation lands. These plans date to the 1970’s, 1980’s and 1990’s. More recently, the HCA has commenced a process for updating the conservation area master and management plans to reflect current conditions and guide the development and management of these conservation lands. These plans provide direction regarding both passive and active recreation, development opportunities to enhance the visitors experience as well as management and enhancement of the natural features found on site. The plans also identify opportunities for restoration of land to increase the natural heritage features of the conservation area. In this regard, the Westfield Heritage Village Conservation Area, the Valens Conservation Area, the Fifty Point Conservation Area, Fletcher Creek, Beverly Swamp, Dofasco 2000, Saltfleet, Winona and Vinemount plans have been completed and the recommendations of these plans are being implemented through the HCA’s annual budget and work plan processes. The Devil’s Punch Bowl Conservation Areas Master Plan is nearing completion as of 2024 with the Felker’s Falls, Mount Albion, Eramosa Karst, Chippewa Trail underway. The Dundas Valley Conservation Area and Christie Conservation Area master plans are scheduled to be completed in the next 3 to 4 years.



Map 5 – HCA Owned and Managed Lands – Target 3 Lands

The HCA also undertakes management and restoration work on HCA lands per the completed master plans and management plans, the HCA's Invasive Species Strategy (2016) and invasive species mapping as well as the result of the HCA's natural heritage monitoring program.

The above noted programs support the implementation of the objectives noted in Section 2.2, specifically the following objectives:

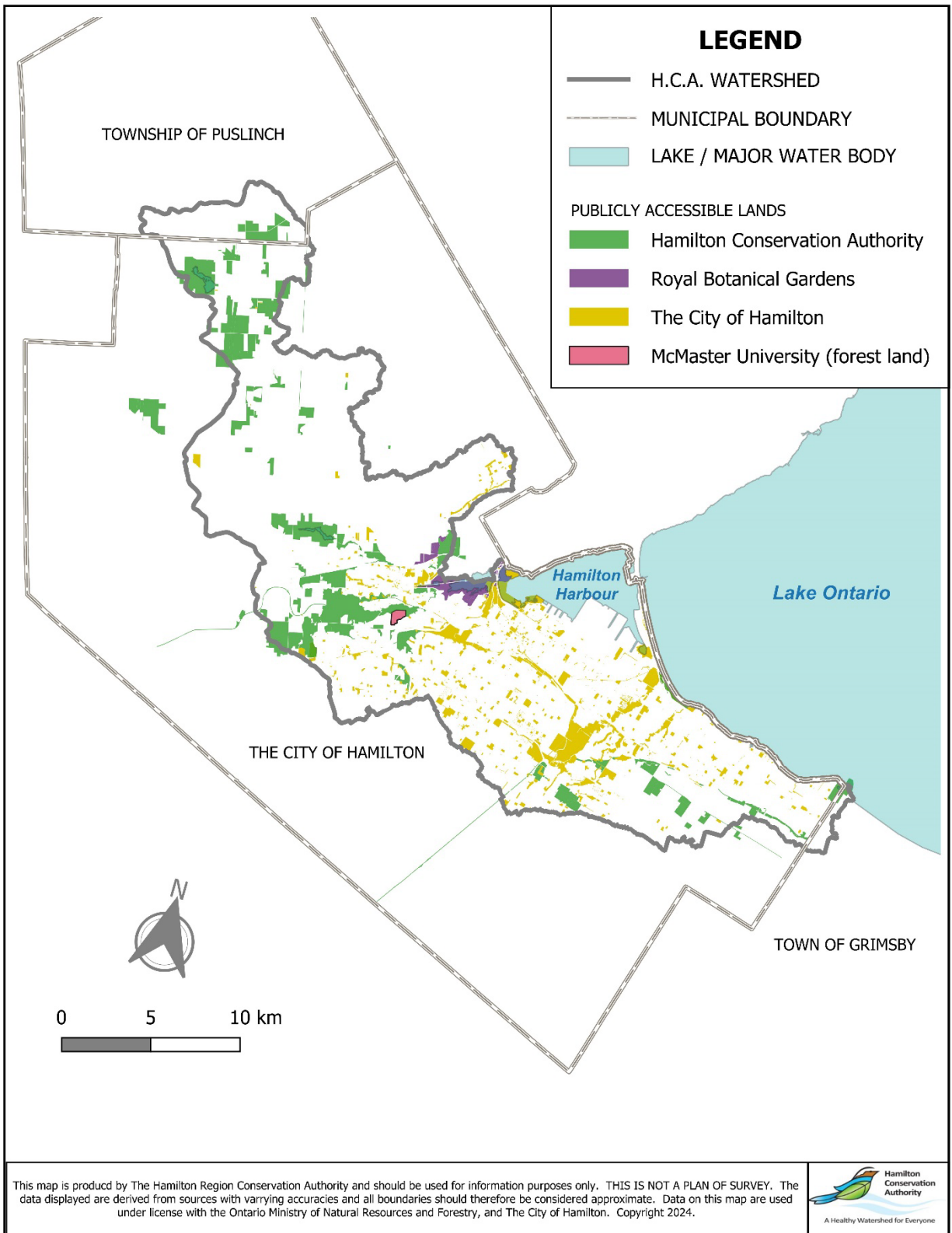
- a. To ensure that all present and future HCA land holdings contribute to the vision and mandate of the HCA, and support an integrated watershed management approach;*
- b. To protect and enhance the ecological integrity of the lands within the HCA's watershed and maintain and enhance a connected natural heritage system*
- c. To undertake research, monitoring and evaluation of the natural heritage system, and organize current information to identify information gaps and strengthen knowledge of the HCA's watershed natural heritage system;*
- d. To provide environmentally sustainable passive and active recreation opportunities, as appropriate, within the HCA's conservation areas;*
- e. To determine the current public uses occurring on these lands, identify user groups and principle uses, and identify actions to meet future needs for these lands*

4.2 Integrate with Provincial and Municipal Lands/Other Publicly accessible Lands and Trails

Map 6 provides an overview of provincial, municipal, and other publicly accessible lands located within the HCA's watershed and how they integrate with HCA lands.

4.2.1 Provincial Lands

Within the HCA's watershed, there are no provincial lands, Provincial Parks or Provincial Conservation Reserves and as such, the Conservation Area Strategy does not take this type of lands into consideration. The Province of Ontario does own the "feeder lands" that form part of the Eramosa Karst Conservation Area. These lands are managed by the HCA through an agreement with the province.



Map 6 – HCA Owned and Managed Lands in Context with City of Hamilton and Royal Botanical Garden Lands

4.2.2 City of Hamilton Lands

The City of Hamilton does own significant lands within the HCA watershed. These lands include local and city-wide parks that serve to provide both passive and recreation opportunities. Generally, these lands do not contain natural heritage features and are not part of the City's natural heritage system, however, they do provide open space for watershed residents and in some cases linkages to the broader parkland and open space system within the City of Hamilton, including HCA lands, and into adjacent communities.

The City of Hamilton does own lands located along the Niagara Escarpment as well as ravine lands within the Red Hill Creek watershed, Battlefield Creek and Stoney Creek as well as the Windermere Basin and Chedoke Creek. These lands do contain natural heritage features and are Core Areas and Linkages as identified in the City of Hamilton's Official Plan. These lands are also part of the City's Natural Heritage System.

4.2.3 Royal Botanical Gardens Lands

Royal Botanical Gardens (RBG) is located on lands around Cootes Paradise and is within both the watershed jurisdictions of the HCA and Conservation Halton. RBG owns and manages 2,700 acres of land including 2,400 acres of nature sanctuaries, 300 acres cultivated gardens and an arboretum. These lands include Cootes Paradise which is a provincially significant coastal wetland, ravine lands and forest. These features are part of the City of Hamilton's Natural Heritage System and are located adjacent to the Dundas Valley Conservation Area and the Borer's Falls Conservation Area with the resulting large natural heritage area which contains trails and passive recreation opportunities. This area is also part

of the Cootes to Escarpment EcoPark System (Section 4.2.6) which is a group of nine land owning agencies that have agreed to establish the EcoPark System as a voluntary collaboration. Collectively, the aim is to effectively manage the lands through restoration and naturalization projects, increasing landholdings and passive use of the area and its trail network.

4.2.4 McMaster Forest

McMaster Forest is a 127-acre parcel of lands owned and maintained by McMaster University. It is located on Lower Lions Club Road and is located immediately adjacent to HCA lands that comprise the Dundas valley Conservation Area. McMaster Forest is an environmental significant area that is used for ecological teaching and research and for recreation purposes. "McMaster Forest Nature Preserve is an incredibly biodiverse area of mixed forests, old growth forests, wetlands, meadows, creeks, and prairie. The proximity to campus, combined with the incredible diversity of animal and plant species thriving on the property, make the McMaster Forest Nature Preserve an ideal research, recreation, and teaching facility. Many undergraduate courses make use of the property as well as undergraduate and graduate

research projects. The public is welcome to explore the area, but is asked to please adhere to posted signage, stay on trail, and not disturb ongoing research.”

4.2.5 Trail System

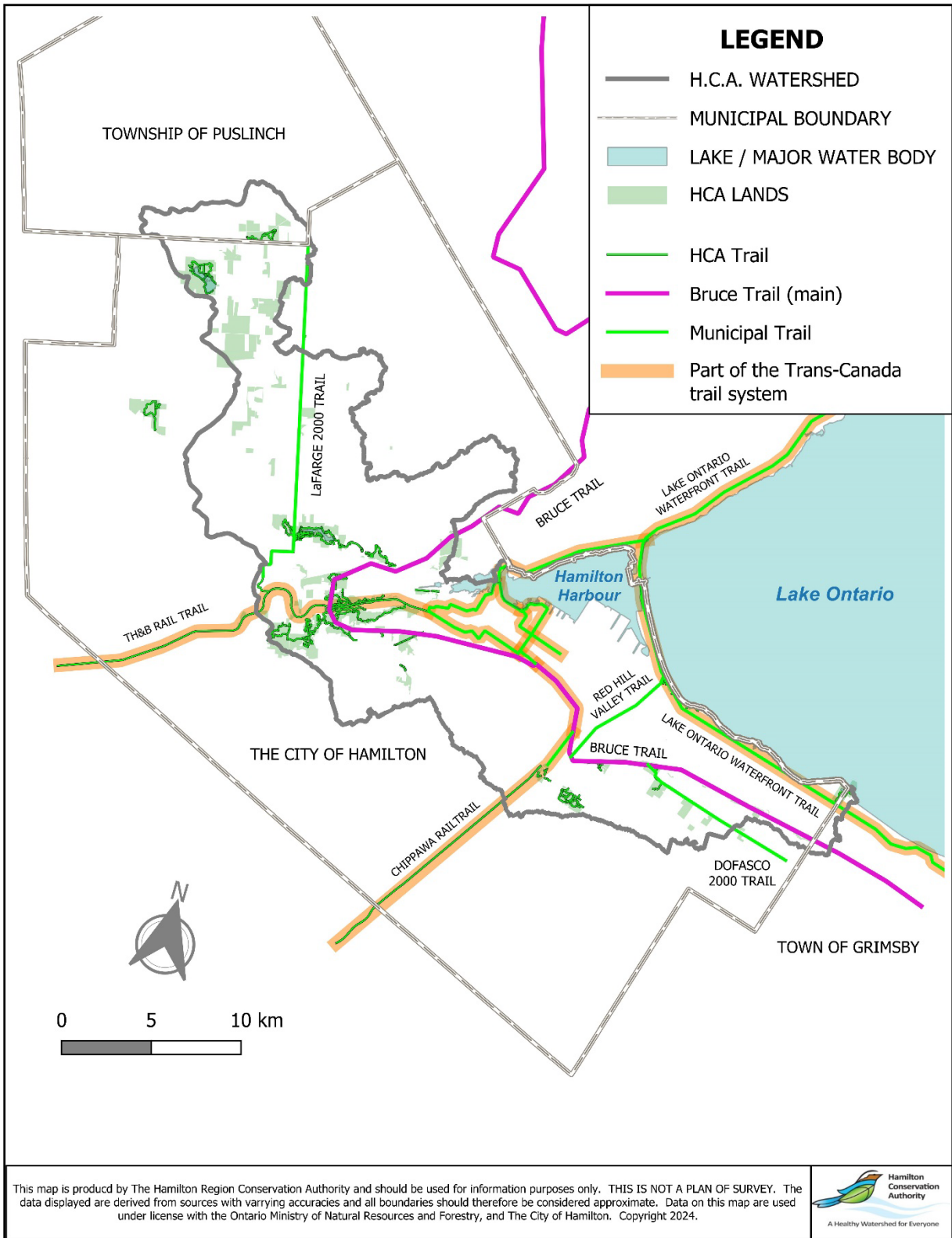
There is a significant trail system within the HCA’s watershed as well as the broader municipal community. At the provincial level, the Bruce Trail, which is administered by the Bruce Trail Conservancy is a 725 km trail that connects Queenston in the Niagara Region to Tobermory on the Bruce Peninsula. The Bruce Trail follows the Niagara Escarpment along its length and in the HCA’s watershed, the trail is located on private and public lands with sections of the trail located on HCA lands. Further, the Bruce Trail does connect via side trails to other trail systems within the HCA’s watershed including HCA trails, specifically in the Dundas Valley Conservation Area.

The Great Lakes Waterfront Trail is a provincial scale trail network that also encompasses portions of the Trans-Canada Trail. The trail system generally follows the shorelines of the St. Lawrence River, Lake Ontario, the Niagara River, Lake Erie, Lake St. Clair, the Detroit River and the St. Clair River, Lake Huron and Georgian Bay. Within the HCA’s watershed, the Great Lakes Waterfront Trail is located along the Lake Ontario Shoreline connecting the Niagara Region to the Greater Toronto Area to the north and east. The trail passes the Fifty Point Conservation Area which is owned by the HCA as well as Confederation Beach Park which is owned by the City of Hamilton and managed by the HCA.

The City of Hamilton owns and maintains an extensive trail system within their boundaries. These trails range from local neighbourhood trails to a more city scale trail network which in certain areas, connects the City’s trail network to the above noted Great Lakes Waterfront Trail and the Bruce Trail. Examples of these trail connections are the Hamilton Harbour Waterfront Trail, the Escarpment Rail Trail and the Red Hill Valley Recreational Trail. The above noted trails also form part of the Greenbelt Route.

4.2.6 Cootes to Escarpment EcoPark System

Cootes to Escarpment EcoPark System (C2E) is a collaborative partnership that works to preserve and enhance the natural lands owned by the partner agencies with a vision to permanently protect lands connecting Cootes Paradise with Hamilton Harbour and the Niagara Escarpment. The C2E mission is “as partners is to collaborate to preserve and enhance the natural lands we own and steward by using sustainable approaches to protect biodiversity, highlight ecosystem services, and enable responsible human connection to nature.” The partners that form C2E are Royal Botanical Gardens, City of Hamilton, Bruce Trail Conservancy, City of Burlington, Halton Region, Conservation Halton, Hamilton Naturalists Club, McMaster University and the HCA.



Map 7 – HCA Watershed Trail System

4.2.7 HCA Trails

The HCA owns and maintains approximately 147 km's of trails. Most of this trail network is located in HCA conservation areas providing opportunities for people to connect with nature and experience the watersheds natural landscapes. The HCA has four linear trails that connect the HCA's conservation areas to the broader City and Provincial trail network. The TH&B Rail Trail connects west Hamilton to Jerseyville through the Dundas Valley Conservation Area. This trail ultimately continues from Jerseyville to Brantford under the ownership of the Grand River Conservation Authority. The Chippawa Rail Trail connects the upper Red Hill Creek Valley to Caledonia. Both the TH&B Rail Trail and the Chippawa Rail Trail are part of the Trans Canada Trail network. Lastly, the LaFarge 2000 Trail and the Dofasco 2000 Trail are located on City of Hamilton road allowances but are managed by the HCA. The LaFarge 2000 Trail connects the Dundas Valley Conservation Area to Puslinch along the Middletown Road right of way while the Dofasco 2000 Trail connects the Devil's Punch Bowl and Saltfleet Conservation Areas to the 11th Road East.

Map 7 provides an overview of the trail system as noted above located within and beyond the HCA's watershed and how they integrate with HCA lands.

The above noted programs support the implementation of the objectives noted in Section 2.2, specifically the following objectives:

- a. To ensure that all present and future HCA land holdings contribute to the vision and mandate of the HCA, and support an integrated watershed management approach;*
- b. To protect and enhance the ecological integrity of the lands within the HCA's watershed and maintain and enhance a connected natural heritage system*
- c. To provide environmentally sustainable passive and active recreation opportunities, as appropriate, within the HCA's conservation areas;*
- d. To maintain, enhance and build new partnerships to enhance connectivity of natural heritage lands and trail networks where possible.*

5.0 Conservation Land Use Categories

Section 10 (1) 4. of Ontario Regulation 686/21 requires "The establishment of land use categories for the purpose of classifying lands in the land inventory described in Section 11 based on the types of activities that are engaged in on each parcel of land or other matters of significance related to the parcel." In this regard, the Conservation Area Strategy will identify land use categories and these categories will be used to classify HCA lands in the Land Inventory as required in Section 11 of Ontario Regulation 686/21.

Through Conservation Ontario's document titled "Guidance on the Conservation Authority Mandatory Conservation Area Strategy", dated January 9, 2022, four high-level land use

categories were proposed for use by all conservation authorities. The guidance document “recognizes that CAs lands may host a variety of activities which warrant different classifications for a single parcel (e.g., a conservation area which hosts passive recreation trails as well as protected management areas).” The guidance document recommends that “CAs are encouraged to apply one of the following four primary land use categories, and where necessary, apply subsequent secondary and/or tertiary categories as appropriate.”

1. Conservation Areas (Active Recreation, Accessible to the Public)
2. Conservation Areas (Passive Recreation, Accessible to the Public)
3. Management Areas (Public Accessibility Varies) (e.g., Natural Heritage Lands, Natural Hazard Lands, Water Management Areas, Forest Management Lands, Environmentally Sensitive Lands, etc.)
4. Conservation Authority Administration Areas

The HCA has considered this recommended approach and the Conservation Area Strategy will implement this land use classification, however, the Conservation Authority Administration Areas classification will not be used as the HCA’s main office area is part of the larger Dundas Valley Conservation Area and the primary use of those lands is conservation. The following provides an overview of the HCA land use classifications and how they will be applied to the Land Inventory.

In implementing the Land Use Categories, it is highlighted that the overarching intent for management of the lands owned and managed by the HCA is to ensure the conservation of the natural heritage and natural hazard features and functions found on these lands. Other uses should ultimately be complimentary to this overarching purpose and not negatively impact on these features.

1. Conservation Areas (Active Recreation, Accessible to the Public)

In addition to the natural heritage and natural hazard features and functions in these areas, this land use category would also include such uses as camping, roofed accommodation, marina, picnic pavilions, active day use areas such as beaches, trails and open space areas. This land use category would apply to the following HCA owned and managed lands – Fifty Point Conservation Area, Confederation Beach Park, Christie Lake Conservation Area, Valens Lake Conservation Area and Westfield Heritage Village Conservation Area. As it relates to Valens Lake and Christie Lake Conservation Areas, this would include operation and maintenance of the dam structures located on site.

2. Conservation Areas (Passive Recreation, Accessible to the Public)

In addition to the natural heritage and natural hazard features and functions in these areas, this land use category would also include such uses as walking, hiking, cycling, nature interpretation and outdoor education and hunting on designated lands per

Provincial Regulations. These lands contain significant natural heritage and physical landforms, and in some cases cultural heritage features. The intent with this land use category is to conserve the natural heritage and natural hazard features found on site while connecting people to nature and to instill a conservation ethic in conservation area visitors and the broader public. This land use category would apply to the following HCA owned and managed lands – Devil’s Punch Bowl Conservation Area, Saltfleet Conservation Area, Eramosa Karst Conservation Area, Felker’s Falls Conservation Area, Mount Albion Conservation Area, Iroquoia Heights Conservation Area, Meadowlands Conservation Area, Dundas Valley Conservation Area, Borer’s falls Conservation Area, Spencer Gorge Conservation Area and Crooks Hollow Conservation Area.

3. Conservation Areas (Management Lands)

The primary land use on these lands is natural heritage and natural hazard conservation. These lands are larger or more isolated parcels that have limited facilities and access and, in most cases, do not experience large visitation numbers. There may be HCA maintained trails, limited trails or a through trail such as the Bruce Trail that is not part of an existing HCA trail located on these lands. This land use category would apply to the following HCA owned and managed lands – Vinemount Swamp Conservation Area, Winona Conservation Area, Beverly Swamp Conservation Area and Fletcher Creek Ecological Preserve.

It is noted that while the above noted land use classifications will be applied to the conservation areas as noted, in some cases, the Conservation Areas (Management Lands) may be applied to certain isolated lands within the conservation areas that have no or limited public access. This would be applicable to certain lands within the Christie Lake Conservation Area, Dundas Valley Conservation Area and the Borer’s Falls Conservation Area.

As noted in Section 4.1, the HCA has historically undertaken master plans for HCA conservation areas. More recently, the HCA has undertaken a program to update conservation area master plans and management plans with Fifty Point Conservation Area, Valens Lake Conservation Area, Westfield Heritage Village Conservation Area, Fletcher Creek, Beverly Swamp, Dofasco 2000, Saltfleet, Winona and Vinemount plans completed. Work on the remaining plans is underway. As part of the development of the plans, the HCA has approached this process with the mind-set that a conservation area in the HCA portfolio requiring Master Plans or updates to Master Plans will follow a consistent methodology. Although not all conservation areas are located within the jurisdiction of the Niagara Escarpment Commission, the policies of the Niagara Escarpment Plan and guidelines of the Niagara Escarpment Parks and Open Space System are utilized in the preparation of master plans and management plans. Through this process, the land uses as envisioned within this Conservation Area Strategy will be further refined using the park zoning approach including permitted uses within each zone. Existing current master plans and management plans can be

viewed [here](#) and opportunities will be available for public and stakeholder engagement as future plans are developed.

6.0 Public Engagement

Public engagement for the Conservation Area Strategy was undertaken in two phases. The first phase involved posting information regarding the development of the strategy and the associated regulatory requirements of Ontario Regulation 686/21 on the HCA's dedicated website for the Conservation Area Strategy and the public consultation webpage "Bang the Table". Further, the process and intent of the Conservation Area Strategy was reviewed at a high level in meetings with the Mississauga of the Credit First Nation and the Six Nations of the Grand River First Nation.

The second phase of the consultation process involved the circulation of the draft Conservation Area Strategy. At this stage the strategy was reviewed by the HCA's Conservation Advisory Board and the HCA's Board of Directors prior to the strategy being made available for broader consultation. The intent of the circulation of the draft strategy was to provide an overview of the regulatory requirements and how HCA staff had completed the document to incorporate these requirements. At this stage, the document will benefit from a broader review and will incorporate comments received through the consultation in order to complete a final strategy.

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. In this regard, the Conservation Area Strategy should be reviewed within a year after the appointment of a new Board of Directors for the HCA. This timing allows for consideration of environmental, social and economic impacts while also aligning with the municipal election cycle in Ontario. A review can also be undertaken within the four-year period noted to address significant issues if they arise.

Stakeholder and public consultation will be undertaken during the above noted review periods to ensure awareness and transparency regarding the Conservation Area Strategy.

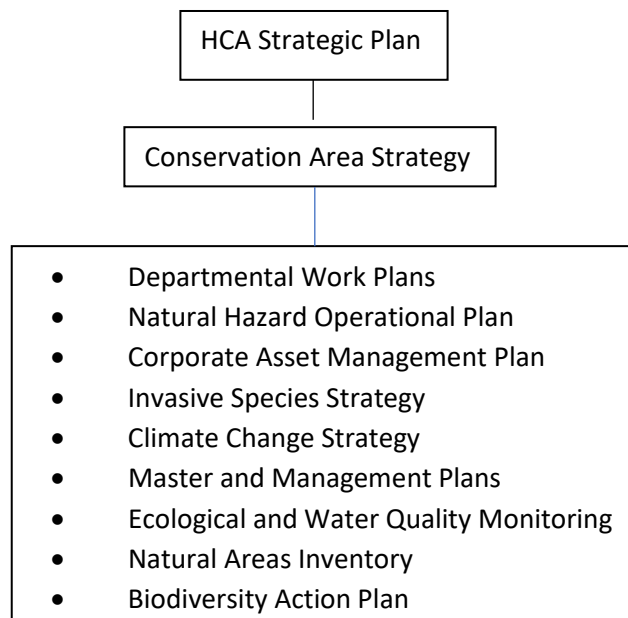
8.0 Future Considerations

The HCA is the area's largest environmental management agency and is dedicated to the conservation and enjoyment of watershed lands and natural resources. The HCA is well known for the lands under its care and stewardship. As noted, the HCA own or manages 4,732 ha (11,695 acres) of land within our watershed jurisdiction. These lands provide critical open

space and habitat for a wide range of species while providing opportunities for people to connect with nature.

Through the development and approval of the HCA's Inventory of Programs and Services, Agreement for Services with the City of Hamilton and Township of Puslinch and the development of Conservation Area Strategy, specific programs and services related to the HCA's conservation lands are highlighted with source of funding noted. The HCA's programs and services and the Conservation Area Strategy comply with regulatory requirements and provide value and experiences for the City of Hamilton, Township of Puslinch, watershed residents and landowners and people from outside the watershed.

Times change, issues evolve, and new issues arise, and these changes will result in pressures related to the HCA's conservation lands as well as broader natural heritage lands. There will be opportunities as well for further land acquisition, restoration and stewardship works to enhance these HCA conservation lands and work with agencies and groups in and outside of the watershed to enhance these features. Ultimately, the HCA's Strategic Plan will provide overall guidance regarding programs and services. The Conservation Area Strategy will provide a finer level of guidance for the management and operation of HCA lands and will be updated based on HCA's overall strategic priorities to address these changes, opportunities and effectiveness of programs as required. Lastly, issue specific strategies and plans will be maintained based on the HCA Strategic Plan and Conservation Area Strategy to provide a greater level of direction and guidance related to these specific issues. The following highlights the hierarchy of this approach.



HCA's successes since 1958 are the result of diligent Board of Director and staff commitment to conserving and restoring the HCA watershed. These efforts have included effective partnerships with governments and agencies at the federal, provincial and municipal level, local businesses, residents and landowners, conservation area visitors and groups like Friends of Eramosa Karst and Friends of Westfield. Moving forward, these relationships and partnerships will need to continue and be enhanced with a focus on greater consultation and engagement with the Mississauga of the Credit First Nation and Six Nations of the Grand River First Nation.

9.0 Resources

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

Ontario Regulation 686/21 - <https://www.ontario.ca/laws/regulation/210686>

HCA Strategic Plan 2019-2023 - https://conservationhamilton.ca/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/HCA_StrategicPlan_Final_LR.pdf

HCA Inventory of Programs & Services - https://conservationhamilton.ca/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/HCA-Inventory-of-Programs-and-Services_Board-Approved-Amendment_23Mar2.pdf

Section C.2.0, City of Hamilton Rural Official Plan - <https://www.hamilton.ca/sites/default/files/2022-07/rhop-volume1-chapterc-citywidesystemsanddesignations-nov2021.pdf>

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

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

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

HCA Master and Management Plans - <https://conservationhamilton.ca/hca-master-plans/>

City of Hamilton Trail Listing - <https://www.hamilton.ca/things-do/parks-green-space/parks-trails/trails-listing>

Royal Botanical Gardens - <https://www.rbg.ca/gardens-trails/by-attraction/trails/>

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

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

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

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

McMaster Forest - <https://nature.mcmaster.ca/mcmaster-forest/about/>

Cootes to Escarpment EcoPark System - <https://cootestoescarpmentpark.ca/>

Report

TO: Conservation Advisory Board

FROM: Lisa Burnside, Chief Administrative Officer (CAO)

RECOMMENDED BY: T. Scott Peck, MCIP, RPP, Deputy CAO/Director, Watershed Management Services

PREPARED BY: Mike Stone, MCIP, RPP, Manager, Watershed Planning, Stewardship & Ecological Services

Lesley McDonell, Terrestrial Ecologist
Bryson McEwen, Invasive Species Technician

MEETING DATE: June 13, 2024

RE: Invasive Species Strategy 2024

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

THAT the Conservation Advisory Board recommends to the Board of Directors:

THAT the updated Invasive Species Strategy 2024 be adopted.

BACKGROUND & PURPOSE

In 2016 HCA developed an Invasive Species Strategy ('the Strategy') as a result of the Terrestrial Resources Monitoring Program identifying invasive species as an increasing concern in the watershed. The goal of the Strategy is to ensure a healthy watershed at the ecosystem level, reduce the impacts of invasive species, and provide support to land owners and HCA land managers to monitor and control invasive species.

The completion of the Strategy and Board of Directors approval in October 2016 has led to greater work on invasive plant species on HCA owned and managed lands, as well as on private lands through stewardship programming. Given the Strategy is now seven years old, and considering how the program has evolved, it was identified that a review and update of the Strategy would be beneficial.

The purpose of this report is to provide a summary overview of the key updates to the Strategy. The updated Strategy is appended to this report.

STAFF COMMENT

The update to the Strategy has been informed by staff's review and assessment of the invasive species program over the 2016-2023 period; the update reflects the program's accomplishments and how it has changed since its inception, as well as updates to relevant legislation. Notably, accomplishments and changes have included:

- Better understanding of the extent of existing and emerging invasive species within the watershed, and revisions to the top priority species
- Hiring of two full-time HCA Invasive Species Technicians
- Phragmites, Japanese Knotweed and Dog-strangling Vine, focal invasive species from 2016 onward, have been significantly reduced on HCA owned lands
- Interest has expanded through HCA's stewardship program for invasive species control on private lands
- Creation and utilization of field mapping of invasive species and treatments has provided better tracking of removals and subsequent monitoring
- Multiple other conservation authorities and municipalities creating invasive species strategies, which has promoted greater collaboration
- Invasive species tracking, mapping and removals are no longer restricted to invasive plant species, and now include invasive insects, pests, pathogens and fish

Legislative updates included:

- Expanded prohibited species lists within the Ontario *Invasive Species Act*, notably Japanese Knotweed
- Passing of Ontario Regulation 686/21 under the *Conservation Authorities Act*, which outlines the mandatory services and programs Conservation Authorities are to provide, including programs and services to conserve, rehabilitate, and manage natural heritage located within the lands owned or controlled by the authority

HCA staff also note that a focus session was held with the HCA Conservation Advisory Board (CAB) on April 13, 2023 to discuss an update to the 2016 Invasive Species Strategy. As a result of the feedback received at the focus session the Invasive Species Strategy now better highlights the impacts of climate change on invasive species, and also includes an enhanced communication section and further discussion on monitoring and restoration.

Overall, the main goals, objectives and strategies have remained similar to the 2016 Strategy. There are now six main strategies identified, down from seven within the original Strategy. This reduction reflects a consolidation of some aspects and strengthening of others. New strategies include restoration and monitoring which recognizes the need to restore habitats once invasive species are removed and monitor for reoccurrence in these areas. Some

strategies changed or were incorporated into others, these included the action plans and research and monitoring. The action plan section has been incorporated into the prioritization section, while research has been given its own section in recognition of how important changes in relevant research are to the management of invasive species. Monitoring was combined with restoration, where those two strategies complement each other.

STRATEGIC PLAN LINKAGE

The initiative refers directly to the HCA Strategic Plan 2019 - 2024:

- **Strategic Priority Area – Natural Heritage Conservation**
 - Initiatives – Maintain and enhance the natural heritage features of HCA lands and manage these lands on an environmentally sustainable basis
 - Work with our partners on stewardship initiatives for the Hamilton Watershed Stewardship Program and the Cootes to Escarpment EcoPark System
 - Continue and expand the aquatic and terrestrial monitoring programs

AGENCY COMMENTS

None

LEGAL/FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The Invasive Species Strategy is implemented as part of the Invasive Species Program with an annual budget item within the Watershed Management Services Department Budget. This includes funding for staff costs, materials and supplies.

CONCLUSIONS

Invasive species present a unique issue in the conservation of biodiversity in Ontario; they are now only second to habitat loss as the highest threat to biodiversity. Under the framework of the 2016 Invasive Species Strategy the HCA's invasive species program has made significant accomplishments in the understanding and management of invasive species on HCA lands. Given how the program has evolved, it is prudent that HCA keep its invasive species strategy up to date and that it that mirrors those of the provincial and federal governments, but also incorporates issues and circumstances unique in this watershed. Addressing the Strategies goals and objectives through the six strategies outlined will assist HCA in focusing efforts and resources in regards to invasive species. Continued collaboration with other organizations and volunteers in our watershed will also assist in invasive species detection and management.

This page intentionally left blank.

Hamilton Conservation Authority Invasive Species Strategy



2024



Table of Contents

TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	1
1. INTRODUCTION	2
2. LEGISLATION AND POLICY FRAMEWORK	5
3. GOALS AND OBJECTIVES	6
3.1. GOALS	7
3.2. OBJECTIVES	7
4. STRATEGIC PLAN LINKAGE	7
5. INVASIVE SPECIES PROGRAM: 2016-2023	8
6. STRATEGIES	9
6.1. PREVENTION	9
6.2. COMMUNICATION	11
6.3. PRIORITIZATION	12
6.4. MONITORING AND RESTORATION	13
6.5. COLLABORATION	14
6.6. RESEARCH	15
7. CONCLUSION	15
8. REFERENCES	17
APPENDIX A	20

1. Introduction

Invasive species have been a growing concern for ecologists, biologists, and land managers over the last 25 years. Invasive species are, “plants, animals, aquatic life, and micro-organisms that outcompete native species when introduced outside of their natural environment and threaten Canada's ecosystems, economy, and society. They can come from across the country or across the globe.” (Government of Canada, 2014).

The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN, 2014) considers invasive species to be the second highest threat to biodiversity conservation after habitat destruction. This organization has an invasive species specialist group that tracks invasive species and their impacts across the globe. According to the Government of Canada, there are hundreds of invasive species in our country (Government of Canada, 2014). These include, birds, mammals, reptiles, amphibians, crustaceans, aquatic and terrestrial plants, marine and freshwater fish, molluscs, algae, fungi, and other pathogens. The impacts of these species are large and cross all sectors including the economy, environment, and human health.

In Ontario, one of the first documents developed to shed light on invasive species as a growing issue for biodiversity was “Sustaining Biodiversity: A Strategic Plan for Managing Invasive Plant Species in Southern Ontario” (Havinga, Invasive Plant Working Group, 2000). The document outlines eight strategies and related specific actions for addressing invasive species, which were intended to support the efforts of the various organizations and agencies involved in land management and conservation in Ontario and serve as a catalyst for further action and partnerships.

The Government of Canada later developed “An Invasive Alien Species Strategy for Canada” in 2004 (Environment Canada, 2004). The strategy is broad in scope and includes direction on prevention, early detection, rapid response to new invaders, and management of established and spreading invaders. The finalization of a strategy and dedication of federal dollars resulted in the development of the Invasive Alien Species Partnership Program and creation of the Invasive Species Centre. The Partnership Program was terminated in 2012, however the Invasive Species Centre continues to operate and is focused on research, prevention, education and outreach, as well as engaging provincial governments, municipalities, conservation organizations and the general public in dialogue about invasive species.

Ontario has a recently updated biodiversity strategy (Ontario Biodiversity Council, 2023), which identifies invasive species as one of the six major threats to biodiversity in Ontario. It discusses the economic and environmental threat of invasive species and the cumulative impacts they can pose. These include climate change, habitat loss, and

other factors allowing invasive species to become established in an ecosystem faster and easier than before.

The impacts of invasive species are widespread and include the disruption of native ecosystems, loss of biodiversity, and economic impacts to humans. Invasive species have the ability to outcompete native plants and animals. This can cause a cascade effect within the food chain. For example, invasive Zebra mussels filter plankton from the water column, thus reducing this food source for fish and clam species native to the Great Lakes. This may have caused a drop in fish populations since the introduction of Zebra mussels (Government of Ontario, 2006).

The inherent characteristics of invasive species can also result in widespread and rapid ecological changes which have permanent consequences for the local ecosystem. For example, forest pathogens typically target a preferred host species which can result in a precipitous decline of that species' population within an area (Invasive Species Centre, 2022). The imminent threat Oak wilt, a disease caused by the fungus *Bretziella fagacearum*, specifically propagates in oak trees. Oak wilt can result in complete mortality of red oak trees within a single season (Canadian Food Inspection Agency, 2024), which may cause profound changes to infected oak dominant forests in a short time span.

Effects such as this impact not only biodiversity but also the economy. The Government of Ontario has quantified some of the economic impacts of invasive species. Invasive species threaten many sectors of the Ontario economy, including fishing, hunting, agriculture, and tourism. Impacts have included reduced value of commercial and recreational fisheries, effects on crop production, and decreased property values. The Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry has determined that invasive plants have cost the agricultural and forestry industries approximately \$7.3 billion annually. The impacts from Zebra mussels alone in Ontario have cost \$75-91 million annually (Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources (OMNR), 2012). It is likely that most species established in Ontario are now here to stay. Many of these species are hard to control once established. The issues related to invasive species are complex as is their management.

The Hamilton Conservation Authority (HCA) in cooperation with its partners has completed three Natural Areas Inventories (NAI), over the past thirty years, with the most recent NAI ('Nature Counts 2') completed in 2014. The fourth NAI project was initiated in 2023 and will build on the work of earlier NAIs.

The NAI is a comprehensive study of the natural areas within the watershed, both public and private, although not all parcels are studied in each round of the NAI. This study

provides information on the distribution and types of terrestrial invasive species in the watershed. Although the NAI study boundary encompasses a larger jurisdiction than the HCA watershed, it represents the best summary of invasive plant species available locally. The last NAI identified 63 invasive plant species within the City of Hamilton (NAI, 2014) which represents 4% of total plant species records. There were also an additional 444 non-native plant species, not considered invasive, identified during the NAI. Considering these additional species, 34.6% of all the plants recorded in the City of Hamilton are non-native. The NAI only speaks to terrestrial invasive species in our watershed. Few studies have been completed to catalogue our aquatic invasive species or invasive pathogens.

The percentage of non-native plant species identified (approximately 35%) is not unexpected given some of the watershed's characteristics. Favorable climate, proximity to the Great Lakes port system, and degraded ecosystems have contributed to this percentage. These conditions make Hamilton vulnerable to the introduction of invasive species more so than other areas that are less urbanized and not adjacent to a large port system. Ports contribute to the introduction of invasive species and are often the first point of entry as different species are transported from other countries in shipping containers or in the ballast water of the ships. Urbanization can also escalate the distribution of invasive species through habitat loss and fragmentation. Given these conditions, HCA considers the control and management of invasive species to be the key priority for addressing loss of biodiversity. However, given the highly urbanized nature of Hamilton's watersheds, decisions to manage invasive species can become increasingly complex. Plants living in urban environments must contend with high levels of disturbance, habitat fragmentation, a constant stream of new ecosystem interactions with introduced species, and more. These factors stress native species that are poorly adapted to these conditions and create a more suitable habitat for invasive species which are either able to rapidly adapt or are pre-adapted to this type of environment (Elmqvist et al. 2008).

Within the scientific community there are ongoing discussions about the ecosystem services invasive species can provide in highly urban environments and whether management is appropriate in all situations (Gaertner et al. 2017). These urban invasive species may provide ecosystem services in a novel way which native species cannot. Specifically, regarding plants, desirable ecosystem services include but are not limited to food production, carbon sequestration, cooling amidst urban heat islands, and air quality improvements (Potgieter et al. 2017). Due to the conditions of urban environments stated previously, hardy non-native plants might be able to provide those services where native plants may struggle to survive. This approach in urban areas needs to be balanced with the knowledge that invasives provide many undesirable

ecosystem disservices, which include widespread biodiversity reduction, threats to human health, propagation beyond original planting, and more (Gaertner et al. 2017). These factors are considered in HCA's prioritization of sites for treatment.

HCA will continue to monitor the scientific discourse around this topic and adjust management strategies as supported by accepted best practices. Currently, invasive species management remains a key component of fulfilling HCA's strategic goals and maintaining the watershed's health.

2. Legislation and Policy Framework

There are a variety of laws, regulations, policies and guidelines in place at all levels of government that can assist in preventing the introduction of invasive species and provide direction regarding the management of those species. At the federal level these include *Ballast Water Control and Management Regulations* under the *Canada Shipping Act*, which require ocean-going vessels to flush their tanks with salt water before entering the St. Lawrence Seaway and the Great Lakes (Government of Ontario, 2015). Fisheries and Oceans Canada maintains *Aquatic Invasive Species Regulations* under the *Fisheries Act* with the objective of preventing the introduction of aquatic invasive species into Canadian waters and to provide for the control and management of their establishment and spread, once introduced.

At the provincial level, some of the key relevant legislation includes the *Weed Control Act*, *Public Lands Act* and *Invasive Species Act*. In the recent past, several plant species have been added and removed from the noxious weed list under the *Weed Control Act* (Government of Ontario, 2015). This list is used by weed inspectors to control target plants and minimize their impact on agriculture. In 2014 the *Public Lands Act* was changed to allow the removal of invasive aquatic plants. This change was necessary as the beds of most water bodies in Ontario are crown land and the MNRF manages these lands under the *Public Lands Act* (Government of Ontario, 2015). There are in-water works timing windows and other rules that need to be followed with this legislation. Ontario introduced regulations in 2005 that prohibits the possession, purchase and sale of several live invasive fish, including Round and Tubenose Goby, Rudd, Ruffe, and the Snakehead family, and four Asian carp species (bighead, black, grass, and silver) (Government of Ontario, 2021).

The Government of Ontario has continued to update invasive species legislation and recommendations as new threats have become apparent in the province. The Ontario Invasive Species Strategic Plan was originally released in 2012 and resulted in the creation of the *Invasive Species Act*. This Act came into force on November 3, 2016. It

allows the province to classify the threat level of invasive species, prohibit the import and possession of significant threat species and give the Minister the power to implement restrictions prescribed by the regulation or designated by the Minister. The *Invasive Species Act* has been amended several times to increase the scope of regulatory controls. As of 2022, watercraft operators are now required to take preventative actions to avoid accidental transportation of aquatic invasive species between water bodies. This includes removing drain plugs to release any captured water and ensuring no aquatic life is attached to the watercraft or related equipment before transport. Also, the list of prohibited and restricted species has been expanded to include 45 species as of January 1, 2024 (Government of Ontario, 2023).

Ontario has also recently completed a review of the Ontario Invasive Species Strategic Plan from 2012-2022. The review examines Ontario's progress in achieving the goals set out in the strategic plan and identifies future areas of focus related to those same goals. The report highlights the economic toll of invasive species and discusses their continued threat which is driven by the risk-factors of economic activity and climate change.

In October of 2021, the Government of Ontario released an update to Regulation 686/21 under the Conservation Authorities Act, which now requires mandatory delivery of certain activities. These include, "programs and services to conserve, protect, rehabilitate, establish, and manage natural heritage located within the lands owned or controlled by the authority" (Government of Ontario, 2021, Sec 9.1.2.iv). HCA has interpreted this to mean the invasive species management activities undertaken on HCA lands are included within the description of the mandatory programs and services under this regulation.

HCA supports the adoption of policies and legislation that will prevent the introduction of invasive species and provide tools to manage the threats posed by invasive species already present. HCA will continue to monitor and review changes to relevant legislation and policy pertaining to invasive species to ensure the strategies and actions employed by HCA in addressing invasive species remain current and effective.

3. Goals and Objectives

The "*Hamilton Conservation Authority Invasive Species Strategy*" (the 'Strategy') outlines HCA's goals and objectives in relation to invasive species and the strategies to be employed on HCA owned lands and promoted throughout the watershed to address the threats they pose. It addresses issues related to both terrestrial and aquatic invasive species.

3.1. Goals

In developing and implementing the Strategy, HCA's main goals are to ensure a healthy watershed at the ecosystem level, reduce the ecological and economic impacts of invasive species, and provide support to HCA land managers and private landowners.

3.2. Objectives

In support of the Strategy's goals, the following objectives have been defined and are focused on invasive species detection, prevention, and management:

- To maintain current information on invasive species and their distribution on HCA properties and throughout the watershed through regular monitoring and survey. This will include both surveys by staff as well as regular review of participatory science platforms;
- To identify priority invasive species and geographic areas to be managed within the watershed;
- To prevent the establishment of new populations of known or new invasive species to the extent possible;
- To provide information regarding invasive species and their impacts in support of education and outreach activities; and
- To use ecological restoration within priority sites to increase resilience to re-invasion.

To achieve the above noted goals and objectives HCA has identified six strategies, which are focused on prevention, communication, prioritization, monitoring and restoration, collaboration, and research. Further information regarding each of these strategies and proposed related priority actions under each is provided in more detail below. Strategies and associated actions will be implemented on a priority basis and as resources allow.

4. Strategic Plan Linkage

This invasive species strategy aligns with the following goals in HCA's 2019-2023 Strategic Plan:

- Strategic goal #2 - Natural Heritage Conservation – HCA conserves, restores and enhances watershed natural areas and ecological systems.
- Strategic Goal # 3 – Conservation Area Experience - HCA provides customers high quality, diverse conservation areas to promote outdoor recreation, health

and well-being, strengthening public awareness of the benefits of being in or near our conservation areas.

- Strategic Goal # 4 – Education and Environmental Awareness – HCA provides active outdoor learning experiences for students, teachers and the community, increasing knowledge and awareness of the value of our environment and heritage.

5. Invasive Species Program: 2016-2023

Since the implementation of the 2016 Invasive Species Strategy, HCA has completed many of the action items listed under the seven key strategies in that plan. A clean equipment protocol was developed to educate HCA staff about measures for preventing the spread of invasive species on equipment. Signs were also installed in various Conservation Areas (CAs), informing the public about local invasive species and how to prevent their introduction into new locations.

HCA took action to communicate the importance of invasive species management to the public through the Hamilton Watershed Stewardship Program (HWSP), and supported removal projects through the Water Quality and Habitat Improvement Program (WQHIP). HCA also promoted the use of public reporting tools such as EDDMapS and iNaturalist to utilize participatory science for early detection. Internally, invasive species distribution data was incorporated into Conservation Area Master Plans.

Under the direction of the 2016 Strategy, HCA conducted yearly invasive species research and monitoring activities. The aquatic and terrestrial ecological monitoring programs have integrated invasive species identification into regular field work. This information is used as a primary detection method and followed up by more comprehensive surveys. Additionally, widespread monitoring was conducted throughout HCA lands supporting a variety of activities which include: Conservation Area master planning, prioritization planning, early detection of newly introduced species, and mapping for prompt removal.

Due to the high volume of invasive species within the HCA watershed, prioritization has been a crucial activity to ensure control efforts are impactful. HCA staff have maintained an understanding of the top priority invasive species by attending educational webinars and conferences. Staff have also used existing inventory data to prioritize invasive species control based on the ecological importance of natural areas. More recently, an Invasive Species Prioritization Plan was developed for Valens Lake Conservation Area. These plans outline criteria for prioritizing invasive species management within Conservation Areas, with the goal of effectively coordinating management efforts between WMS and CAS staff.

Using these prioritization techniques, HCA has taken action to manage invasive species populations throughout the watershed. To summarize, staff have manually and chemically controlled a variety of invasive plants, forest pests, and forest pathogens on HCA lands. Through the HWSP, staff have also assisted with manual control of invasive plant species on private lands. This has been accomplished in part by the creation of two Invasive Species Technician positions, which were made permanent full-time positions in January of 2024. Additionally, WMS staff have undergone certification to become licensed pesticide applicators, reducing cost of treatment implementation.

While conducting invasive species management activities, HCA staff have followed best management practices outlined by organizations such as the Ontario Invasive Plant Council. These documents contain information regarding the most current management practices that balance efficacy and environmental safety.

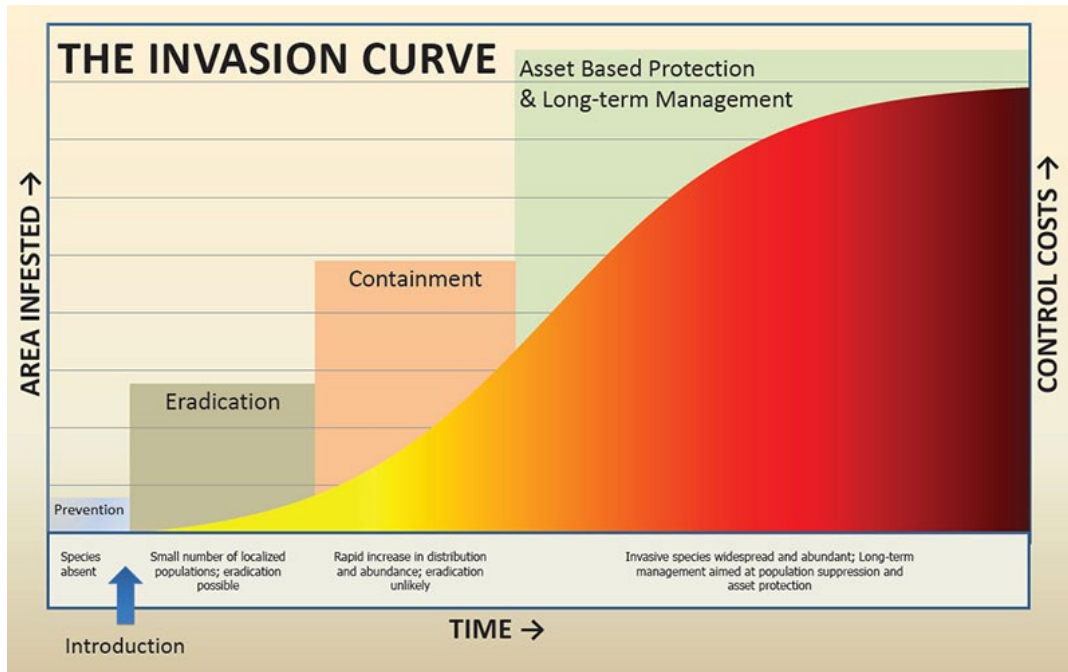
Further, HCA has partnered with organizations like Royal Botanical Gardens and City of Hamilton to combine resources for invasive species removal initiatives. Collaboration has also involved coordinating management efforts and sharing knowledge about best management practices with organizations including McMaster University, City of Hamilton, and Hamilton Naturalist Club.

6. Strategies

6.1. Prevention

Prevention is key with all invasive species, from those that live in the water to the pests which impact forests. Both the federal and provincial governments have developed prevention strategies regarding invasive species (Government of Canada, 2014 and OMNR, 2012). Many of the introduced species (invasive) are hardy species in their native home ranges and thrive in degraded ecosystems. When invasive species are introduced into other landscapes outside of their native range, it is their hardiness and void of natural predators to keep them in check that makes it relatively easy for them to become established. Once established they are difficult to eradicate. This is especially true for aquatic organisms. They can become widespread quickly, can be prolific breeders (i.e. goldfish), and tend to colonize quickly. Eradication efforts can be expensive, time consuming, and in some instances impossible (Asian Carp Regional Coordinating Committee, 2015). This is illustrated by the invasion curve, as seen in Figure 1, which represents the relationship between the level of infestation and the cost of management (United States Department of Agriculture, 2005).

Figure 1. Invasive Species Invasion Curve.



Invasive species can be introduced through several pathways. Within the HCA watershed, some of the main pathways for introduction are garden plants and the nurseries that sell invasive plant species, ballast water from ships, and recreational activities (hiking, fishing, biking and boating). The natural environment within HCA’s watershed is also at risk due to the active port and shipping industries. For example, the invasive Spotted Lanternfly has been intercepted in shipments immediately adjacent to Ontario in New York State (Invasive Species Centre, 2024).

HCA proposes to do the following:

- Install boat washing stations at Valens and Christie Lake Conservation Areas and Fifty Point marina to assist in the removal of aquatic plants, animals, and algae from watercraft before overland transport. This removal is a requirement of the Ontario Regulation 546/16 (2023) under the *Ontario Invasive Species Act (2015)*. By providing a boat washing station, HCA will make it easier for patrons to comply with the regulation.
- Monitor the implementation of clean equipment protocols to prevent the movement of invasive species from CA to CA.
- Install boot brushes at high-traffic hiking locations with Conservation Areas to mitigate invasive species spread during trail use. Working with area superintendents, this will be piloted at Valens Lake CA between 2024 and 2027.

- Review operational procedures in Watershed Management Services (WMS) to prevent the movement of aquatic invasive species on sampling equipment.
- Monitor Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) and Ontario Invasive Plant Council (OIPC) websites for information on new invasive species to ensure prevention strategies remain current.
- Attend industry directed workshops on invasive species to stay current on federal and provincial prevention strategies and management techniques.
- Keep investing in educational signage at HCA's active Conservation Areas which describes invasive species, their impact on the natural environment and how to prevent their introduction. At minimum, five educational signs will be installed over the next five years.

6.2. Communication

Communication is very important to the achievement of HCA's goals and objectives for this Strategy. This includes both internal and external communication. Through education on the introduction, spread, and threat of invasive species, Conservation Area users and staff will be better able to prevent new introductions and be better prepared for managing invasions. Part of the communication strategy will be maintaining the list of the top terrestrial and aquatic invasive species and forest pests and pathogens within the watershed (Appendix A). HCA proposes to do the following:

- Develop a communications strategy to bring all these aspects of communication into an organized plan. WMS and Marketing staff will collaborate to achieve this.
- Develop a webpage dedicated to invasive species found in the HCA watershed, including the following activities:
 - Place links on HCA's website to relevant NGO and Government websites that discuss invasive species, their habitats and introduction pathways.
 - Focus this webpage on top invaders, linking the public to best management practices and other resources.
 - This will be completed in conjunction with HCA communications staff by 2030.
- Provide links to web-based applications for the public to report invasive species in our Conservation Areas such as EDD MapS.

- Continue to share information about invasive species best practices with the public through social media channels.
- Conservation Area Master Plans will include a section on invasive species and what occurs in each CA.
- Promote through private landowner stewardship initiatives the importance of the control of invasive species and their impact on biodiversity.
- Coordinate invasive species management between WMS and Conservation Area Services (CAS) staff on HCA property using Invasive Species Prioritization Plans as discussed in section 6.3.

6.3. Prioritization

As noted throughout this plan there are many different invasive species within the watershed that impact terrestrial and aquatic environments. The degree to which these different species affect their surroundings varies based on their method of spread, invasiveness, and the way they interact with other species and the environment. As a result, prioritization must occur for both species and Conservation Authority lands since preserving the biodiversity contained within certain Conservation Areas requires more immediate action than other areas. HCA will continue to research appropriate BMPs for the invasive species in the watershed. This along with site specific work planning will help guide the implementation of this invasive species strategy.

HCA will continue, through the Master Plan and Management Plan process to inventory invasive species on HCA owned properties. This will guide the development of site-specific prioritization plans which will help prioritize actions based on species (threat level) and/or ecosystem type (sensitivity). With prioritization plans in place, HCA can more effectively engage volunteers and staff in the removal of invasive species. These removals will involve Ecology and CAS staff, along with volunteers when appropriate. Species requiring chemical control will be assessed and controlled by HCA staff with pesticide applicator licenses or by certified contractors. The use of chemicals will be evaluated on a case by case, and species by species basis, balancing the need for chemicals, the appropriateness of their use for certain species, and the manual labour required for mechanical removal. This is a long-term commitment and funding will actively be sought to continue with implementation. HCA proposes to complete the following:

- Develop and maintain a priority list of terrestrial and aquatic invasive species and forest pests/pathogens (Appendix A).

- Develop invasive species prioritization plans following the Master Plan or Management Plan for each Conservation Area. These will be used to direct all staff to the priority invasive species on each property for management. These plans will be completed for the majority of Conservation Areas by 2030.
- Develop and maintain a priority list of locations with high ecological value and/or importance for invasive species prevention and management via the property-specific prioritization plans.
- Conduct surveys for aquatic invasive species to develop a better understanding of the range and diversity of species present. Management of aquatic invasive species is a difficult and resource intensive task. Therefore, implementation activities will focus on mapping, monitoring, and small-scale management initiatives in master plans and prioritization plans within HCA's various landholdings.
- Maintain at least 2 HCA staff as Ontario certified pesticide applicators making implementation more cost effective and faster.
- Work collaboratively with partners and organizations, including the City of Hamilton and Royal Botanical Gardens on invasive species removal initiatives. This is an ongoing action.

6.4. Monitoring and Restoration

In order to combat invasive species, monitoring at two stages is necessary: pre-emptive surveys to detect new occurrences, and post-management surveys to track the success of restoration activities.

HCA has both aquatic and terrestrial monitoring programs that are watershed wide. These may be able to detect invasive species as they establish in the watershed. Master/Management plans are also completed on a 10-year cycle within all lands owned by HCA. These can highlight invasion areas that change between creation of the plans. However, some species can establish and begin to have detrimental impacts very quickly. *Bretziella fagacearum*, the fungus which causes oak wilt, has been highlighted in this strategy as an example of such a species. An invasion of this disease could result in a precipitous decrease in the oak population across the watershed. Regular and thorough monitoring is essential to ensure a rapid response to this type of invasion. Therefore, Conservation Area Staff who are also knowledgeable in regard to invasive species are instrumental in on the ground monitoring of emerging invasive

species. It is also important for HCA to regularly check the CFIA website and consult with other organizations like the Ontario Plant Council that are aware of new and incoming invasive species.

Post-management monitoring is required to measure the efficacy of control methods, to detect re-invasion at managed sites, and to observe the success of post-control restoration efforts. Several invasive species strategies from upper tier municipalities and conservation authorities highlight active restoration as a key activity for ensuring the long-term success of invasive species control efforts (City of Mississauga, 2021; Credit Valley Conservation, 2020). HCA engages in active restoration at invasive species management sites on a case-by-case, but staff have encountered challenges that have mitigated the success of some restoration plantings. Predation of newly planted native species, lack of funds for quick replanting, and secondary invasion by other invasive species have been consistent issues at management sites. HCA proposes to complete the following:

- Develop a restoration protocol to determine if a site can be left to passively restore after invasive plant species removal or whether native plant-reintroduction is necessary. To be completed via collaboration between Ecology staff and Invasive Species staff by 2030.
- Work with Forestry staff and develop a yearly review process to determine areas of significant tree removal to facilitate restoration/management before invasive species can establish. To be completed by 2026.
- Create and implement a monitoring schedule for completed invasive species management sites to track efficacy of control efforts. To be completed by 2026.
- Plantation management will be carefully reviewed for the occurrence of invasive species, and the cost benefit of harvest vs possible invasion will be weighed. This will occur when plantation management is scheduled again.

6.5. Collaboration

Collaboration and partnership will play an important role towards the advancement of the actions and efforts proposed within the Strategy to address invasive species. There are many partners in the Hamilton area with which HCA could coordinate efforts on both private and public land. Some of these partners include Royal Botanical Gardens, Hamilton Naturalist Club, Bruce Trail Conservancy, City of Hamilton, and Cootes to Escarpment (C2E). Collaboration can take place in a variety of ways and may include the following:

- Work with the Hamilton Watershed Stewardship Program to support local landowner initiatives in invasive species removal. This is an ongoing initiative.
- Support invasive species removal initiatives through the Cootes to Escarpment Eco-park (within the HCA watershed).
- Continue to support federal and provincial initiatives (e.g. EDD MapS).
- Work with partners to share information in regard to invasive species management, removals, mapping etc., for example the multi-agency Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area Invasive Species Working Group.
- Engage non-government organizations to partner with and work on changing traditional landscape planting programs and lists with our municipal partners to exclude non-native invasive species.
- Partner with Indigenous-led organizations and communities to better understand Indigenous Ecological Knowledge perspectives on invasive species management.

6.6. Research

Invasive species management practices are continually changing as new knowledge and technologies become available. Additionally, new invasive species continue to spread into the watershed despite prevention measures and may each require a different management approach. To ensure HCA's invasive species management efforts are following current best practices and are as effective as possible, it is important for HCA to engage in research and education. The following are proposed actions:

- Attend annual conferences and webinars to stay up to date on current management strategies and BMPs.
- Conduct field tests to assess efficacy of recommended management techniques to optimize HCA's invasive species control methods.
- Compete as appropriate funding applications to allow the use of a wider range of management tools.

7. Conclusion

Invasive species are a persistent and continually evolving threat to biodiversity in the HCA watershed, and throughout Ontario more generally, second only to habitat destruction. Invasive species have many impacts, from large scale biodiversity loss to costly impacts on industry and infrastructure. The Ontario and Canadian governments

both have strategies in place to address the impacts of invasive species, and regulations such as the *Invasive Species Act* provide legislative support by restricting the movement of some key species. However, it is apparent that already-established invasive species will persist in the local ecosystem and that new species will continue to be introduced through a variety of pathways.

This Strategy and the actions outlined within support HCA's Strategic Plan goals of natural heritage conservation, conservation area experience, and education and environmental awareness. HCA has already taken important steps to improve the health of ecosystems within the watershed by completing many of the actions recommended in the 2016 Invasive Species Strategy. By updating and implementing this 2024 Strategy, HCA will continue to support biodiversity and conservation principles, while also addressing the unique management challenges posed by invasive species in the watershed.

8. References

- Asian Carp Regional Coordinating Committee (2015). *Asian carp response in the Midwest*. <http://www.asiancarp.us/faq.htm> [Accessed February 5, 2016].
- Canadian Food Inspection Agency (2024). *Oak wilt*. <https://inspection.canada.ca/plant-health/invasive-species/plant-diseases/oak-wilt/eng/1325624048625/1325624535106> [Accessed February 2, 2024].
- City of Mississauga (2021). *Invasive species management plan & implementation strategy*. <https://www.mississauga.ca/publication/invasive-species-management-plan-and-implementation-strategy/> [Accessed February 2024].
- Credit Valley Conservation (2011). *CVC priority invasive plants*. <http://www.creditvalleyca.ca/wp-content/uploads/2011/07/11-150-priorityinvasives-11-list-web.pdf> [Accessed November 2014].
- Credit Valley Conservation (2020). *Invasive species strategy*. <https://cvc.ca/document/invasive-species-strategy/> Accessed [February 12, 2024].
- Elmqvist, T., Alfsen-Norodom, C., Colding, J. (2008). *Urban systems*. Ecosystems vol. [5] of *Encyclopaedia of Ecology* / Sven Erik Jørgensen, Brian D. Fath (eds). Elsevier, Oxford, pp 3665–3672.
- Environment Canada (2004). *An invasive alien species strategy for Canada*.
- Gaertner, M., Wilson, J.R.U., Cadotte, M.W., Zenni, R.D., Richardson, D.M., Macivor, J.S. (2017). *Non-native species in urban environments: patterns, processes, impacts and challenges*. *Biological Invasions* 19: 3461–3469.
- Government of Canada (2004). *Invasive alien species strategy for Canada*. http://publications.gc.ca/collections/collection_2014/ec/CW66-394-2004-eng.pdf [Accessed February 11, 2016].
- Government of Canada (2014). *Invasive species in Canada*. http://epe.lac-bac.gc.ca/100/206/301/cfia-acia/invasive_species/www.invasivespecies.gc.ca/english/view.asp@x=1 [Accessed February 20, 2016].
- Government of Ontario (2006). *Zebra mussels invade Ontario waters*. Invading Species Awareness Program.

- Government of Ontario (2015). *How government combats invasive species*.
<https://www.ontario.ca/page/how-government-combats-invasive-species>
[Accessed February 5, 2016].
- Government of Ontario (2015). *Invasive species act*.
<https://www.ontario.ca/laws/statute/15i22> [Accessed February 15, 2024].
- Government of Ontario (2021). *Aquatic invasive species regulations (SOR/2015-121)*.
<https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/regulations/SOR-2015-121/page-3.html#docCont> [Accessed April 8, 2024].
- Government of Ontario (2021). *Ontario Regulation 686/21: Mandatory programs and services*. <https://www.ontario.ca/laws/regulation/210686> [Accessed April 9, 2021].
- Government of Ontario (2023). *Ontario regulation 354/16: general*.
<https://www.ontario.ca/laws/regulation/160354> [Accessed March 8, 2024].
- Hamilton Conservation Authority (2014). *Natural areas inventory project, 3rd edition*.
- Hamilton Conservation Authority (2019). *Hamilton Conservation Authority strategic plan, 2019–2023*.
- Havinga, D., Invasive Plant Working Group (2000). *Sustaining biodiversity: A strategic plan for managing invasive plants in southern Ontario*.
<https://www.nvca.on.ca/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/Managing-Invasive-Species-Ont-Society-Eco-Restoration.pdf> [Accessed January 2016].
- Invasive Species Centre (2022). *Invasive pathogens*.
<https://www.invasivespeciescentre.ca/invasive-species/meet-the-species/invasive-pathogens/> [Accessed February 5, 2024].
- Invasive Species Centre (2024). *Spotted lanternfly: A serious threat to Canada's wine and agricultural industries*. <https://www.invasivespeciescentre.ca/spotted-lanternfly-a-serious-threat-to-canadas-wine-and-agricultural-industries/>
[Accessed February 29, 2024].
- IUCN (2014). *Invasive alien species*. International Union for Conservation of Nature
<https://www.iucn.org/our-work/topic/invasive-alien-species> [Accessed February 20, 2014].
- IUCN (2016). *Global invasive species database*. International Union for Conservation of Nature.
<http://www.iucngisd.org/gisd/species.php?sc=304> [Accessed January 2016].

- Ontario Biodiversity Council (2023). *Ontario's biodiversity strategy: 2023-2030*.
<https://ontariobiodiversitycouncil.ca/wp-content/uploads/Ontarios-Biodiversity-Strategy-2023-2030.pdf> [Accessed Feb 6, 2024].
- Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources (2012). *Ontario invasive species strategic plan*.
Toronto Queen' Printer of Ontario. 58 pp.
- Potgieter, L. J., Gaertner, M., Kueffer, C., Larson, B. M., Livingstone, S. W., O'Farrell, P. J., & Richardson, D. M. (2017). *Alien plants as mediators of ecosystem services and disservices in urban systems: a global review*. *Biological Invasions*, 19(12), 3571-3588. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10530-017-1589-8>.
- United States Department of Agriculture Forest Service (2005). *Invasive plant environmental impact statement*.
- Urban Forest Associates Inc. (2002). *Invasive exotic species ranking for southern Ontario*, <http://serontario.org/pdfs/exotics.pdf> [Accessed November 2014].

Appendix A

Top Terrestrial Invasive Species

Common name	Scientific name	Current Distribution
Dog strangling vine	<i>Vincetoxicum rossicum</i>	Widespread
European buckthorn	<i>Rhamnus cathartica</i>	Widespread
Garlic mustard	<i>Alliaria petiolata</i>	Widespread
Giant Hogweed	<i>Heracleum mantegazzianum</i>	Limited: Lower Spencer Creek
Invasive Honeysuckles	<i>Lonicera sp.</i>	Widespread
Japanese knotweed	<i>Fallopia japonica</i>	Widespread
Oriental bittersweet	<i>Celastrus orbiculatus</i>	Widespread
Phragmites	<i>Phragmites australis</i>	Widespread
Tree of heaven	<i>Ailanthus altissima</i>	Widespread
Wild Parsnip	<i>Pastinaca sativa</i>	Limited: Dundas Valley Conservation Area, Fifty Point Conservation Area

Top Aquatic Invasive Species

Common name	Scientific name	Current Distribution
Asian carp (bighead, black, grass, and silver)	<i>Hypophthalmichthys nobilis</i> and others	Not yet detected in HCA watershed
Common carp	<i>Cyprinus carpio</i>	Widespread
Flowering Rush	<i>Butomus umbellatus</i>	Limited: Lower Spencer creek watershed
Goldfish	<i>Carassius auratus auratus</i>	Widespread
Manna grass	<i>Glyceria maxima</i>	Widespread
Marbled crayfish	<i>Procambarus virginalis</i>	Not yet detected in HCA watershed
Chinese mystery snails	<i>Cipangopaludina chinensis</i>	Limited: Lower Spencer creek watershed and Stoney Creek numbered watercourses
Round goby	<i>Neogobius melanostomus</i>	Limited: Lower Spencer creek and Redhill creek watersheds
Rudd	<i>Scardinius erythrophthalmus</i>	Limited: Lower Spencer creek watershed
Rusty crayfish	<i>Orconectes rusticus</i>	Limited: Lower Spencer creek watershed
VHS and Rana virus	N/A	Widespread
Water Chestnut	<i>Trapa natans</i>	Not yet in HCA watershed
Water Soldier	<i>Stratiotes aloides</i>	Not yet in HCA watershed
White river crayfish	<i>Procambarus acutus</i>	Not yet in HCA Watershed
Zebra mussel	<i>Dreissena polymorpha</i>	Widespread

Top Forest Pests and Pathogens

Common name	Scientific name	Current Distribution
Asian Longhorned Beetle	<i>Anoplophora glabripennis</i>	Formerly present in GTA; has been declared eradicated by CFIA
Beech Bark Disease	Associated with <i>Cryptococcus fagisuga/Neonectria spp.</i> complex	Widespread
Beech Leaf Disease	Associated with <i>Litylenchus crenatae mccannii</i>	Limited: Dundas Valley
Elm Zigzag Sawfly	<i>Aproceros leucopoda</i>	Widespread in Eastern Ontario; invasion possible
Hemlock Woolly Adelgid	<i>Adelges tsugae</i>	Present in Hamilton; invasion imminent
Jumping Worm	<i>Amyntas spp.</i> , <i>Metaphire spp.</i> , <i>Pheretima spp.</i>	Limited: Dundas Valley
LDD (Spongy) Moth	<i>Lymantria dispar</i>	Widespread
Oak Wilt	Associated with <i>Bretziella fagacearum</i>	Present in Ontario; invasion possible
Spotted Lanternfly	<i>Lycorma delicatula</i>	Not yet detected in Ontario

Report

TO: Board of Directors

FROM: Lisa Burnside, Chief Administrative Officer (CAO)

RECOMMENDED BY: Matt Hall, C.E.T., Director, Capital Projects & Strategic Services

PREPARED BY: Nicholas Oleschuk, Asset Management Coordinator, Capital Projects & Strategic Services

MEETING DATE: July 4, 2024

RE: Fifty Point C.A. Entrance Road Rebuild Project – Tender Results

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

HCA Staff recommends to the Board of Directors:

THAT the construction tender for the Fifty Point C.A. Entrance Road Rebuild Project, be award to Brantco Construction for a total cost of \$320,451.05 which includes a contingency sum and HST.

BACKGROUND & PURPOSE

In spring 2021, HCA staff conducted a road condition inspection across all HCA areas. As a result of this inspection, a list of roads was compiled that required major rehabilitation. The first major project was Christie Lake Conservation Area's front entrance road which was completed in Summer 2022. Once the Christie Lake project was complete, HCA staff began to develop detailed designs for Fifty Point Conservation Area's front entrance road, which was the next road noted for major rehabilitation. It was anticipated that construction would take place in Fall 2023, however due to other major projects taking place in Fifty Point the project was postponed to Fall 2024.

The purpose of this report is to recommend award to **Brantco Construction** following the public tender process for the Fifty Point Entrance Road rebuild project.

STAFF COMMENT

Upon completion of the final detailed drawings and engineering investigations, construction tender documents were produced in order to secure contracting services required to complete the necessary rehabilitation work. The project site will begin at Fifty Point's main entrance along Baseline Road and proceed down both entry and exit lanes. The east and west roads of the park will also have a small portion rehabilitated, with the west road being expanded to support three lanes of traffic (see Appendix A for details). The total scope of work includes 3000 square meters of asphalt resurfacing, removal and replacement of existing asphalt, new granular base, soil relocation, and pavement markings.

This Public Tender was issued on May 22, 2024 through the HCA's Bidding Tender website. A recommended bidders meeting was held on May 30, 2024. Tenders closed on June 18, 2024 at 11:00 a.m. A summary of bid results received is as follows:

Company Name	Necessary Bonding	Total Tender Amount including Contingency & HST	Notes
Brantco Construction	Yes	\$320,451.05	Low Bid Meeting Tender Spec
Anthony's Excavating Central Inc.	Yes	\$390,181.66	
Dufferin Construction Company	Yes	\$390,583.94	
Rankin Construction Inc.	Yes	\$390,810.50	
CRL Campbell Construction & Drainage Ltd.	Yes	\$392,847.33	
Walker Construction Limited	Yes	\$434,767.50	

This project is necessary to maintain and enhance the HCA's existing park infrastructure at one of the busiest Conservation Areas within the HCA watershed. Item 8.2.1 in the Fifty Point Master Plan notes that rehabilitation to the main roadway is a top priority, due to greater demands placed on the park in recent years. The marina and campground within the park draw many public users every year, and with these attractions comes a lot of heavy vehicle traffic. This project will not only enhance the visitor's experience, but also improve and enhance the flow of traffic entering the park, thereby helping to alleviate traffic congestion along Baseline Road.

The work proposed is expected to have a serviceable lifespan for a minimum of twenty years, before significant repairs are required once again.

The anticipated schedule for this project is as follows:

June 18, 2024	Public Tenders closed
July 4, 2024	Recommendation report to HCA Board of Directors
July 5, 2024	Contract awarded
Sept. 3, 2024	Contract work period commencement
Nov. 1, 2024	Project Substantial Competition Date

It is anticipated that the scope of work will be substantially completed on or before November 1, 2024. Third party materials testing consultants will be retained to review key milestones during the construction period. HCA CaPSS staff will also be actively involved in site review as the project progresses.

STRATEGIC PLAN LINKAGE

The initiative refers directly to the HCA Strategic Plan 2019 – 2024:

- **Strategic Priority Area – Organizational Excellence**
 - Initiatives – Support the capital development and major maintenance program the enhance our facilities and ensure they are safe, functional and current.
- **Strategic Priority Area – Conservation Area Experience**
 - Initiatives – Update and develop master and management plans, and implement priorities to further enhance conservation areas for current and future generations.

AGENCY COMMENTS - N/A

LEGAL/FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Sufficient funding for this work has been allocated within the HCA Capital and Major Maintenance Budget. A contingency sum of \$40,000 for unforeseen issues during construction works has also been allocated for this project. This has been included in the prices listed above.

CONCLUSIONS

It is recommended that this contract be awarded to Brantco Construction located in Cambridge, Ontario. They are a fully qualified and bonded contracting firm that specializes in parking lot and road construction projects. Recent, similar projects of theirs include the Christie Lake Front Entrance Road Rebuild, Mount Nemo Front Entrance Road Rebuild, and Road and Parking Lot Reconstruction for Middlesex Housing.

This page intentionally left blank.

This page intentionally left blank.

Report

TO: Board of Directors

FROM: Lisa Burnside, Chief Administrative Officer (CAO)

RECOMMENDED & PREPARED BY: T. Scott Peck, MCIP, RPP, Deputy CAO

MEETING DATE: July 4, 2024

RE: Saltfleet Conservation Area Wetland Restoration Project – SC-5, Stage 2 Archaeological Assessment Change Order

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

THAT the Board of Directors approve the change order quote submitted by Archaeological Research Associates Ltd., for the Stage 2 Archaeological Assessment for the SC-5 Wetland for an upset limit of \$327,990.00 excluding HST and this be funded through the East Mountain Wetland Construction Reserve.

BACKGROUND

The purpose of the report is to detail project status and to highlight additional costs to complete Stage 2 Archaeological Assessment.

At the March 7, 2024 Board of Directors meeting, a quote provided by Archaeological Research Associates Ltd., in the amount of \$106,485.00 excluding HST was approved for the required Stage 2 Archaeological Assessment. This work is required to facilitate the design and development of the SC-5 wetland to be constructed at the Devil's Punchbowl Conservation Area.

The work involves the following:

- 14.38 ha (35.53 ac) Pedestrian Survey (fields) at an Interval of 5 m
- 23.13 ha (57.16 ac) Test Pit Survey (forest and vegetated areas) at an Interval of 5 m

The assessment field work related to the Test Pit Surveys commenced at the end of April. The Pedestrian Surveys have not been undertaken as the fields are too wet to be ploughed and meet requirements for the archaeological assessment. This work is expected to be undertaken in July under the current approved quote.

The work related to the Test Pit Survey has taken more time than anticipated and the budget allocation for this work within the quote has been exhausted. The consultant has explained that “The test pit survey encountered soils which had exceptionally higher stoniness than anticipated, impeding their excavation. The rocks and cobbles also included large amounts of naturally occurring Ancaster chert, a known source for the manufacturing of Indigenous stone tools. The stoniness of each test pit and the naturally occurring chert have resulted in increased time to excavate the test pits and increased time analyzing potential artifacts uncovered from screening the soils, respectively. The consultant has provided a quote of \$327,990 excluding HST for the work required to complete the remaining Stage 2 test pit survey. “This includes the additional fieldwork required to complete the work (i.e., test pit survey and intensification), increased laboratory time to process recovered artifacts, and additional reporting/cartography time to incorporate analysis of the archaeological sites into the draft Stage 2 report.” This is above and beyond the original approved quote of \$106,485.00 excluding HST. The consultant notes that the “Costs provided are considered upset limits based on currently available information and findings. If efficiencies are found over the course of the project, associated cost savings will be reflected in our invoicing.”

STAFF COMMENT

As noted, the archaeological assessment process is a requirement to facilitate the design of the wetlands that have been and will be constructed as part of the Saltfleet Conservation Area Wetland Project. Further, it is a requirement from an approvals perspective to ensure compliance with provincial legislation and to document cultural heritage resources. To ensure these issues are address, staff recommend that this additional work to satisfy the Stage 2 Archaeological Assessment be approved. It is noted that dependent on the findings of the Stage 2 assessment, Stage 3 and Stage 4 assessment work may also be required.

We note that representatives from the Mississauga of the Credit First Nation, Six Nations of the Grand River and the Haudenosaunee Development Institute have been on site monitoring this archaeological work conducted by the consultant and the HCA has agreements in place with the Mississauga of the Credit First Nation, Six Nations of the Grand River and the Haudenosaunee Development Institute with the costs of this monitoring work paid for by the HCA.

STRATEGIC PLAN LINKAGE

The initiative refers directly to the HCA Strategic Plan 2019 - 2023:

- **Strategic Priority Area – Natural Heritage Conservation**
 - Initiatives – Implement the Saltfleet Conservation Area Wetland restoration Program and have the first wetland designed and constructed by 2021

- **Strategic Priority Area – Organizational Excellence**
 - Initiatives – Identify opportunities to engage the community, adjacent landowners and Indigenous Peoples

AGENCY COMMENTS

Not applicable

LEGAL/FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The East Mountain wetland reserve has sufficient funds to cover the change order.

CONCLUSIONS

The Stage 2 work noted in this report is required to proceed with the design of the SC-5 wetland and to comply with provincial legislation.

This page intentionally left blank.

Report

TO: Board of Directors

FROM: Lisa Burnside, Chief Administrative Officer

RECOMMENDED BY: T. Scott Peck, MCIP, RPP, Deputy CAO/Director,
Watershed Management Services

PREPARED BY: Mike Stone, MCIP, RPP, Manager, Watershed Planning,
Stewardship & Ecological Services

MEETING DATE: July 4, 2024

RE: Hamilton Conservation Authority – Appointment of
Officer under the *Conservation Authorities Act*

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

THAT the HCA Board of Directors appoint Laura Warner as an Officer under Section 30.1 of the *Conservation Authorities Act*, for the purposes of enforcing Section 28 of the *Conservation Authorities Act* and related regulations, as well as the *Trespass to Property Act*.

BACKGROUND & PURPOSE

HCA planning and regulations staff in Watershed Management Services Division have responsibilities related to the administration and enforcement of Section 28 of the *Conservation Authorities Act* and *O. Reg. 41/24: Prohibited Activities, Exemptions and Permits*. Under Section 30.1 of the *Conservation Authorities Act* an Authority may appoint Officers for the purposes of ensuring compliance with the Act and the regulations. The appointment of Officers under Section 30.1 of the *Conservation Authorities Act* is necessary in order to fulfill class designation requirements for HCA Officers to be designated as Provincial Offences Officers. On March 20, 2024, the Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry issued a class designation under the authority of subsection 1(3) of the *Provincial Offences Act* to designate Officers appointed under Section 30.1 of the *Conservation Authorities Act* as Provincial Offences Officers for the purpose of enforcing the *Conservation Authorities Act* and its

regulations, as well as the *Trespass to Property Act*, within the jurisdiction of their Conservation Authority.

The purpose of this report is to seek the appointment of Laura Warner, Senior Planner, in HCA's Watershed Management Services Division as an Officer of the HCA and Provincial Offences Officers.

STAFF COMMENTS

HCA staff in Watershed Management Services and Conservation Area Services Divisions have responsibilities related to the administration and enforcement of the *Conservation Authorities Act* and its regulations. This includes conducting site visits, undertaking compliance monitoring and inspections, responding to legal inquiries, and supporting court proceedings and prosecutions when necessary. Appointment of HCA staff in Watershed Management Services Division as Officers under Section 30.1 of the *Conservation Authorities Act* provides staff with the necessary authorities to carry out their job duties.

Laura Warner was recently hired as Senior Planner in HCA's Watershed Management Services Division. Laura has satisfied the criteria for appointment as an Officer under Section 30.1 of the *Conservation Authorities Act* as outlined in the *Protocol for Conservation Authority Designation of a Provincial Offences Officer* developed by Conservation Ontario, which requires:

1. The officer shall provide proof of a clean criminal record check
2. The officer shall be adequately trained in the legislation they are to enforce (i.e. the *Conservation Authorities Act*, *Provincial Offences Act*, and the *Trespass to Property Act*).

AGENCY COMMENTS

Not applicable.

LEGAL/FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Not applicable.

CONCLUSIONS

Appointment of Laura Warner, Senior Planner, as an Officer under Section 30.1 of the *Conservation Authorities Act* is required in order for staff to carry out their job duties with HCA to enforce Section 28 of the *Conservation Authorities Act* and associated regulations.

ATTACHEMENT A

HCA staff appointments for the purposes of enforcing Section 28 of the *Conservation Authorities Act* and related regulations, as well as the *Trespass to Property Act*

Jeffrey Tweedle, Conservation Planner, Watershed Management Services Division

HCA staff appointments for the purposes of enforcing Section 29 of the *Conservation Authorities Act* and related regulations, as well as the *Trespass to Property Act*

Travis Haws, Superintendent, Hamilton Mountain Conservation Areas
Brandon Good, Senior Manager, Conservation Area Services

This page intentionally left blank.

Memorandum

TO: Board of Directors

FROM: Lisa Burnside, Chief Administrative Officer (CAO)

RECOMMENDED BY: T. Scott Peck, MCIP, RPP, Deputy CAO/Director,
Watershed Management Services

PREPARED BY: Mike Stone, MCIP, RPP, Manager, Watershed Planning,
Stewardship & Ecological Services
Madolyn Armstrong, Landscape Architect, Capital
Projects & Strategic Services
Kasia Zgurzynski, Natural Areas Inventory Coordinator,
Watershed Management Services

MEETING DATE: July 4, 2024

RE: Hamilton's Biodiversity Action Plan

BACKGROUND & PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to provide the Board of Directors with an update regarding the Hamilton Biodiversity Action Plan.

Interest in developing a Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) was first identified in 2018, when a collective of representatives from Hamilton's conservation community met to discuss biodiversity conservation issues. Through these discussions the need to bring greater attention and action to address biodiversity loss was identified, and a Biodiversity Action Plan Working Group (BAPWG) was established. The BAPWG included the following organizations:

- City of Hamilton – staff from Natural Heritage Planning, Planning and Economic Development and Public Works
- Hamilton Conservation Authority – staff from the Hamilton Watershed Stewardship Program and Capital Projects & Strategic Services
- Hamilton Naturalists' Club

- Conservation Halton
- Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority
- Environment Hamilton
- Royal Botanical Gardens
- Cootes to Escarpment EcoPark System
- Bay Area Restoration Council
- Paul Smith, Naturalist

On February 19, 2020, the City of Hamilton General Issues Committee passed a motion directing City staff to report on the feasibility and resources required to develop a Biodiversity Action Plan in collaboration with the conservation community. The recommendations of the General Issues Committee were approved by Council on February 26 and 27, 2020.

On April 7, 2021 the General Issues Committee passed a motion directing City of Hamilton staff from Planning and Economic Development and the Public Works Department to partner with local conservation organizations in order to develop a Biodiversity Action Plan. The City of Hamilton contributed \$40,000 towards this initiative, with an additional \$22,000 provided by the ArcelorMittal Dofasco Corporate Community Investment Fund (CCIF) Fund. The recommendations of the General Issues Committee were approved by Council on April 14, 2021.

HCA staff brought a report regarding the BAP to the November 3, 2022 Board of Directors meeting, with the Board endorsing staff's continued participation in the collaborative initiative to develop a BAP and directing that the final plan be brought back to the Board once complete.

A draft of the Biodiversity Action Plan was approved for public and stakeholder consultation by City of Hamilton Council on May 9, 2023. In support of developing the Biodiversity Action Plan, Council also passed a motion at this meeting directing City staff to work with the Biodiversity Action Plan partners to develop a terms of reference to update the Natural Areas Inventory (NAI), and to allocate \$200,000 from the City's Climate Change Reserve Fund to support the updating of the NAI over the 2023-26 period.

The BAPWG developed a consultation plan and undertook public and stakeholder consultation between May 2023 and September 2023. A variety of consultation approaches and tools were used to engage the public, including one virtual and two in-person open house events, use of the Engage Hamilton website and completion of a public survey. A workshop and survey were also hosted and developed for local area ecological / conservation partners and agencies. Outreach to Indigenous groups and communities was also undertaken, and resulted in meetings with the Wildlife and

Stewardship Office at Six Nations of the Grand River Elected Council and Joint Stewardship Board of the Haudenosaunee Development Institute. A consultation summary report has been prepared by the BAPWG:

<https://pub-hamilton.escribemeetings.com/filestream.ashx?DocumentId=412052>

The BAPWG has now finalized the plan, with consideration of the public and stakeholder feedback that was received. The “Hamilton Biodiversity Action Plan – A Five-Year Biodiversity Action Plan for Hamilton, 2024” was presented to City of Hamilton Planning Committee on June 18, 2024 (Attachment A). Planning Committee supported the staff recommendation that the plan be approved as a guiding document for City of Hamilton actions to improve biodiversity. The committee also approved one (1) new FTE staff position in Planning and four (4) new FTE staff positions in Public Works to support implementation of the BAP and its identified actions.

The Planning Committee report will be received at the June 26, 2024 City Council meeting. It is expected that City Council will approve the report and its recommendations as they related to the Biodiversity Action Plan.

STAFF COMMENTS

HCA staff from the Hamilton Watershed Stewardship Program and Capital Projects and Strategic Services Division sit on the BAPWG, and have been involved in the on-going discussions and work to develop the BAP. The BAP is a city-wide, multi-stakeholder collaborative initiative, and the first five-year plan is intended to guide actions to protect and restore biodiversity.

The BAP envisions a Hamilton that is resilient to climate change, celebrates nature and provides a healthy environment for all life. In pursuit of the vision, the plan identifies a set of strategic goals as outlined below, as well as related key priorities and associated actions (see Attachment A).

- **Protect** biodiversity by incorporating practices to protect natural areas in policy, guidelines, and land management plans and by identifying funding strategies that support protection and enhancement of the natural environment.
- **Explore**, educate and exchange information about biodiversity through partnerships, community science and outreach.
- **Connect** partner policies, processes, data and workflows to streamline efforts to support biodiversity in Hamilton.
- **Restore** biodiversity across Hamilton by implementing nature-based stewardship activities on public and private land.

The BAP identifies HCA as the lead or supporting partner for a number of actions. In general, these actions align with existing HCA programs and initiatives, including activities related to ecological monitoring and restoration, stewardship programming, and management of HCA owned lands. HCA staff will refer to the BAP as a guiding document for HCA actions to improve biodiversity across our watershed, with identified actions to be incorporated into annual work plans as resources allow.

HCA staff also note there are synergies between the BAP and the NAI project which has recently been initiated. HCA staff brought a report to the June 13 Conservation Advisory Board to provide an update on the NAI project. The NAI will support the BAP and actions identified within it, including the preparation of a baseline biodiversity inventory for the City of Hamilton.

Given the multi-agency and collaborative nature of the BAP, it is noted that a governance model will be required to be developed to ensure maintenance, monitoring and implementation of the plan over time. The City's Planning and Economic Development Department will be assisting in this regard on an interim basis to facilitate the development of the governance model and provide other administrative and communications related duties related to implementation of the plan until a permanent, FTE position is considered through the City's 2025 budget process. HCA will continue to support the administration of the BAP as a member of the BAPWG.

STRATEGIC PLAN LINKAGE

The goals of the BAP align with the HCA's vision, mission, commitment and corporate values, and refers directly to the HCA Strategic Plan 2019 - 2023:

- **Strategic Priority Area – Organizational Excellence**
 - Foster strong working relationships with our federal, provincial and municipal partners through regular meetings to discuss issues of mutual interest

- **Strategic Priority Area – Natural Heritage Conservation**
 - Identify and undertake restoration projects based on monitoring programs and master plans
 - Maintain and enhance the natural heritage features of HCA lands and manage these lands on an environmentally sustainable basis
 - Implement the approved Invasive Species Strategy and natural heritage plans as detailed in HCA master plans
 - Implement the Saltfleet Conservation Area Wetland Restoration Program
 - Work with our partners to maintain and enhance the natural heritage inventory

- **Strategic Priority Area – Conservation Area Experience**
 - Update and develop master and management plans, and implement priorities to further enhance conservation areas for current and future generations

- **Strategic Priority Area – Education and Environmental Awareness**
 - Enhance stewardship programs for both urban and rural areas
 - Promote the connection between environmental health and human wellness

AGENCY COMMENTS

N/A

LEGAL/FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

As the actions identified in the BAP are implemented over time, some additional funding may be required to implement certain initiatives, however, that would be subject to annual work plans and budget considerations and approvals from the Board of Directors.

CONCLUSIONS

The Biodiversity Action Plan is a joint initiative of the conservation community in Hamilton. The BAP aims to protect and restore biodiversity, through collaborative action that will address threats to biodiversity. The BAP supports HCA's vision and mission, and aligns with other local stakeholder initiatives. HCA staff will continue to work collaboratively with the BAP partners to advance its implementation, and will refer to the BAP for direction on actions that will promote protection and restoration of biodiversity within the HCA watershed.

This page intentionally left blank.



A Healthy Watershed for Everyone

Memorandum

TO: Board of Directors

FROM: Lisa Burnside, Chief Administrative Officer (CAO)

RECOMMENDED BY: T. Scott Peck, MCIP, RPP, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer / Director, Watershed Management Services

PREPARED BY: Jonathan Bastien, P.Eng. – Manager, Water Resources Engineering

DATE: July 4th, 2024

RE: Watershed Conditions Report

SYNOPSIS

During the period of May 26th 2024 to June 24th 2024 to, there were no observations, reports, or expectations of significant water safety concerns, significant watercourse flooding events, or Lake Ontario shoreline flooding events.

There are no observations, reports, or expectations that significant watercourse flooding or significant water safety concerns are occurring at this time.

Current flows range from near baseflow conditions to slightly elevated above baseflow conditions but well below the adopted thresholds for significant water safety concerns.

The average monthly recorded flows for June so far have typically been near to above long-term averages. However, monthly flow in Red Hill Creek at Barton Street has been below average.

Currently, there are no observations, reports, or expectations that significant Lake Ontario shoreline flooding is occurring. The Lake Ontario mean daily water level averaged across the entire lake was about 14 cm below average for this time of year, as of yesterday.

Current Christie Lake and Valens Lake levels are within the preferred summer operating levels.

The most recent drought assessment indicated that normal conditions are an appropriate overall characterization of the watershed.

There are no significant rainfall events (+20 mm in a day) forecasted for the watershed over the next 2 weeks, at this time. In the next 9 days, no significant Lake Ontario shoreline flooding is expected, at this time. HCA staff will continue to undertake monthly drought assessments, and coordinate with the Hamilton Low Water Response Team as required if drought conditions are identified.

CURRENT WATERSHED CONDITIONS – June 24th, 2024

Current Flows in Major Area Watercourses

There are no observations, reports, or expectations that significant watercourse flooding or significant water safety concerns are occurring at this time.

Current flows range from near baseflow conditions to slightly elevated above baseflow conditions but well below the adopted thresholds for significant water safety concerns. The five available streamflow gauges are Upper Spencer Creek at Safari Road, Middle Spencer Creek at Highway 5, Lower Spencer Creek at Market Street, Ancaster Creek at Wilson Street and Red Hill Creek at Barton Street.

The average monthly recorded flows for June so far have typically been near to above long-term averages. Monthly flow in Upper Spencer Creek at Safari Road has been 120% of long-term averages (considered slightly above average). Monthly in flow Middle Spencer Creek at Highway 5 has been 96% (considered near average). Monthly flow in Lower Spencer Creek at Market Street has been 136% (considered above average). Monthly flow in Ancaster Creek at Wilson Street has been 108% (considered near average). However, monthly flow in Red Hill Creek at Barton Street has been 60% (considered below average). Flows were significantly elevated near the end of May at all gauges, due to a storm across the watershed. However, before the start of June flows decreased rapidly towards baseflows in Redhill Creek. Contrastingly, into June flows decreased more slowly in the various reaches of Spencer Creek.

May 2024 average recorded flows typically were slightly below long-term averages. Monthly flow in Middle Spencer Creek at Highway 5 was 77% of averages (considered slightly below average). Monthly flow in Lower Spencer Creek at Market Street was 75% of averages (considered slightly below average). Monthly flow in Red Hill Creek at Barton Street was 74% (considered slightly below average). However, monthly flow in Upper Spencer Creek at Safari Road was 119% of long-term averages (considered slightly above average). Also, monthly flow in Ancaster Creek at Wilson Street was 106% of averages (considered near average). The higher flows in Upper Spencer Creek are expected to be the result of higher precipitation amounts received in the area upstream of this gauge. Unfortunately, precipitation gauge data for the Ancaster area was not available due to communication issues which are actively being addressed.

April 2024 average recorded flows ranged between well below to below long-term averages at the three Spencer Creek gauges. Monthly flow in Upper Spencer Creek at Safari Road was 51% of long-term averages (considered well below average). Monthly flow in Middle Spencer Creek at Highway 5 was 69% of averages (considered below average). Monthly flow in Lower Spencer Creek at Market Street was 61% of averages (considered below average). However, monthly flow in Ancaster Creek at Wilson Street was 91% of averages (considered near average). Also, monthly flow in Red Hill Creek at Barton Street was 82% (considered slightly below average). The higher flows in Red Hill Creek are expected to be the result of higher precipitation amounts, compared to the majority of gauges in Spencer Creek. Unfortunately, precipitation gauge data for the Ancaster area was not available due to communication issues which are actively being addressed.

Current Lake Ontario Water Levels

At this time, there are no observations, reports, or expectations of significant Lake Ontario shoreline flooding. The Lake Ontario mean daily water level in the Hamilton area was 74.94 m IGLD85 as of yesterday. The Lake Ontario mean daily water level averaged across the entire lake (74.93 m IGLD85 as of yesterday) is about 14 cm below average for this time of year.

Current Storages in HCA Reservoirs

Current Christie Lake levels (771.34 ft) are within the preferred summer operating levels (771.00 to 771.50 ft).

Current Valens Lake levels (275.38 m) are within the preferred summer operating levels (275.25 to 275.45 m).

Current Soil Conditions

Surface and root-zone soil moisture information is currently not available across the watershed.

RECENT STORM EVENTS

During the period of May 26th 2024 to June 24th 2024 to, there were no observations, reports, or expectations of significant water safety concerns, significant watercourse flooding events, or Lake Ontario shoreline flooding events.

RECENT WATERSHED LOW WATER CONDITIONS

The most recent drought assessment (including data up to May 31) indicated that normal conditions are an appropriate overall characterization of the watershed.

FORECASTED WATERSHED CONDITIONS

Watercourse Flooding

There are currently no significant rainfall events (+20 mm in a day) forecasted for the watershed over the next 2 weeks. HCA staff continue to monitor conditions and forecasts routinely. Resultant water levels and flows from currently anticipated rain are not expected to result in significant watercourse flooding.

Lake Ontario Shoreline Flooding

In the next 9 days, no significant Lake Ontario shoreline flooding is expected.

Watershed Low Water Conditions

HCA staff will continue to undertake monthly drought assessments, and coordinate with the Hamilton Low Water Response Team as required if drought conditions are identified.



A Healthy Watershed for Everyone

Memorandum

TO: Board of Directors

FROM: Lisa Burnside, Chief Administrative Officer (CAO)

PREPARED BY: Liam Fletcher, Senior Manager of Conservation Area Services

MEETING DATE: July 4, 2024

RE: Conservation Areas Experiences Update

BACKGROUND & PURPOSE

HCA provides high quality, diverse conservation areas that promote outdoor recreation, health and well being and strengthen public awareness of the importance of being in or near our conservation areas.

STAFF REPORTING COMMENTS

- Wild Waterworks– June 22nd marked the thirty-ninth (39) operational season for Wild Waterworks. Wild Waterworks is operating on a six day a week schedule and will include all summer holiday Mondays. The team has done an excellent job in getting the facility up and running despite multiple mechanical failures during opening.
- Fifty-Point Conservation Area– Visitors to Fifty-Point have been enjoying the fabulous views of the Lake Ontario waterfront while walking along the promenade. The newly established wetland area continues to thrive, and a variety of wildlife have been benefiting from this natural feature. The pilot program of the Kelson road entrance at Fifty Point will be open from Canada Day weekend, June 29th to Labour Day weekend, September 2nd, 2024. This will further alleviate traffic congestion along Baseline road and promote our Advanced Day Pass and Membership Pass programs.

- Eramosa Karst Coyote Reports – Coyotes continue to be active in Eramosa Karst Conservation Area. Staff have contacted the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry and have bolstered informational signage within the area for visitors. A press release regarding the coyote was issued on June 26, urging visitors to stay alert and exercise caution while visiting the conservation area.