



Board of Directors Meeting Agenda

Thursday October 2, 2025

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Board of Directors Meeting

Thursday, October 2, 2025 at 6:00 p.m.

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

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

- 1. Call to Order** – Susan Fielding
- 2. Declarations of Conflict of Interest**
- 3. Approval of Agenda**
- 4. Delegations**
- 5. Consent Items for Applications, Minutes and Correspondence**
 - 5.1. Permit Applications Summary Report Page 1
 - 5.2. Approval of Board of Directors Minutes – September 4, 2025 Page 5
 - 5.3. Approved – August 21, 2025 Budget & Administration Committee Minutes – for receipt only Page 15
- 6. Foundation Briefing** Foundation Vice Chair – Graham Reid
- 7. Member Briefing**
- 8. Business Arising from the Minutes**
- 9. Reports from Budget & Administration Committee and Conservation Advisory Board**
 - 9.1. Budget & Administration Committee – September 18, 2025 – Susan Fielding
(Recommendations)

9.1.1. BA 2535	Draft 2026 HCA Operating and Capital Budgets	Page 21
9.1.2. BA 2536	External Audit Services – Request for Proposal Results	Page 49

10. Other Staff Reports/Memorandums

Reports to be approved

10.1. Dundas Valley Study Area Master and Management Plans – Results of Request for Proposal for Consultant Services	– Madolyn Armstrong	Page 53
10.2. Specific Agreement with the Haudenosaunee Wildlife and Habitat Committee	– Gord Costie	Page 63

Memorandums to be received

10.3. Watershed Conditions Memorandum	– Jonathan Bastien	Page 75
10.4. Conservation Areas Services Update	– Liam Fletcher	Page 79

11. New Business

12. In-Camera Items

13. Next Meeting – Thursday, November 6, 2025 at 6:00 p.m.

14. Adjournment



Report to: Board of Directors

Approved for Circulation By: Lisa Burnside, CAO

Reviewed By: T. Scott Peck, MCIP, RPP, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer/Director, Watershed Management Services

Prepared By: Mike Stone, MCIP, RPP, Senior Manager, Watershed Planning, Stewardship & Ecological Services

Meeting Date: October 2, 2025

Subject: Permit Applications Summary Report

HCA permit applications approved by staff under the *Conservation Authorities Act* and Ontario Regulation 41/24 between the dates of August 21, 2025 and October 2, 2025 are summarized in the following Permit Applications Summary Report (PASR-7/25).

Recommendation:

THAT the Board of Directors receive this Permit Application Summary Report PASR-7/25 as information.

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HAMILTON REGION CONSERVATION AUTHORITY

PERMIT APPLICATION SUMMARY REPORT (PASR 7/25)

HCA permit applications approved under the Conservation Authorities Act and Ontario Regulation 41/24 between the dates of August 21, 2025 - September 16, 2025

File Number	Date Received	Date Permit Issued	Review Days	Applicant Name	Location	Application Description	Recommendation / Conditions
F/F,C,A/25/56	15-Aug-25	25-Aug-25	12		217-245 4th Concession Rd W and 11-53 Parkside Dr Lot 13, 21, 22, Concession 4 Flamborough	for ditching and culvert replacement works	Approved subject to standard conditions.
SC/F,C,A/25/58	31-Jul-25	27-Aug-25	29		7 Parkedge Dr Lot 22, Concession BF Stoney Creek	for the modifications to a stormwater outlet	Approved subject to standard conditions.
SC/F,C,A/25/61	14-Aug-25	27-Aug-25	15		1933-1941 Rymal Rd E Lot 31, Concession 8 Stoney Creek	for the construction of a four-storey mixed use building and associated grading	Approved subject to standard conditions.
SC/F,C/25/63	27-Aug-25	04-Sep-25	9		1332 Highway 8 Lot 3, Concession 2 Stoney Creek	for the construction of a single-family dwelling	Approved subject to standard conditions.
SC/F,C/25/60	18-Aug-25	10-Sep-25	19		93 Creanona Blvd Lot 3, Concession BF Stoney Creek	For the construction of a two storey addition and renovation of an existing single family dwelling	Approved subject to standard conditions.
SC/F,C,A/25/46	24-Jul-25	11-Sep-25	43		Upper Centennial Parkway Lot 24, 25, Concession 7 Stoney Creek	for the installation of a watermain	Approved subject to standard conditions.
D/F,C/25/43	08-Sep-25	11-Sep-25	5		1055 Governor's Rd Lot 4, Concession 1 Dundas	for the installation of natural gas servicing	Approved subject to standard conditions.

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Hamilton Region Conservation Authority

Minutes

Board of Directors Meeting

September 4, 2025

Minutes of the Board of Directors meeting held on Thursday, Date, 2025 at 6:00 p.m., at the HCA main office, 838 Mineral Springs Road, in Ancaster, and livestreamed on YouTube.

PRESENT:

Brad Clark – in the Chair	
Craig Cassar	Lisa DiCesare
Susan Fielding	Matt Francis
Brian McHattie	Wayne Terryberry
Alex Wilson	Maureen Wilson

André Chabot – Foundation Chair

REGRETS: Jeff Beattie, Mike Spadafora

STAFF PRESENT: Jonathan Bastien, Lisa Burnside, Marlene Ferreira, Scott Fleming, Liam Fletcher, Brandon Good, Rob Gray, Matt Hall, Amanda Martin, Stacey McConnell, Scott Peck, Elizabeth Reimer, Mike Stone, Jaime Tellier, Sandra Winninger

OTHERS: Lance Ceaser (Ceaser Work Council)

Note: For clarity, items were captured in the order they were addressed

1. Call to Order

The Chair called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone present. HCA's Indigenous Land Acknowledgement was read. Additionally, the Chair stated that Brian McHattie, a citizen appointee, has resigned from the Board of Directors due to relocation to British Columbia. Councillor Clark indicated that Brian had been on HCA's Board of Directors from 2011 to 2014 and was Chair of the Board during this time. He was appointed to the Board in August 2023 and he also served on the Conservation Advisory Board. Brian McHattie was thanked for his service and all the best in his future endeavours.

2. Declarations of Conflict of Interest

The Chair asked members to declare any conflicts under the Board's Governance Policy. There were none.

3. Approval of Agenda

The Chair requested any additions or deletions to the agenda. CAO Lisa Burnside requested that the Confidential Report 12.2 be moved up the agenda after the approval of the agenda as legal council is present.

BD12, 3522

**MOVED BY: Susan Fielding
SECONDED BY: Craig Cassar**

THAT the agenda be approved, as amended.

CARRIED

12. In-Camera Item

BD12, 3523

**MOVED BY: Susan Fielding
SECONDED BY: Craig Cassar**

THAT the Board of Directors moves *in camera* for matters of law, personnel and property.

CARRIED

During the *in-camera* session, one Legal/personnel matter was discussed.

12.2 Confidential Report – BD/Sept 01-2025
 (Legal Personnel Matter)

An overview of the confidential report was provided, and members' questions were answered.

BD12, 3524

**MOVED BY: Craig Cassar
SECONDED BY: Wayne Terryberry**

THAT the confidential report entitled BD/Sept 01-2025 be received and remain in camera.

CARRIED

BD12, 3525**MOVED BY: Craig Cassar****SECONDED BY: Susan Fielding****THAT the Board of Directors moves out of closed session.****CARRIED****4. Delegations**

There were none.

5. Consent Items for Applications, Minutes and Correspondence

The following items were adopted:

- 5.1. Permit Applications Summary Report
- 5.2. Approval of Board of Directors' Minutes – July 3, 2025
- 5.3. Approval of Board of Directors' Minutes, Special Meeting, July 24, 2025
- 5.4. Approved – June 23, 2025 Conservation Advisory Board Minutes – for receipt only
- 5.5. Approved – May 15, 2025 Budget & Administration Committee Minutes – for receipt only
- 5.5 Correspondence from the Joanne Turnell with respect to proposed urban expansion at 159 & 163 Sulphur Springs Road
- 5.5 Correspondence from Warren Waxman with respect to Tiffany Falls and proposed parking lot on Lower Lions Club Road

6. Foundation Briefing

André Chabot, Chair of the Conservation Foundation, indicated that the Foundation received a total of **\$32,714** in donations from July 1st to August 31st, 2025, bringing the fiscal year-to-date fundraising total to **\$842,357** which is 99% of the annual fundraising goal.

Some gift highlights include:

- \$11,711 gift from the Ray Lowes Environmental Fund.

- \$5,000 from a local family to support a native plant garden and interpretative signage at the Devils Punchbowl
- \$652 from Summit Station Dairy. Summit Station hosted a fundraiser on August 1 where bottle return deposits were donated to Hamilton Conservation Foundation in support of the Westfield Locomotive Restoration.
- \$864 from a new \$3 donation option upon checkout through the CAMIS reservation system. This is a new initiative that was launched mid-July, and to date a total of 288 individuals have participated.

BD12, 3526

MOVED BY: Maureen Wilson

SECONDED BY: Matt Francis

THAT the Foundation Briefing be received.

CARRIED

7. Member Briefing

There was none.

8. Business Arising from the Minutes

There was none.

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

9.1 Budget & Administration Committee – August 21, 2025 (Recommendations)

9.1.1 BA 2528 Budget Assumptions and Processes

Susan Fielding brought forward the staff report which outlined key assumptions and drivers that will shape the 2026 budget. The proposed budget assumptions are designed to maintain program and service delivery, balancing operational needs with strategic priorities outlined in the 2025–2029 Strategic Plan.

Key expense drivers include staff compensation adjustments (COLA, step increases), rising benefit costs, IT upgrades, and a new contract staff position for data integration. Revenues are supported by an estimated 3–4% municipal levy increase, revenue from the new campground at Valens Lake and a moderate

increase to conservation area fees. The Hamilton Conservation Foundation will continue to provide funding for the outdoor educational program.

New for 2026, is an emphasis on land acquisition, which will be accomplished through a request for special funding from the City of Hamilton, dedicated funding from 10% of HCA annual pass sales as well as an annual contribution from the Foundation.

BD12, 3527

**MOVED BY: Susan Fielding
SECONDED BY: Lisa DiCesare**

THAT the Budget & Administration recommends to the Board of Directors:

THAT this report be received for information and further;

THAT the budget assumptions for the 2026 Operating and Capital Budgets as identified be approved for use in the development of the 2026 budgets and further;

THAT the 2026 draft budget be reviewed by the Budget and Administration Committee at their September 2025 meeting and brought to the Board of Directors at the October 2025 meeting for approval; and further.

THAT the City of Hamilton and Township of Puslinch be advised 30 days in advance of the of the final budget vote in accordance with the *Conservation Authorities Act* and Ontario Regulation 402/22.

CARRIED

9.1.2 BA2529 2026 Fee Schedule

Susan Fielding brought forward the staff report indicating that 2026 fee increases are intended to contribute self-generated revenue to HCA's 2026 budget to maintain program and service delivery and our goals as outlined in the budget assumptions report.

The Fee Schedule follows the Board approved the Fee Development Framework and modest fee increases are recommended which include:

- \$5 increase to Membership Pass, along with the reinstatement of the program perks and discounts for Pass holders.

- For Conservation areas, targeted increases for rentals, programs and services. Daily admission fees remain unchanged.
- The launch of the new premium campsites at Valens Lake will also make a new contribution to self generated revenues beginning in summer 2026
- A 2% inflationary increase is proposed for Watershed Management plan review services fees; this is under the assumption that the Minister's direction to freeze rates will not be extended past December 31, 2025.

BD12, 3528**MOVED BY: Susan Fielding
SECONDED BY: Craig Cassar****THAT the Budget & Administration Committee
recommends to the Board of Directors,****THAT effective January 1, 2026, HCA staff be directed to
implement the revised fee schedule contained in this
report.****CARRIED****10. Other Staff Reports/Memoranda**Reports to be approved**10.1. Request for Proposal – Bidder Results – Borers, Logies & Sydenham Creek
Floodplain Mapping Study**

Jonathan Bastien presented a summary of the report indicating that a Request for Proposal was issued. Aquafor Beech was the low bit. He also noted that the company has significant experience conducting floodplain mapping as they recently completed the Redhill Creek Floodplain Mapping Study for the HCA. Floodplain mapping helps the HCA to better understand flood risks and direct development away from natural hazards.

BD12, 3529**MOVED BY: Alex Wilson
SECONDED BY: Wayne Terryberry****THAT the Board of Directors accept the proposal for the
Borers, Logies & Sydenham Creek Floodplain Mapping
Study submitted by Aquafor Beech, at a cost not to exceed
\$89,755 plus HST.****CARRIED**

10.2. Proposed addition within the Regulated Area of Lake Ontario, 19 Lakegate Dr, Stoney Creek, City of Hamilton – HCA File No. SC/F,C,A/25/50

Elizabeth Reimer provided an overview of the report indicating that the applicant wants to install a covered porch and swimming pool within the regulated area along Lake Ontario. HCA staff worked with the applicant and their costal engineer, assisting them to be able to meet HCA policy on two of the three issues: installation of a rock berm at the shoreline to help mitigate erosion and flooding issues as well as ensuring the two structures are outside the regulated setback area for flooding. The last issue to be resolved was access to the shoreline for maintenance of the shoreline protection: the property's width is less than the 6 meters between dwellings to allow safe access for equipment. Staff are able to support the coastal engineer's solution to use a crane in which to move material to the shoreline but required Board approval to issue the Permit.

BD12, 3530

**MOVED BY: Susan Fielding
SECONDED BY: Matt Francis**

THAT the HCA Board of Directors approve the issuance of a permit under Section 28.1 of the Conservation Authorities Act for construction of an addition of a covered porch and swimming pool within the regulated area associated with Lake Ontario, at 19 Lakegate Drive, Stoney Creek, City of Hamilton.

CARRIED

Reports to be Received

10.3 Watershed Conditions Memorandum

Jonathan Bastien summarized the memorandum and indicated that technically, the watershed is experiencing Level 1 Low Water Conditions, which will be monitored.

BD12, 3531

**MOVED BY: Craig Cassar
SECONDED BY: Wayne Terryberry**

THAT the memorandum entitled Watershed Conditions Memorandum be received.

CARRIED

10.4 Conservation Areas Experience Update

Brandon Good provided the update, highlighting that Conservation Areas experienced a successful summer season, with day use, camping, and marina revenues performing well despite a cool spring this year. Additionally, there are several upcoming events in September including the Bright Run at Christie Lake on September 6th; Autumn Stroll in the Dundas Valley September 7th and the annual reservation service at Spencer Gorge during the fall colour period beginning September 27th.

BD12, 3532

MOVED BY: Craig Cassar

SECONDED BY: Susan Fielding

THAT the memorandum entitled Conservation Areas Experience Update Memorandum be received.

CARRIED

11. New Business

There was none.

12. In-Camera Items

BD12, 3533

MOVED BY: Susan Fielding

SECONDED BY: Craig Cassar

THAT the Board of Directors moves *in camera* for matters of law, personnel and property.

CARRIED

During the *in-camera* session, one Security and one Legal/negotiation and one Land matter were discussed.

12.1. Confidential Report BA/Aug 02-2025 (Security Matter)

Susan Fielding brought forward the staff report and answered members' questions.

BD12, 3534

MOVED BY: Susan Fielding

SECONDED BY: Lisa DiCesare

THAT the Budget & Administration Committee recommends to the Board of Directors;

THAT Confidential Report BA/Aug02-2025 be approved and remain in camera

CARRIED

12.3 Confidential Report – BD/Sept 02-2025
(Position on a negotiation)

Lisa Burnside provided a summary of the report and answered members' questions.

It was indicated that the motion only come out of camera for provision to city staff.

BD12, 3535

MOVED BY: Matt Francis
SECONDED BY: Wayne Terryberry

THAT the Board of Directors approve Confidential Report BD/Sept 02–2025.

CARRIED

12.4 Confidential Report – BD/Sept 03-2025
(Land Matter)

Scott Peck to bring forward the staff report and answered members' questions.

BD,12 3536

MOVED BY: Alex Wilson
SECONDED BY: Wayne Terryberry

THAT Report BD/Sept 03/2025 be approved and remain in camera.

CARRIED

BD12, 3537

MOVED BY: Lisa DiCesare
SECONDED BY: Craig Cassar

THAT the Board of Directors moves out of closed session.

CARRIED

Following the in-camera portion of the meeting, resolution BD12,3535, approving the extension/renewal of the 5-year Confederation Beach Park Management Agreement was read for provision to City of Hamilton staff.

THAT the Board of Directors support and approve the five (5) year extension/renewal of the Confederation Beach Park Management Agreement (the “Agreement”), dated effective January 1, 2017, expiring December 31, 2026; and further THAT staff be directed to work with the Park Management Review Team to review, update and make required amendments to the Agreement as needed; and further

THAT staff be directed to execute any requisite agreements with the City of Hamilton effecting an extension/renewal and amendment of the Agreement.

13. Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Board of Directors will be held on Thursday, October 2, 2025 at 6:00 p.m. at the HCA Main Administration Office – Woodend Auditorium, 838 Mineral Springs Road, Ancaster, Ontario.

14. Adjournment

On motion, the meeting adjourned.

Scott Fleming
Secretary-Treasurer

Hamilton Conservation Authority

Minutes

Budget & Administration Committee

August 21, 2025

Minutes of the Budget & Administration Committee meeting held on Thursday, Date, 2025 at 2:00 p.m., at the HCA main office, 838 Mineral Springs Road, in Ancaster, and livestreamed on YouTube.

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

Regrets: None

Staff Present: Lisa Burnside, Lindsay Davidson, Marlene Ferreira, Scott Fleming, Liam Fletcher, Brandon Good, Matt Hall, Mike Stone, Jaime Tellier, and Sandra Winninger

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

The Chair requested any additions or deletions to the agenda.

BA 2524**MOVED BY: Brad Clark
SECONDED BY: Alex Wilson****THAT the agenda be approved.****CARRIED****4. Delegations**

There were none.

5. Consent Items

The following consent items were adopted:

- 5.1. Approval of Budget & Administration Committee Minutes –
June 23, 2025

6. Business Arising from the Minutes

There was none.

7. Staff Reports/MemorandaMemorandums to be Received

7.1. HCA 2nd Quarter Financial Results – Operating

Scott Fleming provided an overview of the memorandum and answered members' questions.

BA 2525**MOVED BY: Alex Wilson
SECONDED BY: Maureen Wilson****THAT the Memorandum entitled HCA Q2 Financial Results –
Operating be received.****CARRIED**

7.2. HCA 2025 2nd Quarter Financial Results – Capital & Major Maintenance

Matt Hall provided a summary of the memorandum and answered members'

questions.

In response to a question posed by Maureen Wilson, staff accepted direction to provide information on the completion rate of capital projects as part of the year end reporting.

BA 2526

**MOVED BY: Alex Wilson
SECONDED BY: Brad Clark**

THAT the Memorandum entitled HCA 2025 2nd Quarter Financial Results – Capital & Major Maintenance be received.

CARRIED

7.3. HCA 2nd Quarter Vendor Report

Scott Fleming provided an overview of the memorandum and answered members' questions

BA 2527

**MOVED BY: Maureen Wilson
SECONDED BY: Brad Clark**

THAT the Memorandum entitled HCA 2nd Quarter Vendor Report be received.

CARRIED

Lisa DiCesare joined the meeting

Reports for Recommendation

7.4. 2026 Budget Assumptions and Processes

Scott Fleming provided an overview of the report and answered members' questions.

BA 2528

**MOVED BY: Alex Wilson
SECONDED BY: Lisa DiCesare**

THAT the Budget & Administration recommends to the Board of Directors:

THAT this report be received for information and further;

THAT the budget assumptions for the 2026 Operating and Capital Budgets as identified be approved for use in the development of the 2026 budgets and further;

THAT the 2026 draft budget be reviewed by the Budget and Administration Committee at their September 2025 meeting and brought to the Board of Directors at the October 2025 meeting for approval; and further.

THAT the City of Hamilton and Township of Puslinch be advised 30 days in advance of the of the final budget vote in accordance with the *Conservation Authorities Act* and Ontario Regulation 402/22.

CARRIED

7.5. 2026 Fee Schedule

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

BA 2529

**MOVED BY: Lisa DiCesare
SECONDED BY: Alex Wilson**

THAT the Budget & Administration Committee recommends to the Board of Directors:

THAT effective January 1, 2026, HCA staff be directed to implement the revised fee schedule contained in this report.

CARRIED

8. New Business

There was none.

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

BA 2530

**MOVED BY: Maureen Wilson
SECONDED BY: Lisa DiCesare**

THAT the Budget and Administration Committee moves *in camera* for matters of law, personnel and property.

CARRIED

During the *in camera* session, one personnel and one legal matter and one security matter were discussed.

**9.1. Confidential Memorandum – BA/Aug 01-2025
(Legal Matter)**

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

BA 2531

**MOVED BY: Brad Clark
SECONDED BY: Maureen Wilson**

THAT the confidential report entitled BA/Aug 01-2025 be received and remain in camera.

CARRIED

**9.2 Confidential Report – BA/Aug 02-2025
(Security Matter)**

Jaime Tellier provided a summary of the report and answered members' questions.

BA 2532

**MOVED BY: Alex Wilson
SECONDED BY: Lisa DiCesare**

THAT the Budget & Administration Committee recommends to the Board of Directors;

THAT Confidential Report – BA/Aug 02-2025 be approved and remain in camera.

CARRIED

BA 2533

**MOVED BY: Brad Clark
SECONDED BY: Alex Wilson**

THAT the Budget and Administration Committee moves out of closed session.

CARRIED

10. Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Budget and Administration Committee will be held on Thursday, September 18, 2025 at 2:00 p.m. at the HCA Main Administration Office – Woodend Auditorium, 838 Mineral Springs Road, Ancaster, Ontario.

11. Adjournment

On motion, the meeting adjourned.



HCA 2026 Draft Budgets

Budget & Administration Committee – September 18, 2025





Executive Summary

- The 2026 draft budget contains details for HCA's planned operations and capital activities
- The 2026 total budget is \$20.7M with \$18.2M in operating and \$2.5M in capital. The operating budget results in a 3.3% increase in levy in 2026 to accomplish its goals (3% in 2025) which also relies on enhanced self-generated revenue and use of reserves
- In addition, the Board has requested that the City of Hamilton allocate special funding in the amount of \$500,000 to the HCA's land acquisition program as part of the budget process
- The capital budget holds the \$2M in block funding and is furthered with \$500,000 in use of reserves to accomplish its goals
- Key expense and revenue drivers were presented to B&A and the Board over the last month
- The 2026 budget assumptions and process have been developed to align with regulatory requirements and strategic priorities



Operating Budget Goals

- Engage in those activities identified in HCA's 2025-2029 Strategic Plan as Year 2 initiatives
- A total of 14 priorities have been identified across the Plan's four strategic priority areas:
 - Water Resources Management
 - Organizational Excellence
 - Natural Heritage Conservation
 - Connecting People to Nature
- Construct a zero-based budget
- Operate on a cash neutral basis (break-even)

Year 2 – Water Resources Management

- **Complete updated floodplain mapping for Tiffany, Ancaster, Spring, and Sulphur Creeks** to improve flood risk identification and inform land use planning.
- **Implement priority system enhancements** to improve connectivity and reliability of streamflow, precipitation, and snowpack monitoring network, based on the recommendations from the 2025 system review.
- **Use the results of the 2025 riparian buffer analysis** to prioritize and implement private land restoration projects in collaboration with landowners.



Year 2 – Organizational Excellence

- **Launch a values-based recognition program** to reinforce corporate values, foster a culture of appreciation and celebrate staff contributions.
- **Implement key initiatives from the Digital Transformation Plan** to provide operational efficiencies and advance information management practices.
- **Advance Asset Management Strategy by initiating Phase 2** to complete land improvement planning.



Year 2 Priorities – Natural Heritage Conservation

- **Continue targeted outreach to landowners in priority areas** with the aim of securing at least one new property for conservation.
- **Promote progress and public awareness of the Saltfleet Wetland Restoration Program** while advancing design and funding for the third wetland.
- **Begin priority monitoring and restoration actions** based on the 2025 comprehensive monitoring and restoration plan to guide enhancements of natural areas.
- **Develop a framework to integrate existing data sets for monitoring, invasive species, and stewardship data systems** to support identification and visualization of priority restoration areas.



Land Acquisition

- Land acquisition is a key initiative in the strategic plan; a long-term legacy to protect and expand natural areas, strengthen climate resilience and enhance green space access across the watershed
- HCA board has approved high-priority lands across the watershed for their ecological significance, proximity to existing lands and establishing linkages between natural areas
- This is a long-term vision with a focus on acquiring land adjacent to current holdings, creating larger core natural areas and linkages to these lands across the watershed
- Aligns with City of Hamilton initiatives related to the biodiversity action plan, natural areas inventory, climate action strategy as well as the City's recognition for the need for more green space and importance of protecting existing green spaces



Year 2 Priorities – Connecting People to Nature

- **Implement 2025 Access and Amenities Review recommendations** to improve visitor accessibility and inclusivity across conservation areas.
- **Implement 2025 Conservation Areas Program Review visitor engagement recommendations** to enrich visitor experiences.
- **Support Completion of existing master/management plans and Advance planning work** for the Dundas Valley Study Area.
- **Support the Volunteer Engagement Coordinator to review existing and upcoming projects** and identify new opportunities and outreach efforts.





Revenues & Expenses

New revenues through:

- Expanded campground at Valens Lake
- Modest fee increases at our conservation areas
- Levy increase
- Ongoing support from the Foundation for environmental education and monies from various grants have also been included

Our largest expense is staffing as a people driven organization providing programs and services. Costs to be factored in:

- COLA
- Increases to minimum wage
- Implementing job evaluation steps
- 1 new contract position in 2026



Special Funding Request – Land Acquisition

- HCA board requests \$500,000 per year CPI indexed over a duration of ten years
- This funding is a shared model which also includes:
 - 10% of HCA annual pass revenue (~\$135K)
 - \$20K/year from partner Hamilton Conservation Foundation
 - Applications to federal/provincial grants
 - Private partnerships and ecological gifts program
- Since our formation in 1958 as the Spencer Creek Conservation Authority, land acquisition has protected places now part of the fabric of Hamilton's key green spaces – the Dundas Valley, Christie and Valens Lake, Spencer Gorge, Beverly Swamp and Fifty Point
- HCA owns or manages over 11,600 acres of conservation lands across the watershed
- In the past 10 years, we have added 1,375 acres and also grown eastward, with major milestones such as the Eramosa Karst and Saltfleet Conservation Areas
- Our history proves what can be achieved with steady commitment, vision and investment

A Balanced Budget (000's)

	Budget <u>2026</u>	Budget <u>2025</u>	Actual <u>2024</u>	Actual <u>2023</u>
<u>Revenues</u>				
Levy	\$ 5,219	\$ 5,052	\$ 4,909	\$ 4,778
Admissions	3,881	3,756	3,482	3,643
Camping/marina	3,948	3,722	3,552	3,569
Equipment rental	1,413	1,372	1,336	1,301
Transfer from reserves	111	345	937	171
Other	<u>3,631</u>	<u>3,477</u>	<u>4,628</u>	<u>3,793</u>
	18,203	17,724	\$ 18,844	17,255
<u>Expenses</u>				
Staffing	12,496	11,716	10,842	9,275
Equipment	773	888	910	878
Utilities	821	805	751	849
Materials/supplies	556	592	495	458
Other	<u>3,557</u>	<u>3,723</u>	<u>5,476</u>	<u>3,692</u>
	18,203	17,724	18,474	15,152
Net surplus	<u>\$ -</u>	<u>\$ -</u>	<u>\$ 370</u>	<u>\$ 2,103</u>

Watershed Management Services (000's)

	Budget <u>2026</u>	Budget <u>2025</u>	Actual <u>2024</u>	Actual <u>2023</u>
<u>Revenues</u>				
Levy	\$ 2,574	\$ 2,306	\$ 1,783	\$ 1,656
Permits, fees	295	310	338	313
Grants	456	336	497	198
Transfer from Reserves	17	95	696	171
Other	<u>196</u>	<u>181</u>	<u>737</u>	<u>552</u>
	3,537	3,228	4,051	2,890
<u>Expenses</u>				
Staffing	2,913	2,709	2,351	1,895
Contractors	313	233	1,457	711
Materials/supplies	107	115	35	68
Other	<u>204</u>	<u>172</u>	<u>208</u>	<u>215</u>
	3,537	3,228	4,051	2,890
Net surplus	<u>\$ -</u>	<u>\$ -</u>	<u>\$ -</u>	<u>\$ -</u>

Conservation Area Services (000's)

	Budget <u>2026</u>	Budget <u>2025</u>	Actual <u>2024</u>	Actual <u>2023</u>
<u>Revenues</u>				
Admissions	\$ 3,796	\$ 3,683	\$ 3,400	\$ 3,563
Camping	2,289	2,118	2,033	2,019
Marina	1,659	1,604	1,519	1,550
Other	<u>681</u>	<u>656</u>	<u>967</u>	<u>686</u>
	8,425	8,060	7,920	7,817
<u>Expenses</u>				
Staffing	3,952	3,755	3,664	3,203
Equipment	708	807	852	793
Materials/supplies	335	330	333	307
Utilities	399	375	374	375
Other	<u>1,197</u>	<u>1,224</u>	<u>1,234</u>	<u>1,174</u>
	6,591	6,491	6,457	5,852
Net surplus	<u>\$ 1,833</u>	<u>\$ 1,569</u>	<u>\$ 1,462</u>	<u>\$ 1,965</u>

Westfield Heritage Village & Conservation Area (000's)

	Budget <u>2026</u>	Budget <u>2025</u>	Actual <u>2024</u>	Actual <u>2023</u>
<u>Revenues</u>				
Levy	\$ 695	\$ 673	\$ 654	\$ 624
Events	145	160	119	131
School Programs	65	62	58	61
Admissions	85	73	82	80
Other	<u>53</u>	<u>42</u>	<u>91</u>	<u>42</u>
	1,043	1,010	1,004	938
<u>Expenses</u>				
Staffing	674	653	667	608
Promotion	92	103	36	38
Materials/supplies	45	48	48	43
Utilities	63	60	57	56
Other	<u>170</u>	<u>147</u>	<u>173</u>	<u>156</u>
	1,043	1,010	982	900
Net surplus	<u>\$ -</u>	<u>\$ -</u>	<u>\$ 22</u>	<u>\$ 38</u>

Central Support Services (000's)

	Budget <u>2026</u>	Budget <u>2025</u>	Actual <u>2024</u>	Actual <u>2023</u>
<u>Revenues</u>				
Levy	\$ 1,950	\$ 2,073	\$ 2,472	\$ 2,498
Equipment	1,413	1,372	1,336	1,301
Management fees	600	552	571	536
Transfer from Reserves	94	250	241	-
Other	<u>1,141</u>	<u>1,179</u>	<u>1,248</u>	<u>1,275</u>
	5,198	5,426	5,869	5,610
<u>Expenses</u>				
Staffing	4,957	4,599	4,160	3,569
Utilities	359	370	320	418
Contractors	144	181	288	191
Materials/supplies	69	99	79	40
Equipment	65	66	58	85
Other	<u>1,438</u>	<u>1,680</u>	<u>2,079</u>	<u>1,208</u>
	7,032	6,995	6,984	5,510
Net surplus/(deficit)	<u>\$ (1,833)</u>	<u>\$ (1,569)</u>	<u>\$ (1,115)</u>	<u>\$ 100</u>

2026 Draft Operating Budget Summary

Watershed Management Services	2026 Draft Budget	2026 Draft Operating Budget Funding Sources			
		General Revenue	Municipal Levy	Provincial Grants	Reserves
Watershed Services Administration	982,470	425,824	556,646	-	-
Conservation Services (Ecology, Invasives & Restoration)	782,810		782,810		
Permits & Compliance	449,427		449,427		
Watershed Stewardship Program	326,676	124,800	190,376		11,500
Water Engineering and Prov Water Control	387,764		387,764		
Water Quality Monitoring	246,307	56,000	75,307	115,000	
Climate Change Initiatives	135,000	135,000			
Provincial Supported Water Control Program	226,895		131,699	89,996	5,200
Total Watershed Management Services	3,537,349	741,624	2,574,029	204,996	16,700

Conservation Areas	2026 Draft Budget	2026 Draft Operating Budget Funding Sources			
		General Revenue	Municipal Levy	Provincial Grants	Reserves
Fifty Point	2,428,209	2,877,050			
Valens Lake	1,501,925	2,635,500			
Christie Lake	1,233,710	1,823,750			
Dundas Valley	833,930	833,000			
Hamilton Mountain	593,639	256,125			
Total Conservation Areas	6,591,413	8,425,425	-	-	-

Westfield Heritage Village & Conservation Area	2026 Draft Budget	2026 Draft Operating Budget Funding Sources			
		General Revenue	Municipal Levy	Provincial Grants	Reserves
Westfield Operations	1,043,244	347,750	695,494		
Total Westfield Heritage Village & Conservation Area	1,043,244	347,750	695,494	-	-

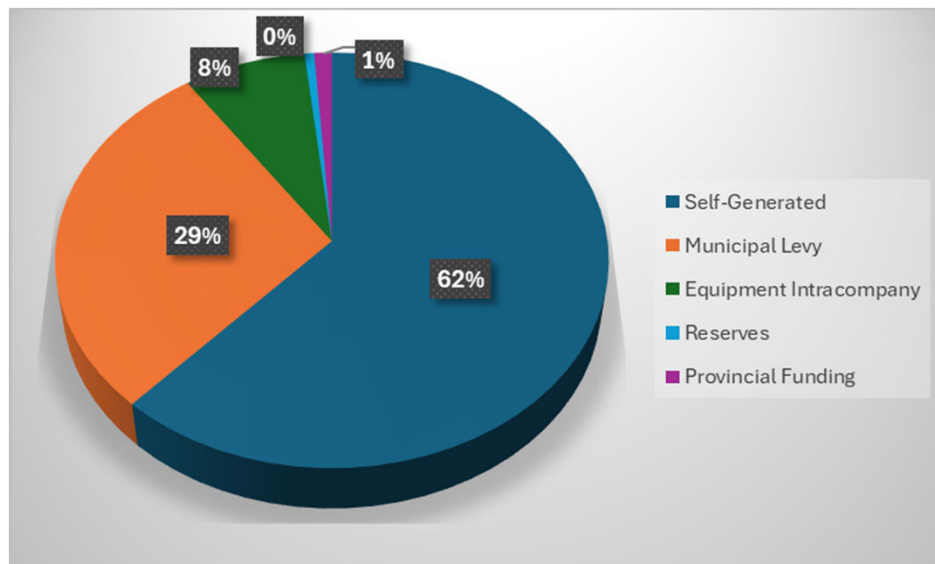
2026 Draft Operating Budget Summary

Central Support Services	2026 Draft Budget	2026 Draft Operating Budget Funding Sources			
		General Revenue	Municipal Levy	Provincial Grants	Reserves
Administration	2,973,614	1,134,500	1,949,602		50,000
Information Technology	345,329				44,000
Equipment Pool Operation & Maintenance	923,708	1,419,160			
Central Workshop	616,916	75,000			
Marketing & Communications	598,900				
Human Resources	450,673				
Conservation Foundation	314,440	75,000			
Other (General Maintenance, Memorial Benches, Rentals)	272,233	191,700			
Millgrove Workshop	230,569				
Outdoor Environmental Education Program	213,200	258,750			
Admin Operations Trade	92,142				
Total Central Support Services	7,031,724	3,154,110	1,949,602	-	94,000

Total Operating Programs	18,203,730	12,668,909	5,219,125	204,996	110,700
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2026 Sources of Operating Revenue

\$18.2M Operating budget revenue breakdown



Operating Revenue	Amount
Self-Generated	11,249,749
Municipal Levy	5,219,125
Equipment Intracompany	1,419,160
Reserves	110,700
Provincial Funding	204,996
Total	18,203,730



Operating Budget Levy Request

- This year's Operating Budget Levy increase request is: **3.3%**
- Province provides allocation percentages annually, this year
 - City of Hamilton 99.24%
 - Township of Puslinch 0.76%
- Total Levy for 2026 \$5,219,125 (\$ 5,052,396 in 2025)
 - City of Hamilton \$5,184,745
 - Township of Puslinch \$34,380
- Year over year impact on Operating Levy is an increase of \$166,729

Capital Budget

- The draft capital budget is composed of two areas; the first being special projects and the second being major maintenance
- Special projects make up 69% of the capital budget in 2026 and are broken down by location
- Major maintenance makes up 31% of the capital budget and is spread across the watershed
- HCA has much to maintain with close to 100 bridges, 15 km of internal roadways, 2km of boardwalk, 170 buildings, 145km of trails and countless other items such as fencing, utilities, gates, etc.
- 2026 budget includes use of reserves to finalize the design on the third wetland for the Saltfleet Conservation Area restoration project which is targeted for construction in 2027

<u>Specific Projects</u>			<u>Subtotal By Area</u>	<u>Percent of Projects</u>	<u>Percent of Total</u>
<u>#</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>\$ Amount</u>			
Fifty Point					
1	Marina Road Reconstruction	\$ 300,000			
2	Marina Channel Dredging	150,000			
3	Beach Pavilion Access Improvements	100,000			
4	Dock & Boardwalk Repairs	<u>25,000</u>			
			575,000	33.3%	
Christie Lake					
5	Boat Launch Replacement	\$ 150,000			
6	Beach House Building Improvements	<u>50,000</u>			
			\$ 200,000	11.6%	
Valens Lake					
7	Boardwalk Replacements	\$ 150,000			
8	Dump Station Tank Expansion	<u>50,000</u>			
			200,000	11.6%	
Dundas Valley / Woodend					
9	Wayfinding Signage Improvements	\$ 100,000			
10	Woodend Office Renos	<u>50,000</u>			
			150,000	8.7%	

Capital
Budget
cont'd

<u>Specific Projects</u>				
<u>#</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>\$ Amount</u>	<u>Subtotal By Area</u>	<u>Percent of Projects</u>
Westfield				
11	Boardwalk & Building Accessibility Improvements	\$ 50,000	50,000	2.9%
Watershed Management Services				
12	Saltfleet - Finalize Design of Third Wetland	\$ 500,000		
13	Floodplain Mapping	\$ 50,000	550,000	31.9%
			1,725,000	100.0%
General Projects - Major Maintenance				
	Building Maintenance	\$ 150,000		
	Roads & Parking	150,000		
	Trails	50,000		
	Signage	50,000		
	Bridges	100,000		
	Gates	25,000		
	Fencing	50,000		
	Utilities & Services	75,000		
	Masterplans	100,000		
	Natural Areas Management	25,000	775,000	31.0%
Total Capital and Major Maintenance Budget			\$ 2,500,000	100.0%

Capital
Budget
cont'd

Capital Budget (cont'd)

Funding Sources

City of Hamilton (Block Funding)
HCA Reserves (Saltfleet)

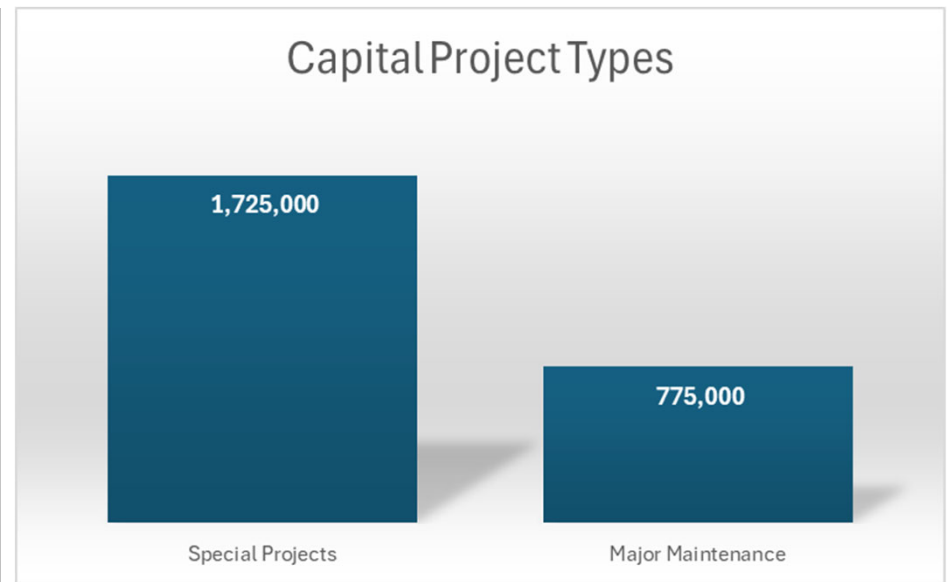
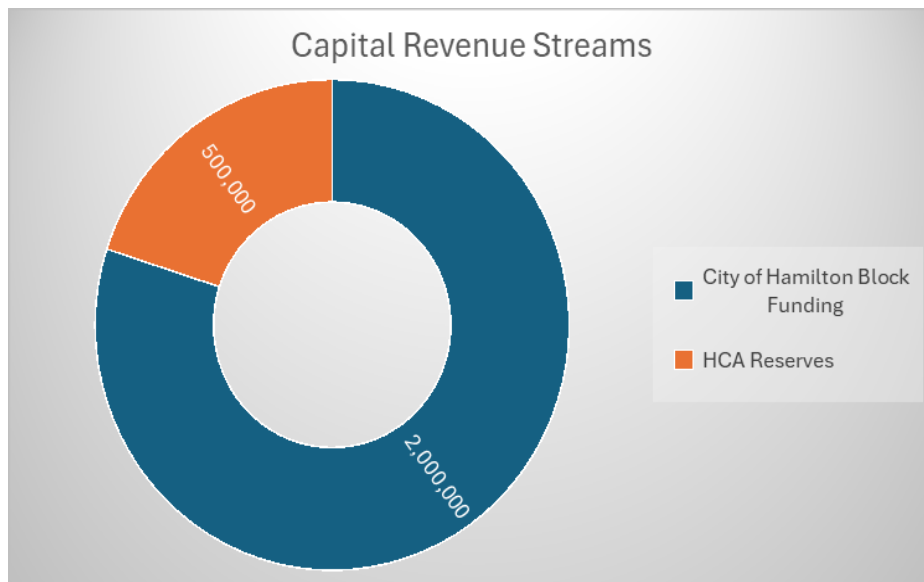
2,000,000
500,000

Total Capital Budget Funding

\$ 2,500,000

2026 Sources of Capital Budget Revenue

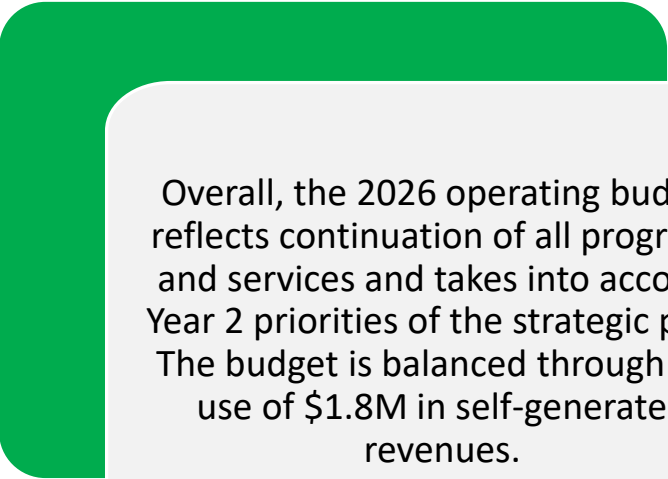
\$2.5M Capital budget revenue breakdown



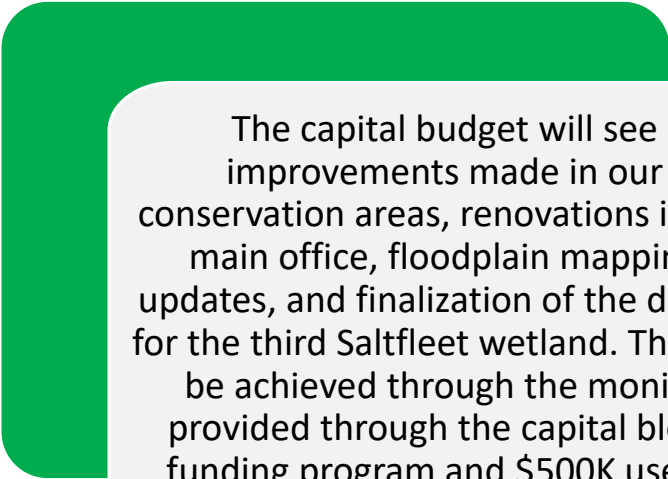
Reserve Funds

Reserve Fund	2024 Opening	+/-	2024 Net Transactions =	2024 Closing	= 2025 Opening
a. Construction Capital and Major Maintenance projects	\$ 2,469		\$ (202)	\$ 2,267	\$ 2,267
b. Watershed Engineering projects	\$ 336		115	451	\$ 451
c. Fifty Point Wetland	\$ 648		(529)	119	\$ 119
d. East Mountain wetland construction/land acquisition funds	\$ 2,057		(328)	1,729	\$ 1,729
e. General land acquisition funds	\$ 1,000		218	1,218	\$ 1,218
f. Major equipment replacement funds	\$ 400		5	405	\$ 405
g. Westfield FOW & endowment fund	\$ 258		10	268	\$ 268
h. Seasonal operating shortfall protection	\$ 3,000			3,000	\$ 3,000
i. Human resources protection fund	\$ 500		(37)	463	\$ 463
j. Legal issues	\$ 300			300	\$ 300
k. Unscheduled capital	\$ 700			700	\$ 700
l. Climate Change Initiatives	\$ 125		56	181	\$ 181
m. Records management & IT	\$ 508		(91)	417	\$ 417
	\$ 12,301		\$ (783)	\$ 11,518	\$ 11,518

Budget Summary



Overall, the 2026 operating budget reflects continuation of all programs and services and takes into account Year 2 priorities of the strategic plan. The budget is balanced through the use of \$1.8M in self-generated revenues.



The capital budget will see improvements made in our conservation areas, renovations in the main office, floodplain mapping updates, and finalization of the design for the third Saltfleet wetland. This will be achieved through the monies provided through the capital block funding program and \$500K use of reserves.



Staff Recommendation

- THAT the Budget & Administration Committee recommend to the Board of Directors:
- THAT the 2026 Draft Operating Budget, as presented, be endorsed for approval and;
- THAT the 2026 Draft Capital Budget, as presented, be endorsed for approval

Questions?





Report to: Budget & Administration Committee

Approved for Circulation By: Lisa Burnside, CAO

Reviewed By: Scott Fleming, Director of Finance and Central Support Services

Prepared By: Nauman Chaudhry, Special Projects Accountant

Meeting Date: September 18, 2025

Subject: External Audit Services – Request for Proposal Results

Recommendation:

HCA the Budget & Administration Committee recommends to the Board of Directors:

THAT the contract for external audit services for the Hamilton Conservation Authority, Confederation Beach Park, and the Hamilton Conservation Foundation for the five-year period beginning with the year ending December 31, 2025, be awarded to KPMG LLP for a total cost of \$341,330.00, exclusive of HST and further;

THAT the Hamilton Conservation Authority appoints KPMG as its auditors for the 2025 fiscal year.

Executive Summary:

Staff have completed a Request for Proposal (RFP) process to secure external audit services for the five-year term covering fiscal years 2025–2029. The scope of services includes conducting annual financial audits, preparing audited financial statements, and presenting results to the Budget & Administration Committee and/or Board of Directors.

The previous audit services contract was awarded to Grant Thornton LLP in 2020 and has now concluded. A new RFP was issued on July 23, 2025, to eight qualified accounting firms, with three proposals received by the closing date of August 22, 2025. The proposals received ranged from \$341,330 to \$433,778 over five years. Following evaluation, **KPMG LLP** is recommended for appointment. KPMG submitted the lowest-cost proposal and demonstrated strong qualifications, extensive experience with conservation authorities, and a comprehensive understanding of Public Sector Accounting Standards.

Staff Comment / Discussion:

This project involves the appointment of an external auditor to conduct the annual financial audits of the Hamilton Conservation Authority (HCA), Confederation Beach Park (CBP), and the Hamilton Conservation Foundation (HCF) for the five-year period beginning with the 2025 fiscal year and ending in 2029. The HCF has a year end of November 30, while the HCA and CBP have year ends of December 31. The audit services also include the preparation of annual financial statements and the attendance of a senior firm representative at the Budget & Administration Committee and/or Board of Directors meeting to present the audited statements.

The previous five-year contract for audit services was awarded to Grant Thornton LLP in 2020, following a competitive Request for Proposals (RFP) process. That contract has now concluded, and in preparation for the upcoming audit cycle, HCA staff initiated a new RFP process to secure a qualified audit firm for the next term.

On July 23, 2025, the RFP for external audit services was issued to eight (8) accounting firms, including those with prior experience working with public sector and not-for-profit organizations. The deadline for submissions was August 22, 2025. In total, three (3) proposals were received by the closing date.

Submissions were evaluated based on the firm's experience with conservation authorities and not-for-profit organizations, knowledge and understanding of HCA operations, qualifications and experience of the proposed engagement team, and the overall cost of services.

A summary of RFP results received is as follows:

Accounting Firm	Total Fees (For 5 years)	Notes
KPMG LLP	\$341,330.00	Lowest fees
Doane Grant Thornton LLP	\$360,447.13	
BDO Canada LLP	\$433,778.00	
Pettinelli Mastroluisi Chartered Accountants	N/A	No proposal submitted.
Bateman MacKay	N/A	No proposal submitted.
DJB Chartered Professional Accountants	N/A	No proposal submitted.
Taylor Leibow	N/A	No proposal submitted.
Brownlow Partners	N/A	No proposal submitted.

It is recommended that the contract be awarded to KPMG LLP, a leading professional services provider to Public Sector and Not-for-Profit (NPO) entities in Canada. KPMG offers the lowest total cost over the five-year period while providing a full range of services. In addition to their competitive pricing, KPMG brings extensive experience working with conservation authorities and a deep understanding of Public Sector Accounting Standards. KPMG's long-standing reputation for delivering high-quality, efficient audits makes them a strong and reliable partner for the years ahead.

Strategic Plan Linkage:

The initiative refers directly to the HCA Strategic Plan 2025 – 2029:

- **Strategic Priority Area – Organizational Excellence**

Legal / Financial Implications:

Sufficient funding will be allocated within the HCA's annual operating budgets to support external audit services over the five-year term. Total fees proposed by KPMG LLP amount to \$341,330 for the combined audit and financial statement preparation services for the Hamilton Conservation Authority, Confederation Beach Park, and Hamilton Conservation Foundation. Annual fees, excluding HST, are as follows: \$64,900 in 2025, \$66,550 in 2026, \$68,200 in 2027, \$69,960 in 2028, and \$71,720 in 2029. At the conclusion of this contract term, a competitive process will be undertaken for the subsequent audit services period.

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Report to: Board of Directors

Approved for Circulation By: Lisa Burnside, CAO

Reviewed By: Matthew Hall, Director, Capital Projects & Strategic Services

Prepared By: Madolyn Armstrong, Landscape Architect

Meeting Date: October 2, 2025

Subject: Dundas Valley Study Area Master and Management Plans – Results of Request for Proposal for Consultant Services

Recommendation:

THAT the consulting services for the development of new Master & Management Plans for the Dundas Valley Study Areas, be awarded to “thinc design” for a total cost of \$164,510 (excluding HST, including \$15,000 contingency).

Executive Summary:

HCA staff are developing new Master and Management Plans for the Dundas Valley Study Area, which includes:

- Dundas Valley Conservation Area
- Tiffany Falls Conservation Area
- The Hamilton to Brantford Rail Trail
- Summit Bog Conservation Lands
- Iroquoia Heights Conservation Area
- Meadowlands Conservation Area
- Lower Spencer Creek Conservation Area and Canal Park

Staff have identified the need for assistance from a consulting firm on developing these Plans. An RFP was issued on August 20, 2025 through the HCA Bidding website and closed on September 17, 2025 at 1:00 pm. Two proposals were received by the specified closing time.

Following the evaluation of proposals received, staff recommend award of the project to “thinc design”.

Staff Comment / Discussion:

About the Dundas Valley Study Area

New Master Plans and Management Plans are developed for HCA properties as part of the HCA 10 Year Master Plan Update Strategy, which was approved by the Board of Directors in 2019. As part of this Strategy, the HCA watershed is divided into seven study areas. The Dundas Valley Study Area will be the sixth study area undertaken. A map of the Dundas Valley Study Area is appended to this report. There are seven new Plans that will be developed within this study area:

1. Dundas Valley Conservation Area Master Plan

Dundas Valley is the largest conservation area within this study area, with all parcels combined reaching over 1200 hectares. This Master Plan will update and replace the 1997 Dundas Valley Conservation Area Master Plan ratified by MNRF.

2. Hamilton to Brantford Rail Trail Management Plan

The 32km trail runs from the east end of Brantford to the west side of Hamilton. This Plan will focus on the HCA owned and maintained 18km section between Jerseyville and Hamilton. This plan will update and replace the 1992 Toronto, Hamilton & Buffalo Railway Corridor Rail Trail Master Plan as well as the Rail Trail portion in the 1997 Dundas Valley Master Plan.

3. Iroquoia Heights Conservation Area Management Plan

This 88-hectare passive conservation area includes recreational trails and views of Lake Ontario and the Hamilton and Dundas areas. This plan will update and replace the 1993 Master Plan ratified by MNRF.

4. Lower Spencer Creek Conservation Area Management Plan (includes Canal Park)

Lower Spencer Creek is a 30-hectare natural area with one trail. This Management Plan will update and replace the 1997 Spencer Creek Watershed Management Plan and 2010 Lower Spencer Creek Subwatershed Stewardship Action Plan.

This Plan will also include Canal Park, which is a 1-hectare park with a looped trail and pavilion. The plan will incorporate background studies, development plans, capital project development and site management since it was acquired in 2008.

5. Meadowlands Conservation Area Management Plan

Meadowlands is a 38-hectare fragmented natural area with minimal recreational trails. It is located within a heavily developed residential area. This plan updates and replaces the 2012 Meadowlands Conservation Area Management Plan.

6. Summit Bog Conservation Lands Management Plan

Summit Bog is an approximately 10-hectare natural area located along the Hamilton to Brantford Rail Trail near its intersection with Highway 52. This new Management Plan updates and replaces the draft 1978 Summit Bog Master Plan, as well as the Summit Muskeg Preserve portion in the 1997 Dundas Valley Conservation Area Master Management Plan ratified by MNRF.

7. Tiffany Falls Conservation Area Management Plan

Tiffany Falls totals 18 hectares and includes a very popular day-use parking lot and trail to the base of a waterfall along Tiffany Creek. This Master Plan updates and replaces the Tiffany Falls sections of the 1997 Dundas Valley Conservation Area Master Plan.

Project Timeline and Scope of Work

In an effort to better manage the writing of seven Plans at one time, the properties will be divided into two Study Area Phases. Work on the Plans in Phase 1 will begin first. Once draft Plans have been created and are under review, work on the Phase 2 Plans will begin. Once complete, Phase 1 Plans will be brought to the Board for approval followed by the Phase 2 Plans.

<u>Phase 1</u>	<u>Phase 2</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Iroquoia Heights • Meadowlands • Lower Spencer Creek & Canal Park • Tiffany Falls 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dundas Valley • Hamilton to Brantford Rail Trail • Summit Bog

The preparation of HCA Master and Management Plans is typically divided into four Stages of work.

Stage 1 - Background Review and Preparation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Source and review background files and historical information • Begin creating maps and figures for each Plan • Provide a Memorandum to HCA Conservation Advisory Board
Stage 2 - New Information Gathering	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete ecological fieldwork • HCA staff working group workshops • Engagement with HCA staff and CAB via facilitated input sessions • External engagement begins with the public, stakeholders, agencies and Indigenous communities • Collect data with trail and vehicle counters
Stage 3 - Draft Document Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compile draft documents with all information gathered • Internal staff working group review and commenting on draft Plans • External review and commenting on draft Plans

Stage 4 - Final Document and Approvals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Editing and finalizing Plans • Presentation to Conservation Advisory Board for endorsement • Presentation to Board of Directors for approval • Applicable Plans sent to NEC and MNR for approval
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It is anticipated that the new Plans for this study area will be completed in 2028. The table below includes a timeline of milestones for completing these Master and Management Plans.

Fall 2025	Project start-up – Award project to Consultants, start-up meeting, begin New Information Gathering for Phase 1 properties.
Winter 2025	Phase 1 properties – Staff, public and stakeholder engagement begins
Spring 2026	Phase 2 properties – Staff, public and stakeholder engagement begins
Summer 2026	Phase 1 properties - Draft documents reviewed internally by HCA staff.
Winter/Spring 2027	Phase 2 properties - Draft documents reviewed internally by HCA staff.
Spring 2027	Phase 1 properties - External stakeholder review of the draft documents.
Summer/Fall 2027	Phase 1 properties - Report and presentation to the HCA Conservation Advisory Board and Board of Directors to approve the final drafts. Plans then sent to the NEC and MNR for endorsement and approval.
Fall 2027	Phase 2 properties - External stakeholder review of the draft documents.
Winter/Spring 2028	Phase 2 properties - Report and presentation to the HCA Conservation Advisory Board and Board of Directors to approve the final drafts. Plans then sent to the NEC and MNR for endorsement and approval.

To date, all Master and Management Plans as part of the HCA 10 Year Master Plan Update Strategy have been completed entirely in-house by HCA staff. Dundas Valley is the largest and most complex study area undertaken to date.

HCA staff and the selected Consultant will be working closely together on developing these Master and Management Plans. Some roles in developing the Plans will still be completed in-house by HCA staff, and some roles will become the responsibility of the Consultant. Below is a summary of the tasks the HCA and the Consultant will be responsible for:

Roles to be completed by HCA staff:

- All ecological fieldwork and writing about ecological findings and recommendations in the Plans.

- Reviewing internal background files for the properties and writing the background sections of the Plans.
- Writing the Site Concept and Financial sections of the Plans.
- Creating mapping and figures for the Plans.
- Developing capital budgets to include in the appendices of the Plans.
- Collecting data with trail and vehicle counters.
- Corporate communications through HCA website and social media.

Roles to be completed by the Consultant:

- Coordinating and facilitating all engagement with the following groups:
 - HCA staff and staff working group meetings
 - HCA Board of Directors and Conservation Advisory Board
 - The public
 - External stakeholder groups and agencies
 - Local Indigenous communities
- Managing and compiling the draft and final documents.
- Writing sections of the Plans including the Introduction, Executive Summary, Management Practices, Programming and Summary sections based on information gathered through consultation and information provided by HCA staff.
- Coordinating and managing internal and external review and commenting periods for the documents.
- Presenting final Plans to HCA Board of Directors and Conservation Advisory Board for approval.

Proposal Evaluation and Selection

Two proposals were received by the closing on September 17th at 1:00 p.m. A summary of the two proposals is included in the table below.

Company Name	Project Total excluding HST	Total Score by HCA Staff
thinc design	\$149,510.00	91 / 100
LURA Consulting	\$149,885.00	86.5 / 100

The proposals received were evaluated by HCA based upon the following criteria, which was included in the RFP package.

- Proposed Consulting Fees
- Relevant Consulting Team Experience
- Overall Project Understanding
- Ability to Meet Project Schedule

Following the evaluation, HCA staff recommend awarding the project to thinc design. thinc design is a landscape architecture, planning and urban design consulting practice

based in Toronto, Ontario. In their proposal, they have included a work plan to undertake all of the consultant roles outlined for the project within the budget allotted by HCA. The schedule that they have proposed meets the timeline put forward by HCA for completing these seven documents.

The team at thinc design specializes in municipal infrastructure projects, parks and recreation master plans and public realm projects. Through their proposal, they have provided examples of several projects similar to the Dundas Valley Master and Management Plans that they have completed. These include the Trent Lakes Open Spaces Master Plan, Design Guidelines for Trails in the York Regional Forest, The Kingston Waterfront Master Plan and Belle Park Master Plan. thinc design has extensive experience in developing master plans for natural areas and incorporating community, stakeholder and Indigenous engagement. Their team has created multi-year plans for both natural and urban areas with diverse user groups, recreational offerings and conservation in mind.

Strategic Plan Linkage:

The initiative refers directly to the HCA Strategic Plan 2025 – 2029:

- **Strategic Priority Area – Natural Heritage Conservation**

Initiative – Manage natural areas on HCA lands through monitoring, inventories, strategies and approved master and management plan recommendations to ensure enhancement of natural areas and ecosystems.

- **Strategic Priority Area – Organizational Excellence**

Initiative – Increase our engagement with First Nations Peoples to learn about and incorporate traditional knowledge in stewardship and teachings on the Treaty and traditional lands within the HCA watershed.

Initiative – Uphold our ties to federal, provincial, and municipal partners to work together to advance conservation efforts.

- **Strategic Priority Area – Connecting People to Nature**

Initiative – Manage and enhance conservation lands utilising best management practices to support nature appreciation and recreation activities, as communities continue to grow and look to HCA's conservation areas to spend time in nature.

Initiative – Continue development of master and management plans and implementation of priority capital reinvestments.

Agency Comments:

The properties to be reviewed for updated Master and Management Plans include lands in the watershed of the Grand River Conservation Authority, lands in the City of

Hamilton, and lands within the Niagara Escarpment Plan Area. These agencies will be consulted and circulated for comment during the draft plan review process.

The final Plans for lands within the Niagara Escarpment Plan Area including Dundas Valley Conservation Area, Iroquoia Heights Conservation Area, Tiffany Falls Conservation Area, Hamilton to Brantford Rail Trail and Summit Bog Conservation Lands will be sent for endorsement by the NEC and approval by MNR once they have been approved by the HCA Board of Directors.

Legal / Financial Implications:

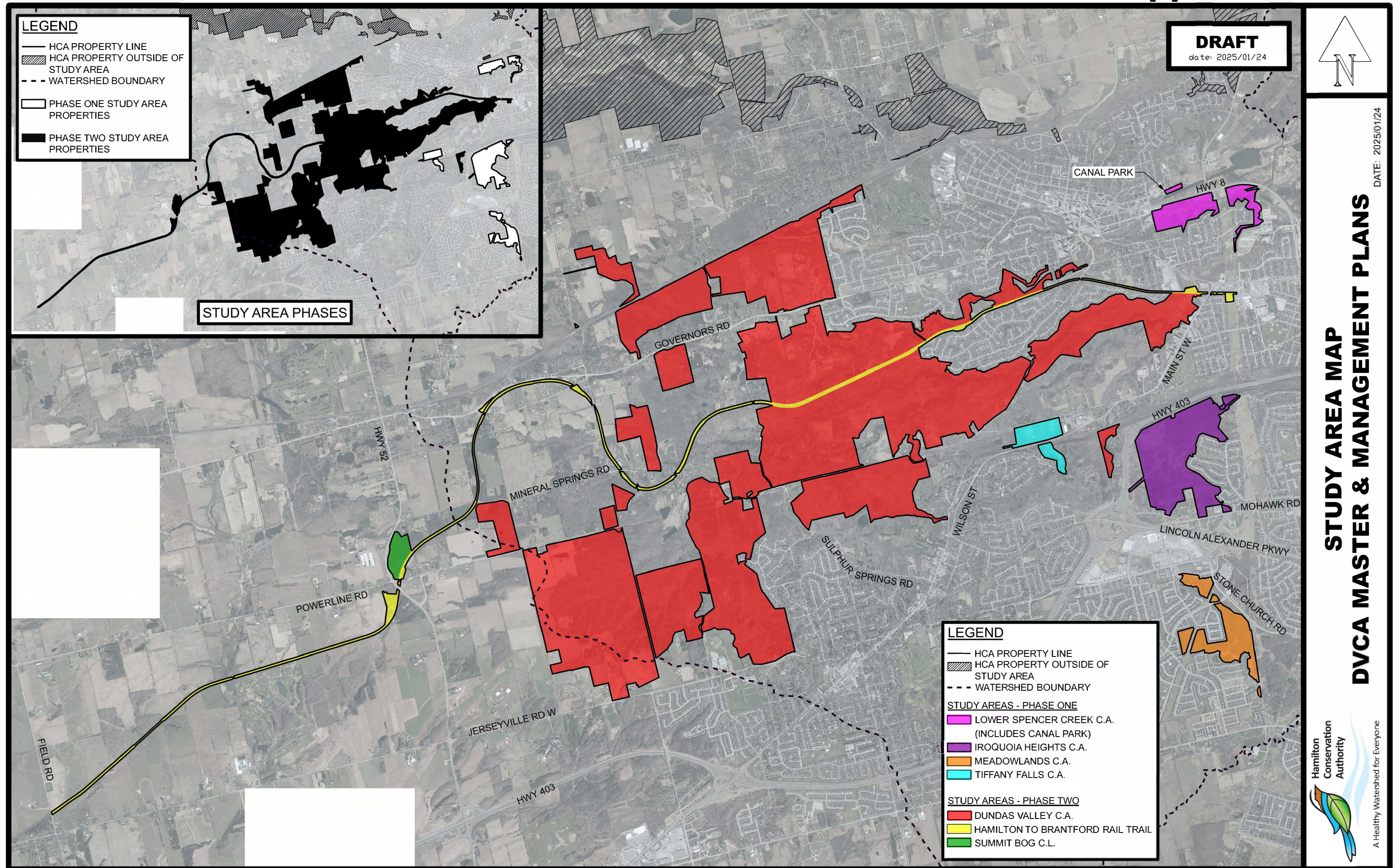
Sufficient funding for this work has been allocated within the HCA Capital and Major Maintenance Budget to begin work in 2025. Additional capital funding will be requested in 2026, 2027 and 2028 in order to complete all aspects of the scope of work.

In addition to the project total, a \$15,000 contingency, approximately 10% of the total, will be set aside to cover any unforeseen additions to the scope of the project.

Related Reports and Appendices:

Attachment A – Dundas Valley Study Area Map

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Report to: Board of Directors

**Approved for
Circulation By:** Lisa Burnside, CAO

**Reviewed By &
Prepared By:** Gord Costie, Director of Conservation Area Services

Meeting Date: October 2, 2025

Subject: Specific Agreement with the Haudenosaunee Wildlife and Habitat Committee

Recommendation:

THAT the Board of Directors approve the attached agreement allowing for a deer harvest in an area of Dundas Valley Conservation Area identified as Schedule 'A', and generally bounded by Martin Road to the east, Jerseyville Road to the south, Paddy Green Road to the west, and Powerline Road to the north and; identified as Schedule 'B' and generally bounded by 50 metres into HCA lands between Weir's Lane to the east, the CN rail line to the north, the lot line of private properties along the south and west only on weekdays excluding Fridays between November 3 and December 4, 2025, inclusive for 2025 and further,

THAT the agreement extends to 2026 and 2027 for the same locations only on weekdays excluding Fridays between November 2 to December 3, 2026 and November 1 to December 2, 2027 inclusive

Executive Summary:

The Hamilton Conservation Authority (HCA) Board of Directors at its meeting of November 3, 2011 authorized entering into an agreement with the Haudenosaunee Wildlife and Habitat Authority now known as the Haudenosaunee Wildlife and Habitat Committee (HWHC), to establish a protocol for recognizing the Treaty Rights of the Haudenosaunee respecting deer harvesting on HCA owned lands. The protocol continues in place. At the same meeting, the Board of Directors authorized entering into a Specific Agreement in the west end of the Dundas Valley Conservation Area. The specific agreement is recommended on a three-year cycle based on the ongoing relationship with the HWHC and with the field experience of the deer harvest since 2011.

This report details the proposed specific agreement to allow deer harvesting in the west end of the DVCA for the 2025 season and additionally for the 2026 and 2027 seasons

Staff Comment / Discussion:

As a result of discussions between HWHC members and HCA staff, the specific agreement (attached) allows for deer harvesting in the Dundas Valley Conservation Area in two locations.

This agreement is an extension to the previous Board approved three-year agreement 2022 – 2024, providing for the taking of up to 60 deer, notification to Hamilton Police Services and Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry officials and notification to the public and trail closures.

Strategic Plan Linkage:

The initiative refers directly to the HCA Strategic Plan 2025 - 2029:

- **Strategic Priority Area – Organizational Excellence**
 - Initiatives – Identify our engagement with First Nations Peoples to learn about and incorporate traditional knowledge in stewardship and teachings on the Treaty and traditional lands within the HCA watershed

Agency Comments:

Not applicable

Legal / Financial Implications:

Not applicable

Related Reports and Appendices:

HWHC Specific Agreement

Protocol between the WWHC and HCA

Specific Agreement HWHC Deer Harvest 2025 - 2027

BETWEEN THE HAMILTON CONSERVATION AUTHORITY, HEREAFTER KNOWN AS "HCA," AND
HAUDENOSAUNEE WILDLIFE AND HABITAT COMMITTEE, HEREAFTER KNOWN AS "HWHC."

The above parties agree to the following terms and conditions for the facilitation of a deer harvest within the specified areas illustrated on the attached two maps, Schedule "A" and Schedule "B" only of Dundas Valley Conservation Area (DVCA), which is administered by HCA.

This agreement is consistent with Haudenosaunee treaty rights, the HCA land acknowledgement, and remains in alignment with our shared standards of safety and conservation.

This agreement is to be read jointly with the Protocol made between the HWHC and the HCA on November 3, 2011, as attached in *Appendix A*.

THE HCA AGREES TO:

Provide access with no fee for HWHC members participating in the deer harvest for the 2025, 2026, and 2027 harvest seasons as outlined in this agreement in Schedules "A" and "B" within the Dundas Valley Conservation Area as attached in *Appendix B*.

HWHC Deer Harvest Dates as scheduled, Monday – Thursday only:

1. Monday, November 3, 2025, to Thursday, December 4, 2025
2. Monday, November 2, 2026, to Thursday, December 3, 2026
3. Monday, November 1, 2027, to Thursday, December 2, 2027

THE HWHC AGREES TO:

1. HWHC will continue to provide deer harvest communication with all harvesters and provide a final tally or best estimate of the number of deer harvested at the completion of the harvest each year.
2. For the 2025, 2026, and 2027 deer harvest seasons, the number of deer harvested from the areas identified in Schedules "A" and "B" combined shall not exceed sixty deer in each calendar year.
3. Deer harvesting will only take place on Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays. No deer harvesting will be permitted on Fridays, Saturdays, or Sundays.

4. The HCA and HWHC will monitor the deer harvest area perimeter and remain in consistent contact throughout the deer harvest period.
5. Haudenosaunee harvesters will use archery equipment, including compound bows and crossbows. Firearms, rifles, and shotguns will not be used. The use of dogs, feed bait, or jack-lighting is prohibited. Harvesting before dawn or after dark will not be permitted, as per the sunrise/sunset tables for the harvest areas.

PUBLIC SAFETY AND COMMUNICATION

THE HCA WILL:

1. Contact the Hamilton Police Service, Hamilton Municipal Law Enforcement, and the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources to inform them of the intent and provisions of this agreement and secure their cooperation in ensuring public and harvester safety.
2. Hold a Task Agency meeting within two weeks prior to the deer harvest commencement for each year of the agreement.
3. Use the "Conservation Alert and Trail Closure Protocol" approved by its Board on February 3, 2011, as a basis for informing the public about the deer harvest.
4. Ensure public notification of the "Trail Closure" that will include:
 - a) A media release to local media sources
 - b) Notification to the HCA Board, City Council, and the Office of the City Manager of Hamilton via a written media release.
 - c) Notices to landowners adjacent to the harvest area, including contact details for HCA staff, the Ministry of Natural Resources, and the Hamilton Police Service.
 - d) Posting of "Public Notice of Trail Closure" on the HCA website.
 - e) Posting of "Public Notice of Trail Closure" at the Dundas Valley Conservation Area gatehouse and main trail entry points utilized during the deer harvest.

TERMS AND CONDITIONS

1. This agreement witnesses that HWHC and all persons associated with the harvest will comply with all HCA instructions and regulations concerning its activities within the designated areas.
2. The HCA, its members, staff, or other designated persons reserve the right to enter the designated property at any time for inspection, maintenance or other purposes.
3. The HCA is not responsible for any personal injury or loss or damage to personal property that occurs during the participation in the deer harvest on HCA property. This includes any loss resulting from external factors such as weather conditions affecting the feasibility of deer harvesting.

For HWHC:

Print Name: Aggrey Jacob KAYNEEN W DEGUNDODDEM
PAUL WILLIAMS BRIAN SKYE

Signature: [Signature] [Signature] [Signature]

Date: Sept 24, 2025

For HCA:

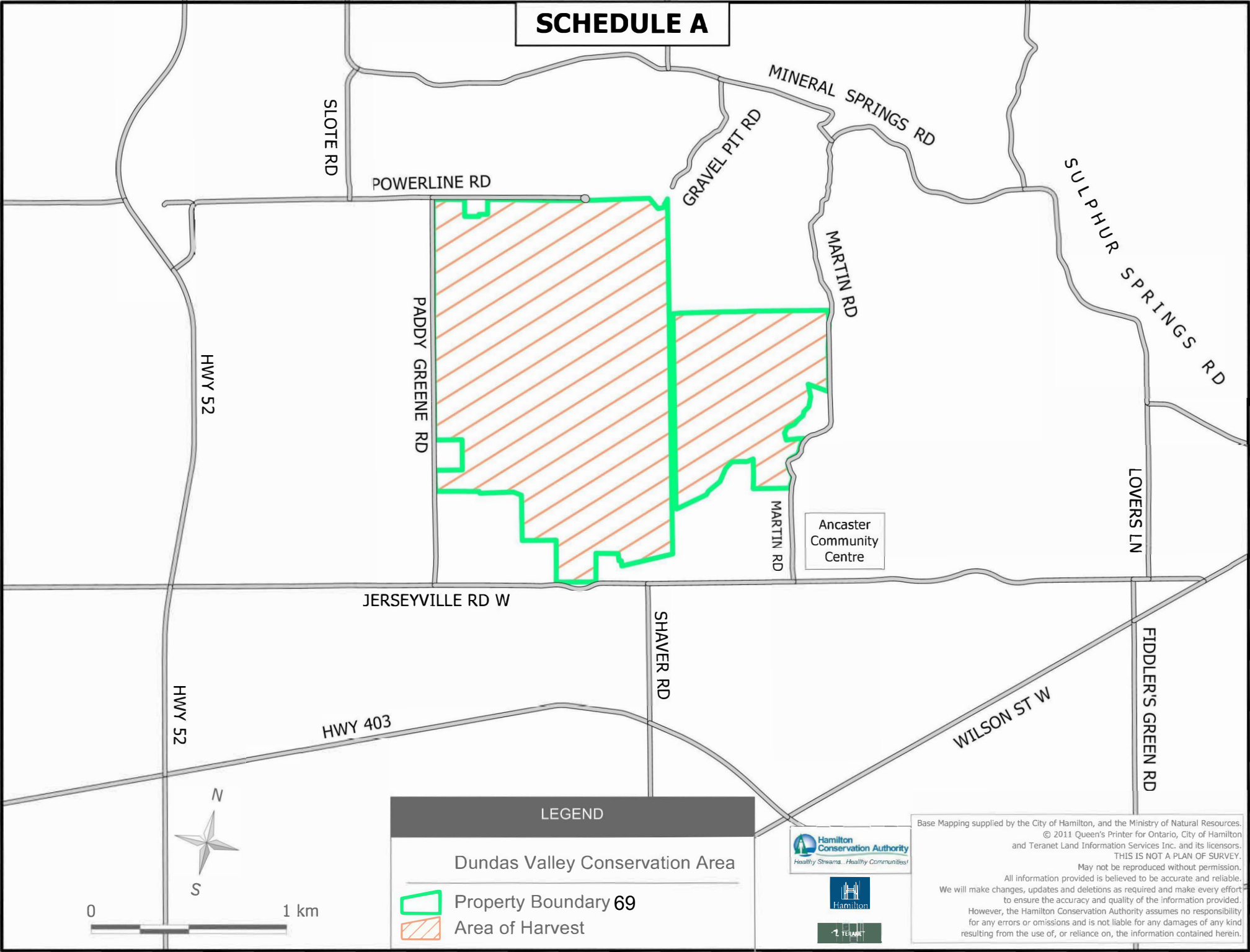
Print Name: Lisa Burnside

Signature: Lisa Burnside

Date: September 24, 2025

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SCHEDULE A



LEGEND

Dundas Valley Conservation Area



Property Boundary 69

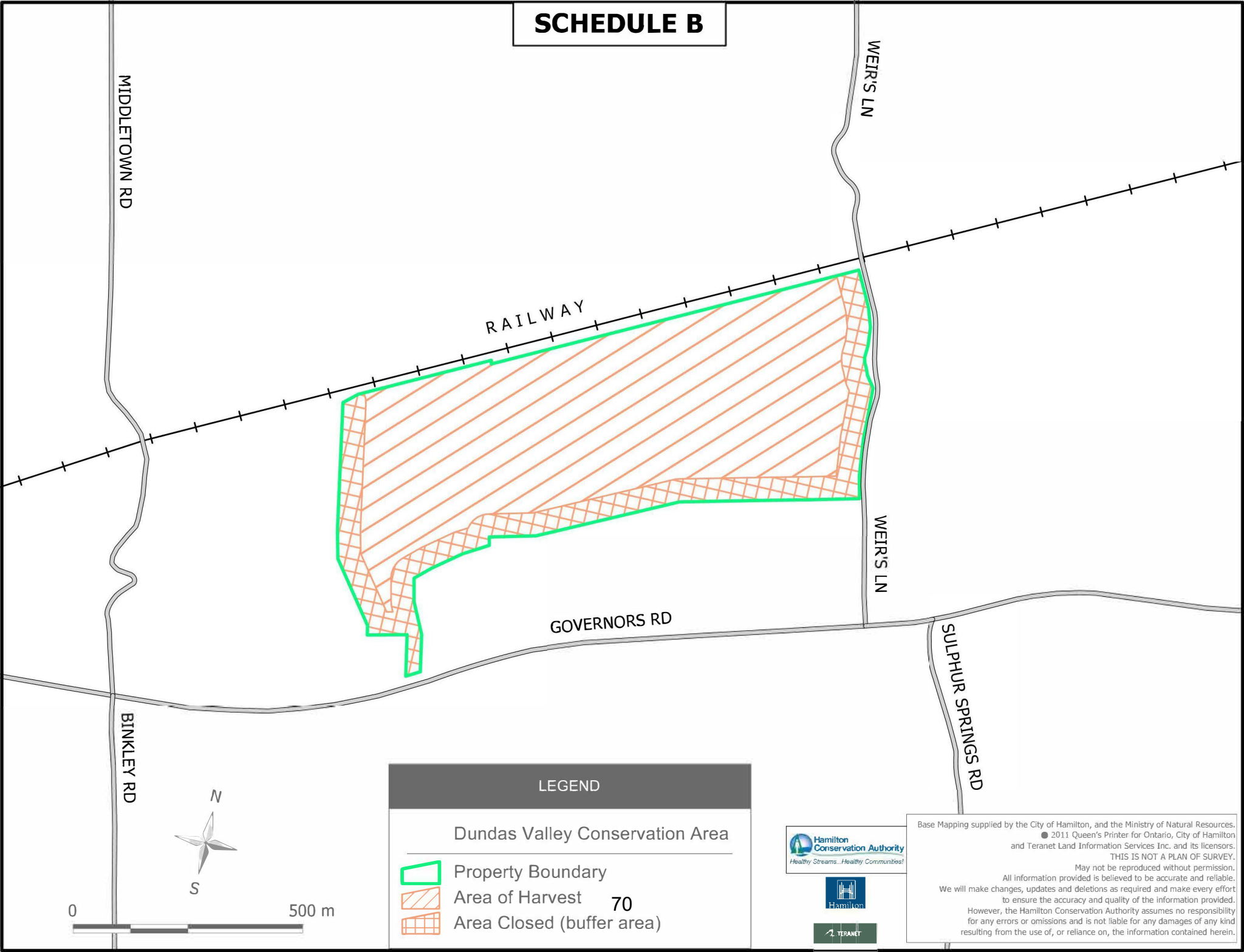


Area of Harvest






Base Mapping supplied by the City of Hamilton, and the Ministry of Natural Resources.
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 However, the Hamilton Conservation Authority assumes no responsibility
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SCHEDULE B



LEGEND

Dundas Valley Conservation Area

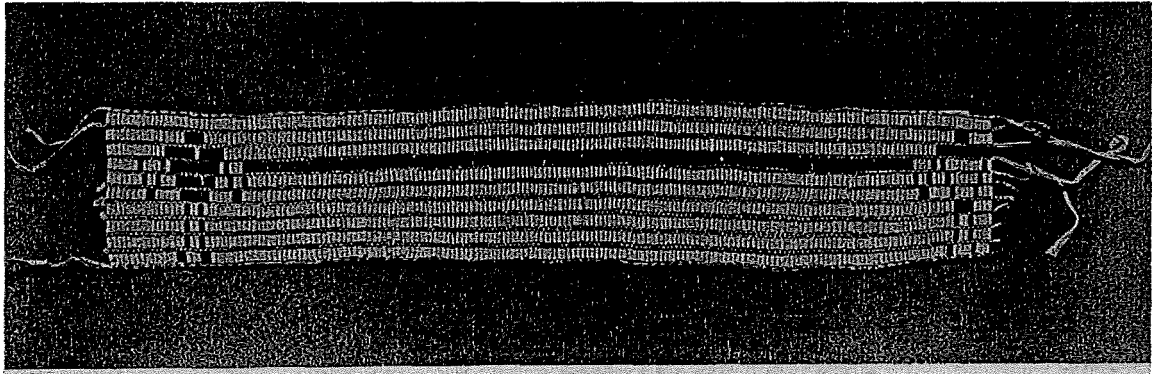
-  Property Boundary
-  Area of Harvest 70
-  Area Closed (buffer area)



Base Mapping supplied by the City of Hamilton, and the Ministry of Natural Resources.
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**Protocol Between
The Haudenosaunee Wildlife and Habitat Authority and
The Hamilton Conservation Authority**

The Haudenosaunee and the Crown have maintained a treaty relationship, symbolized by the Silver Covenant Chain, for over three centuries. In a context of peace, the principles governing that relationship are respect, trust and friendship.



This protocol is not a treaty, but it is made in the spirit of those principles. In this protocol, “we” means the Haudenosaunee Wildlife and Habitat Authority and the Hamilton Conservation Authority.

The Hamilton Conservation Authority carries stewardship of a number of conservation areas.

In 1701, the Haudenosaunee and the Crown made a treaty at Albany that provided that the Crown would respect Haudenosaunee rights in the Beaver Hunting Ground, which includes the lands now held by the Hamilton Conservation Authority.

Our mutual objectives in this protocol are intended to be consistent with the principles expressed in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

The Haudenosaunee and the Hamilton Conservation Authority share basic values and objectives that enable and encourage them to enter into this protocol. We agree that, as human beings, we have a responsibility to protect, maintain and restore the natural world, not only for our own future generations, but for its own sake. We share a responsibility to protect our home ecosystems from invasive plants and animals. We recognize that people are responsible to obey the laws of their nations. Our attitude toward creation is one of gratitude and humility.

Haudenosaunee rights to gather, harvest and use parts of the natural world are recognized by treaties between the Haudenosaunee and the Crown. This protocol reflects our commitment to the implementation of those rights in a way that respects conservation, protects public safety, and fosters our mutual respect, trust and friendship. We recognize that with rights come responsibilities.

In early September of each year this protocol is in effect, we will meet to discuss the state of the ecosystems in the conservation areas. Our discussion will include evaluation of the deer populations of each area and, where those exceed the capacity of the area's ecosystem to maintain its balance, or will permit a sustainable harvest, the discussion will include consideration of a joint approach to reducing the deer population. We may agree to conduct a count or evaluation of the state and numbers of a deer population together. We will also discuss steps to ensure that endangered or threatened species and cultural or historic features are not injured. As a matter of policy, our decisions will be governed by respect for ecosystems rather than by human desires.

Specific agreements shall provide more detailed provisions in respect of each conservation area involved. These agreements may include descriptions of areas affected; identification of hunting methods; harvesting dates; objectives for harvesting; monitoring for diseases; and reporting and evaluation.

Traditionally, the Haudenosaunee take deer each year during a period determined by natural occurrences. The season begins when the strawberry leaves turn brown; when the sumac leaves change colour; or with the first killing frost. The season ends with the Midwinter ceremonies, when the Seven Dancers, the Pleiades, are directly overhead.

Within sixty days after the end of Midwinter ceremonies, we will meet again to discuss how our collaboration is working.

Deer taken under the aegis of this protocol will be used by the Haudenosaunee for midwinter ceremonies; for food for elders; and for food for families. Other parts of the deer, including the skin, hooves and antlers, may be used for traditional crafts, which may be sold.

The Haudenosaunee avoid wasting any parts of animals. Deer taken under the aegis of this protocol will be removed without undue delay. Deer gut piles will be buried in shallow pits where raccoons, foxes and other predators will have an opportunity to find and eat them.

Where a conservation area borders on privately held land, the Haudenosaunee will conduct their activities pursuant to this protocol more than 150 metres away from the border of the conservation area, unless they have agreed otherwise with the landholder. Firearms will not be used where it is unsafe to do so. Specific agreements will address hunting methods.

Within conservation areas, Haudenosaunee will take deer only with bows and shotguns, using tree stands and blinds wherever possible. Best efforts will be made to take deer humanely, to avoid inflicting prolonged suffering. Where a deer is wounded, the hunter's responsibility is to track the deer and kill it humanely.

The Haudenosaunee will not take deer at night. However, they may set up their stands and blinds before sunrise, and may track wounded animals after sunset.

When a deer is taken under this protocol, the person taking the deer will inspect the deer for ticks, and if ticks are found, will take samples of them and submit the samples to a member of the Haudenosaunee Wildlife and Habitat Authority. The Haudenosaunee, either on their own or in conjunction with the Conservation Authority, may send deer heads for testing for Chronic Wasting Disease and other diseases. We will share information gathered in this way.

Public safety is an important value that we share. Where a conservation area is subject to intensive public use, any deer removal pursuant to this protocol will be conducted at times when such areas, or designated parts of them, are closed to the public by the Conservation Authority. Where conservation areas are not intensively used, we will take steps to warn the public, and where possible, to exclude the public, during specific times Haudenosaunee will take deer.

In some cases, for reasons of conservation or safety, it may be inappropriate or inadvisable to remove deer from a conservation area, and in such cases, we may jointly seek to discourage Haudenosaunee hunters from taking deer in those areas.

As a result of our evaluations of deer populations, and our discussions in September, we will seek to identify sustainable harvests of deer with respect to each conservation area. Where that number of deer has been reached in any conservation area, the Haudenosaunee will seek to discontinue the taking of deer there.

We will work together to ensure that police and other law enforcement agencies are informed of this protocol and of activities pursuant to it. We will collaborate with them to address safety concerns in specific agreements.

Haudenosaunee individuals entering conservation areas under this protocol will carry identification which will show their Haudenosaunee nationality, and will show this identification to Conservation Authority staff or police on request.

Where the Conservation Authority becomes aware of incidents in which it is alleged that Haudenosaunee individuals have engaged in activities that violate this protocol, it will report those incidents to the Haudenosaunee, who will look into the matters and will take steps to address them. The Haudenosaunee, in implementing this protocol, will make their best efforts to ensure that these matters are fully addressed and dealt with appropriately.

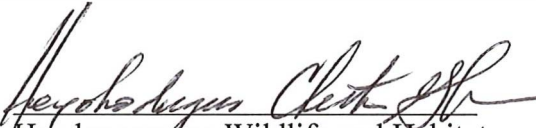
Haudenosaunee gathering, harvesting and use of fish and plants in areas under the stewardship of the Conservation Authority may become the subject of future specific agreements.

If a matter arises that is of concern to either of us, we will meet as soon as possible to seek to resolve the matter. In some difficult situations, we may want to seek the help of an independent mediator.

We are human beings, and we have done our best to make an agreement that will work well for ourselves, our people and the ecosystems we are responsible to respect, protect, restore and maintain. We recognize that, as humans, we are likely to make mistakes, and where we can improve this protocol and remedy those mistakes, we are committed to working together to that end. This protocol amends and replaces the one signed in November, 2011.

Signed at Hamilton and at the Six Nations Grand River Territory this 13th day of June, 2013.


Chief Administrative Officer
Hamilton Conservation Authority


Haudenosaunee Wildlife and Habitat
Authority


Haudenosaunee Wildlife and Habitat
Authority


Haudenosaunee Wildlife and Habitat
Authority



Memorandum to: Board of Directors

Approved for Circulation By: Lisa Burnside, CAO

Reviewed By: T. Scott Peck, MCIP, RPP, Deputy CAO/Director, Watershed Management Services

Prepared By: Jonathan Bastien, P. Eng., Manager, Water Resources Engineering

Meeting Date: October 2nd, 2025

Subject: Watershed Conditions Memorandum

Executive Summary:

During the period of August 20th to September 23rd 2025, there were no significant watercourse flooding events, no significant watercourse water safety concerns, and no Lake Ontario shoreline flooding events.

There are no observations, reports, or expectations that significant watercourse flooding, localized watercourse flooding of low-lying areas that typically flood during higher water levels, or significant water safety concerns are occurring at this time. Current flows are near baseflow conditions to slightly elevated but well below thresholds for significant water safety concerns.

The average monthly flows for September so far have ranged between significantly below long-term averages to well below long-term averages. August average recorded flows similarly ranged between significantly below long-term averages to below long-term averages. July average recorded flows ranged between well below long-term averages to significantly above long-term averages.

There are no observations, reports, or expectations that significant Lake Ontario shoreline flooding is occurring at this time. The Lake Ontario mean daily water level averaged across the entire lake is 6 cm below average for this time of year, as of yesterday.

Christie Lake levels are currently slightly below preferred summer operating levels. Valens Lake levels are currently within preferred summer operating levels.

The most recent drought assessment indicated that Level 1 Low Water Conditions are an appropriate overall characterization of the watershed at this time. Given the time of year

and the fact that this is the first recent assessment to indicate Level 1 Low Water Conditions, HCA staff have deferred notifying the Low Water Response Team to suggest declaration and will reassess conditions at the beginning of October.

There are currently two potentially significant rainfall events forecasted for the watershed over the next 2 weeks. HCA staff continue to monitor conditions and forecasts routinely, and will issue flood messages as appropriate. At this time, resultant water levels and flows from currently forecasted rain are not expected to result in significant watercourse flooding. There are currently no significant Lake Ontario shoreline flooding forecasted for the HCA Lake Ontario shoreline over the next 2 weeks. HCA staff will continue to undertake monthly drought assessments, and coordinate with the Hamilton Low Water Response Team if drought conditions warrant actions.

Staff Comment / Discussion:

CURRENT WATERSHED CONDITIONS – September 23rd, 2025

Current Flows in Major Area Watercourses

There are no observations, reports, or expectations that significant watercourse flooding, localized watercourse flooding of low-lying areas that typically flood during higher water levels, or significant water safety concerns are occurring at this time.

Current flows are near baseflow conditions to slightly elevated but well below 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 flows for September so far have ranged between significantly below long-term averages to well below long-term averages. Monthly flow in Upper Spencer Creek at Safari Road has been 29% of long-term averages (considered significantly below average). Monthly flow in Middle Spencer Creek at Highway 5 has been 17% (considered significantly below average). Monthly flow in Lower Spencer Creek at Market Street has been 19% (considered significantly below average). Monthly flow in Ancaster Creek at Wilson Street has been 51% (considered well below average). Monthly flow in Red Hill Creek at Barton Street has been 29% (considered significantly below average).

August average recorded flows ranged between significantly below long-term averages to below long-term averages. Monthly flow in Upper Spencer Creek at Safari Road was 41% of long-term averages (considered well below average). Monthly flow in Middle Spencer Creek at Highway 5 was 18% (considered significantly below average). Monthly flow in Lower Spencer Creek at Market Street was 30% (considered significantly below average). Monthly flow in Ancaster Creek at Wilson Street was 61% (considered below average). Monthly flow in Red Hill Creek at Barton Street was 48% (considered well below average).

July average recorded flows ranged between well below long-term averages to significantly above long-term averages. Monthly flow in Upper Spencer Creek at Safari

Road was 323% of long-term averages (considered significantly above average). Monthly flow in Middle Spencer Creek at Highway 5 was 140% (considered above average). Monthly flow in Lower Spencer Creek at Market Street was 194% (considered well above average). Monthly flow in Ancaster Creek at Wilson Street was 57% (considered below average). Monthly flow in Red Hill Creek at Barton Street was 44% (considered well below average). The precipitation amounts recorded at the streamflow gauges do not explain the considerable variations in average monthly recorded flows. It is therefore expected that the considerable variations in average monthly recorded flows are likely due to significant differences in local rainfall and thunderstorms received in the ungauged areas upstream of each streamflow gauge. Also, a late June rain storm in the Upper Spencer Creek area resulted in significantly increased flows at all three Spencer Creek gauges into early July.

Current Lake Ontario Water Levels

There are no observations, reports, or expectations that significant Lake Ontario shoreline flooding is occurring at this time. The Lake Ontario mean daily water level in the Hamilton area was 74.75 m IGLD85 as of yesterday. The Lake Ontario mean daily water level averaged across the entire lake (74.69 m IGLD85 as of yesterday) is 6 cm below average for this time of year.

Current Storages in HCA Reservoirs

Christie Lake levels (770.73 ft) are currently slightly below preferred summer operating levels (771.00 to 771.50 ft).

Valens Lake levels (275.26 m) are currently within preferred summer operating levels (275.25 to 275.45 m).

Current Soil Conditions

Surface and root-zone soils are considered moist to saturated across the watershed.

RECENT STORM EVENTS

During the period of August 20th to September 23rd 2025, there were no significant watercourse flooding events, no significant watercourse water safety concerns, and no Lake Ontario shoreline flooding events.

RECENT WATERSHED LOW WATER CONDITIONS

The most recent drought assessment (including data up to August 31) indicated that Level 1 Low Water Conditions are an appropriate overall characterization of the watershed at this time. Given the time of year and the fact that this is the first recent assessment to

indicate Level 1 Low Water Conditions, HCA staff have deferred notifying the Low Water Response Team to suggest declaration and will reassess conditions at the beginning of October.

FORECASTED WATERSHED CONDITIONS

Watercourse Flooding

There are currently two potentially significant rainfall events (+20 mm in a day, on both September 24th and 25th) forecasted for the watershed over the next 2 weeks. HCA staff continue to monitor conditions and forecasts routinely, and will issue flood messages as appropriate. At this time, resultant water levels and flows from currently forecasted rain are not expected to result in significant watercourse flooding.

Lake Ontario Shoreline Flooding

There are currently no significant Lake Ontario shoreline flooding forecasted for the HCA Lake Ontario shoreline over the next 2 weeks.

Watershed Low Water Conditions

HCA staff will continue to undertake monthly drought assessments, and coordinate with the Hamilton Low Water Response Team if drought conditions warrant actions.

Memorandum to: Board of Directors

Approved for Circulation By: Lisa Burnside, CAO

Reviewed By: Gord Costie, Director, Conservation Area Services

Prepared By: Liam Fletcher, Senior Manager, Conservation Area Services

Meeting Date: October 2, 2025

Subject: Conservation Area Services Update

Executive Summary:

Conservation areas are well-prepared for a busy fall season. Strong attendance is anticipated over Thanksgiving weekend, supported by continued demand for camping at Valens Lake and seasonal camping at Fifty Point.

Spencer Gorge remains a popular destination for fall colours, with the online reservation system beginning September 27, 2025 to November 9, 2025. Westfield Heritage Village will host its annual Witches' Halloween Party on October 25–26, offering family-friendly activities and entertainment.

Staff Comment / Discussion:

- Thanksgiving Weekend – All of our major conservation areas and parking lots will be open and ready to welcome the many visitors across the watershed for fall colours. Camping and cabin rentals at Valens Lake continue to perform strong into the fall shoulder seasons. After a great summer, seasonal campers at Fifty Point will wrap up at the end of the month. Attendance figures over the long weekend are anticipated to remain positive, as we finish out the operating season on a strong note.
- Christie Lake Conservation Area – New wayfinding signs have arrived at Christie Lake, Spencer Gorge and Crooks Hollow! These new signs make it easier for visitors to know where they are, what to expect and where to go next. Welcome signs are located at trailheads and entrance points. They

include maps of the area, trail details, area rules and safety tips. A standard rating system has also been introduced to indicate trail difficulty. Directional posts have been added at intersections along the trails to help visitors navigate the trail system. Upgrading wayfinding signage at conservation areas began in 2024 at the Eramosa Karst and will be rolled out to more conservation areas in the next few years.

- Spencer Gorge Conservation Area – Webster and Tew falls remains a top destination for picturesque views of the Gorge in fall colours. The online reservation system opened on September 27 for visitors to book their two-hour reservation through the HCA website. Visitors also have the option of reserving both hiking experiences with one 4-hour reservation. Staff will continue to monitor visitation levels to ensure a seamless transition out of the reservation service.

New for 2025, visitors can enhance their experience by using [HCA's new trail app, Talking Forest](#). Learn fascinating details about local wildlife, ecology, history, and geology as you explore Spencer Gorge. The area also features new trailhead and wayfinding signage, which provide information about the area and its features, and help visitors better navigate the trails.

- Westfield Heritage Village – Westfield Heritage Village will be hosting a Witches' Halloween Party on Saturday October 25 and Sunday October 26, 2025 from 10 am to 4 pm. Visitors can create special Halloween crafts, ride the tractor, attend the School of Wizardry or launch Pumpkins with the famous pumpkin slinger. For those who dare, the haunted house and Railway Station will offer spine-tingling experiences. Visitors are encouraged to dress up in their witch, wizard and Halloween costumes. Food and drinks will be provided on site by the Copetown Lions club. Reservations for the event are required and can be made online at the HCA website.