



Board of Directors Meeting Agenda

Thursday December 4, 2025

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Board of Directors Meeting

Thursday, December 4, 2025 at 6:00 p.m.

Hamilton Conservation Authority is now conducting meetings in a hybrid format via an 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

– Brad Clark

1.1. Land Acknowledgement

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 – November 6, 2025 | Page 5 |
| 5.3. Approval of Board of Directors Minutes – Special Meeting, November 25, 2025 | Page 15 |
| 5.4. Approved – September 18, 2025 Budget & Administration Committee Minutes – for receipt only | Page 19 |
| 5.5. Correspondence regarding Bill 68/ ERO Notice 025-1257 related to amendments to the Conservation Authorities Act, items labeled a to e. | Page 23 |

6. Foundation Briefing

Foundation Chair – André Chabot

7. Member Briefing

7.1. Saltfleet Conservation Area Wetland Project – Progress Update – Scott Peck

8. Business Arising from the Minutes

8.1. Motion in response to Bill 68/ERO from HCA Board of Directors – Brad Clark Page 47

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

9.1. Budget & Administration Committee – November 20 ,2025 – Susan Fielding
(Recommendations)

9.1.1. BA 2541 HCA Reserves Policy Page 49

9.1.2. BA 2542 Project Technical Advisory Committee – Insurance Coverage 2026
Page 65

10. Other Staff Reports/Memorandums

Reports to be approved

10.1. Final HCA 2026 Budget Approval – Lisa Burnside Page 69

Memorandums to be received

10.2. Watershed Conditions Report – Jonathan Bastien Page 103

10.3. Conservation Areas Experiences – Brandon Good Page 109

11. New Business

12. In-Camera Items

12.1. Confidential Report – BD/Dec 01-2025
(Personnel Matter)

12.2 Confidential Memorandum – BD/Dec 02-2025
(Land matter)

12.3 Confidential Memorandum – BD/Dec 03-2025
(Legal matter)

13. Next Meeting – Thursday, February 5, 2026 at 6:00 p.m.

14. Adjournment

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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: December 4, 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 October 25, 2025 – November 21, 2025 are summarized in the following Permit Applications Summary Report (PASR-9/25).

Recommendation:

THAT the Board of Directors receive this Permit Application Summary Report PASR-9/25 as information.

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HAMILTON REGION CONSERVATION AUTHORITY

PERMIT APPLICATION SUMMARY REPORT (PASR 9/25)

HCA permit applications approved under the Conservation Authorities Act and Ontario Regulation 41/24 between the dates of October 25, 2025 - November 21, 2025

File Number	Date Received	Date Permit Issued	Review Days	Applicant Name	Location	Application Description	Recommendation / Conditions
SC/F,C,A/25/50	16-Jul-25	27-Oct-25	77		19 Lakegate Dr Lot 22, Concession BF Stoney Creek	for the construction of shore protection, inground swimming pool, and covered porch	Approved subject to standard conditions.
F/F,A/25/79	08-Oct-25	29-Oct-25	23		413 Highway 8 Lot 33, Concession 2 Flamborough	for site alteration and placement of fill	Approved subject to standard conditions.
F/F,C,A/25/69	25-Sep-25	29-Oct-25	19		ROW adjacent to 153 Valley Rd Lot 22, Concession 2 Flamborough	for the temporary remediation of a slope failure	Approved subject to standard conditions.
F/A/25/78	27-Aug-25	30-Oct-25	66		619 Centre Rd Lot 8, Concession 4 Flamborough	for the alteration of an existing culvert	Approved subject to standard conditions.
A/F/25/59	07-Jul-25	13-Nov-25	75		786 Stone Church Rd Lot 54, Concession 3 Ancaster	for site alteration, filling and grading	Approved subject to standard conditions.
H/F,C,A/25/80	20-Oct-25	19-Nov-25	20		1964-1968 Main St W Lot 53, Concession 1 Hamilton	for the replacement of a culvert	Approved subject to standard conditions.
F/F,C/25/83	13-Nov-25	19-Nov-25	23		1283 Concession 5W Lot 32, Concession 9 Flamborough	for the construction of an addition to an existing farm storage building	Approved subject to standard conditions.

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Hamilton Region Conservation Authority

Minutes

Board of Directors Meeting

November 6, 2025

Minutes of the Board of Directors meeting held on Thursday, November 6, 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 **Elise Copps**
 Lisa DiCesare **Susan Fielding**
 Wayne Terryberry **Alex Wilson**

André Chabot – Foundation Chair

REGRETS: **Jeff Beattie, Matt Francis, Mike Spadafora and Maureen Wilson**

STAFF PRESENT: **Madolyn Armstrong, Nancy Arnold, Jonathan Bastien, Lisa Burnside, Gord Costie, Marlene Ferreira, Scott Fleming, Liam Fletcher, Rob Gray, Matt Hall, Amanda Martin, Stacey McConnell, Scott Peck, Mike Stone, Jaime Tellier, Stacey Van Opstal, Sandra Winninger**

OTHERS: **Joey Coleman**

1. Call to Order

The Chair called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone present. HCA's Indigenous Land Acknowledgement was read.

Councillor Clark welcomed Elise Copps, a new citizen representative, to the Board of Directors. He indicated that Elise was appointed by the City of Hamilton, filling the position vacated by Brian McHattie. Elise was also a current citizen member of the Conservation Advisory Board.

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. Lisa Burnside advised that two addendums were circulated: a report regarding a tender award to repair the Mineral Springs Detention Facility, which will be addressed under Other Staff Reports/Memoranda, as item 10.3 on the agenda and, an HCA website news item regarding the provincial announcement from October 31, 2025. This will appear under New Business, item, 11.1.

BD12, 3546

MOVED BY: Craig Cassar

SECONDED BY: Wayne Terryberry

THAT the agenda be approved, as amended.

CARRIED

4. Delegations

There were none.

5. Consent Items for Applications, Minutes and Correspondence

The following consent items were adopted:

- 5.1. Permit Applications Summary Report
- 5.2. Approval of Board of Directors Minutes – October 2, 2025
- 5.3. Approved – June 12, 2025 Conservation Advisory Board Minutes – for receipt only
- 5.4. Correspondence from City of Hamilton, Office of the Mayor with respect to 2026 Budget Directive
- 5.5. Correspondence from the City of Hamilton, Office of the Mayor with respect to Mayoral Directive to Staff

6. Foundation Briefing

André Chabot, Chair of the Conservation Foundation, reported that that between

October 1st to 31st, the Foundation received \$93,084 in donations. This brings the fiscal year-to-date fundraising total to \$1,094,440 (29% above fundraising goal of \$847,300).

This month, some gift highlights include:

- \$50,000 from an individual donor in support of the Outdoor Education program
- \$10,000 from Trans Canada Trail in support of the Basadinaa Project
- \$7,900 through the TD Friends of the Environment Foundation in support of new interpretative signage at Saltfleet Conservation Area
- \$1,527 in donations through CAMIS system; the best month yet, in large part due to reservations made for fall colours.
- Donations in response to our fall direct mail appeal are starting to trickle in. We've received just over \$2,000 in donations so far.

Earlier this month, the Foundation supported a volunteer tree planting event at the Eramosa Karst Conservation Area. A total of 440 native trees and shrubs were planted by 18 volunteers. Trees were purchased through donations made to the Foundation's Plantings Fund.

BD12, 3547

**MOVED BY: Lisa DiCesare
SECONDED BY: Elise Copps**

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. Conservation Advisory Board – October 9, 2025
(Recommendations)

9.1.1 CA2522 – HCA's Planning and Regulations Policies Update

Wayne Terryberry provided an overview of the staff report. Mike Stone provided additional details for members, noting the document was revised to reflect the changes to the regulations of the Conservation Authorities Act, which took effect April 1, 2024 as well as providing direction to staff when reviewing Permit and land use applications.

BD12, 3548

**MOVED BY: Wayne Terryberry
SECONDED BY: Elise Copps**

**THAT the Conservation Advisory Board
recommends to the Board of Directors;**

**THAT the *Policies for Land Use Planning and
Development Regulation in the Watersheds of the
Hamilton Conservation Authority (September 2025)*
be adopted.**

CARRIED

**9.1.2 CA2523 – Final Eramosa Karst Conservation Area Master Plan and
Chippawa Rail Trail Management Plan for Approval**

Wayne Terryberry brought forward the staff report and indicated that the Conservation Advisory Board was given a detailed review of the process used to create the plans. The two plans have undergone both an internal and external review and will guide the respective conservation areas, including operations and capital works planned for the next ten years.

BD12, 3549

**MOVED BY: Wayne Terryberry
SECONDED BY: Susan Fielding**

**THAT the Conservation Advisory Board
recommends to the Board of Directors;**

**THAT this report and accompanying Master and
Management Plans of September 2025 be received
as information for project background and general
understanding;**

and further

**THAT the Eramosa Karst Conservation Area
Master Plan and Chippawa Rail Trail Management
Plan of September 2025 be approved.**

CARRIED

9.1.3 CA 2524 – Water Resources Engineering Monitoring Network – Review and Enhancements

Wayne Terryberry provided an overview of the staff report noting the review was undertaken as part of the Year 1 Strategic Plan initiative to identify priority enhancements needed to update the Water Resources Monitoring Network. Included in the upgrades are the servers and software, gauge data loggers and expanding the monitoring network.

BD12, 3550

**MOVED BY: Wayne Terryberry
SECONDED BY: Elise Copps**

**THAT the Conservation Advisory Board
recommends to the Board of Directors;**

**THAT the *Water Resources Engineering
Monitoring Network - Review and Enhancements*
staff report be adopted.**

CARRIED

10. Other Staff Reports/Memoranda

10.1. Watershed Conditions Report

Jonathan Bastien presented a summary of the memorandum, noting that September 23rd to October 27th 2025, there were no significant watercourse flooding events, no significant watercourse water safety concerns, and no Lake Ontario shoreline flooding events. Three additional items were noted since the report was written:

- Valens reservoir is at winter level but Christie is being drawn down more slowly to support salmon spawning in Spencer Creek;
- Data suggests that Level 1 drought conditions exist but the response is being deferred due to less demand for water from the agricultural sector and the increase in precipitation that normally occurs in November and December; conditions will be reevaluated in the Spring.
- A storm event is being predicted for November 9th with potential wave levels reaching 2 metres for shoreline of Lake Ontario; messaging will be circulated if warranted.

BD12, 3551

**MOVED BY: Lisa DiCesare
SECONDED BY: Wayne Terryberry**

**THAT the memorandum entitled Watershed Conditions
Report be received.**

CARRIED**10.2. Conservation Areas Services Update**

Liam Fletcher provided a summary of the memorandum highlighting events within the conservation areas, including:

- The Road 2 Hope race that occurred at Confederation Beach Park on the first weekend in November, welcoming 4,600 participants
- Conclusion of the reservation system on November 9th at Spencer Gorge
- The continuation of the annual deer harvest by the Haudenosaunee in the Dundas Valley
- A successful Halloween program at Westfield Heritage Village, welcoming 2,700 visitors over the weekend.

BD12, 3552**MOVED BY: Elise Copps****SECONDED BY: Lisa DiCesare**

THAT the memorandum entitled Conservation Areas Services Update be received.

CARRIED**10.3 Request to Award Tender – Slope Slump Repair at Mineral Springs Detention Facility**

Scott Peck brought forward the staff report to request a tender award to repair the slope slump for the Mineral Springs Detention Facility, located on the Sulphur Creek crossing with Martin Road, Ancaster, to C.R.L. Campbell Construction & Drainage Ltd. be accepted at a cost not to exceed \$ 164,377.33. The Mineral Springs Detention Facility was constructed by HCA as a flood control project in 1992 under an agreement indicating that the City of Hamilton is responsible for ongoing maintenance and repairs. Discussion with City staff have confirmed the City will reimburse HCA for repair costs.

BD12, 3553**MOVED BY: Lisa DiCesare****SECONDED BY: Susan Fielding**

THAT the Tender for the Slope Slump Repair of Mineral Springs Detention Facility submitted by C.R.L. Campbell Construction & Drainage Ltd. be accepted at a cost not to exceed \$ 164,377.33 inclusive of contingency and HST;

THAT Watershed Management Services reserves be utilized to pay for the slope slump repair of the Mineral Springs Detention Facility for a total of \$164,377.33; and further

THAT HCA staff be directed to continue to work with the City of Hamilton regarding reimbursement of the costs of this project per the Mineral Springs Detention Facility agreement between the HCA and the City of Hamilton (Town of Ancaster).

CARRIED

11. New Business

11.1. HCA acknowledges new provincial conservation agency – website announcement

Lisa Burnside shared the media information piece which will be posted on HCA's website. Lisa advised of the following:

- On October 31, Environment Minister Todd McCarthy and Hassaan Basit, Chief Conservation Executive, announced the Government of Ontario's intention to introduce amendments to establish a new agency called the Ontario Provincial Conservation Agency, to provide leadership, governance, and strategic direction for Ontario's Conservation Authorities.
- Additionally, the Province is proposing consolidation of Conservation Authorities from 36 down to several regional entities.
- The Province plans to introduce legislation soon, with a 45-day public consultation period on the ERO.
- Implementation of changes is anticipated to take place in late 2026 to 2027, following current municipal election cycles.
- It's business as usual and we await full details of the proposed amendments and remain committed to watershed protection and the continued delivery of all programs and services at the local level without interruption.
- As noted in the MECP media release, under the leadership of the new agency, conservation authorities will continue to deliver existing programs such as protecting people and property from natural hazards, drinking water source protection and the management of lands and recreational trails, including public access to local natural areas, as well as other recreational and educational activities.

- We look forward to engaging with the Province, Conservation Ontario, and other stakeholders through the upcoming consultation process following the ERO release.

Members discussed the proposed changes announced by the Province, expressing concern regarding how these changes would affect conservation authorities and, specifically, the HCA. One area of concern was the potential loss of addressing local issues. Following discussion, it was agreed that a special board meeting, with the HCA's lawyer in attendance, to review the details of the proposal as well as to discuss HCA's response to the proposal.

BD12, 3554

MOVED BY: Craig Cassar

SECONDED BY: Lisa DiCesare

THAT the HCA Website News Item be received.

CARRIED

12. In-Camera Items

BD12,3555

MOVED BY: Susan Fielding

SECONDED BY: Lisa DiCesare

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

CARRIED

During the *in-camera* session, one Land matter was discussed.

12.1. Confidential Report – BD/Nov 01-2025

Scott Peck provided a summary of the report regarding a land matter and answered the members' questions.

BD12, 3556

MOVED BY: Craig Cassar

SECONDED BY: Lisa DiCesare

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

CARRIED

BD12, 3557

MOVED BY: Susan Fielding

SECONDED BY: Elise Copps

THAT the Board of Directors moves out of closed session.

CARRIED

13. Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Board of Directors will be held on Thursday, December 4, 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

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Hamilton Region Conservation Authority

Minutes

Special Meeting

Board of Directors

November 25, 2025

Minutes of the Board of Directors meeting held on Tuesday November 25, 2025 at 2:00 p.m., at the HCA main office, 838 Mineral Springs Road, in Ancaster, and livestreamed on YouTube.

PRESENT:	Brad Clark – in the Chair Jeff Beattie Elise Copps Susan Fielding Mike Spadafora Alex Wilson	Craig Cassar Lisa DiCesare Matt Francis Wayne Terryberry Maureen Wilson
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REGRETS:

STAFF PRESENT: Lisa Burnside, Gord Costie, Marlene Ferreira, Scott Fleming, Liam Fletcher, Brandon Good, Rob Gray, Matt Hall, Kristine Leach, Amanda Martin, Scott Peck, Mike Stone, Jaime Tellier, Sandra Winner

OTHERS: Jordan Diacur (Gowlings WLG); Mac Christie (media)

1. Call to Order

The Chair called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone present. HCA's Indigenous Land Acknowledgement was read.

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 indicated an Addendum regarding correspondence received was circulated and will be addressed under item number 3, as 3.1.

BD12, 3558

MOVED BY: Craig Cassar

SECONDED BY: Jeff Beattie

THAT the agenda be approved, as amended.

CARRIED

3.1 Correspondence to be received:

3.1.1 United Counties of Stormont, Dundas & Glengarry – Counties Resolution Conservation Authorities, dated November 17, 2025

3.1.2 Essex Region Conservation – Letter re: Resolution 90-25(Bill 68 and ERO Posting 025-1257, dated November 19, 2025

3.1.3 Niagara This Week – Conservation authority chairs question proposed mergers, dated November 21, 2025

BD12, 3559

MOVED BY: Susan Fielding

SECONDED BY: Lisa DiCesare

THAT the correspondence circulated be received

CARRIED

4. Member Briefing

4.1. Overview of MECP November 18, 2025 presentation

Lisa Burnside provided an overview of the presentation that was made to conservation authorities and municipalities by the Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks (MECP), that highlighted the changes to the Conservation Authorities Act, including the creation of the Ontario Provincial Conservation Agency through Bill 68 and proposal for regional consolidation of conservation Authorities on the Environmental Registry. The ERO is open for comment until December 22, 2025.

Members discussed the changes announced by the Province, expressing concern regarding how these would affect the conservation authorities and, specifically, the HCA. It was noted that HCA already delivers efficient, coordinated local services. Areas of concerns were numerous including:

- That limited information has been provided to justify the proposed restructuring;
- The proposed model would shift governance away from the municipalities that created and fund conservation authorities, resulting in a significant loss of local decision-making and community accountability; what affect it would have on staff's ability respond to local issues and/or flooding events;
- Impact on HCA land holdings and ensuring that they remain protected for future generations;
- The future role of the Foundation in the new model.

5. In Camera Items

BD12, 3560

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

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

CARRIED

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

5.1. Confidential Discussion – BD/Nov 02-2025

Legal Council was present to guide the discussion and provide legal opinions with respect to Bill 68 and the ERO proposal.

BD12, 3561

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

THAT the Board of Directors moves out of closed session.

CARRIED

6. Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Board of Directors will be held on Thursday, December 4, 2025 at 6:00 p.m. at the HCA Main Administration Office – Woodend Auditorium, 838 Mineral Springs Road, Ancaster, Ontario.

7. Adjournment

On motion, the meeting adjourned.

Scott Fleming
Secretary-Treasurer

Hamilton Conservation Authority

Minutes

Budget & Administration Committee

September 18, 2025

Minutes of the Budget & Administration Committee meeting held on Thursday, September 18, 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
Alex Wilson
Maureen Wilson

Regrets: Lisa DiCesare

Staff Present: Lisa Burnside, Marlene Ferreira, Scott Fleming, Liam Fletcher, Brandon Good, Rob Gray, Matt Hall, Amanda Martin, Stacey McConnell, Scott Peck, 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 2534**MOVED BY: Alex Wilson
SECONDED BY: Brad Clark****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 –
August 21, 2025

6. Business Arising from the Minutes

There was none.

7. Staff Reports/Memoranda

Reports to be approved

7.1. Draft 2026 Operating and Capital Budgets

Scott Fleming brought forward the staff report, indicating the proposed 2026 operational budget focuses on maintaining programs and services that began in 2025, as part of the Year One priorities of the HCA's Strategic Plan. This is in addition to aligning with HCA's regulatory requirements. The operational budget is balanced through the use of \$1.8 million in self-generated revenues, to be achieved through the expanded campground at Valens' Lake, modest increase of fees at conservation areas in addition to a 3.3% increase in Levy.

The 2026 proposed budget also includes the Board approved special funding request from the City of Hamilton in the amount of \$500,00 for the HCA's land acquisition program. This long-term plan will help protect and expand natural areas within the watershed. Land parcels to be considered will connect or create natural linkages with current HCA lands.

Matt Hall presented the draft 2026 capital budget, highlighting new as well as major maintenance projects planned for 2026. He noted that these projects will be accomplished through the \$2 million block funding from the City of Hamilton. Improvements to the conservation areas include Marina Chancel dredging at Fifty Point; boardwalk replacements at Valens Lake as well as way-finding sign improvements in the Dundas Valley and floodplain mapping updates. The finalization of the design for the third Saltfleet wetland is planned for 2026, the funding of which will be drawn from the \$500,000 Saltfleet reserve.

In response to questions regarding the reserve funds, Scott Fleming indicated that that money in HCA reserves is used exclusively for the purpose for which they were created. He also noted that Board of Director's approval is required prior to using any money from the reserves.

Further discussion occurred on the amount of self generated HCA money has been used for land acquisition. Staff direction was given to provide specific information on how recent land acquisitions were funded for the upcoming budget meetings with the City of Hamilton.

BA 2535

MOVED BY: Alex Wilson

SECONDED BY: Maureen Wilson

**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**

CARRIED

7.2. External Audit Serviced – Request for Proposals Results

Scott Fleming brought forward the staff report indicating that the current contract for the services of external auditors has concluded. A Request for Proposal was issued to qualified firms to provide these services for the fiscal years from 2025 to 2029. Following evaluation of the proposals, staff recommended that the contract be awarded to KPMG LLP for \$341,330 for the 5-year period. It was noted that KPMG LLP had the lowest cost proposal in addition to demonstrating their strong qualifications and experience in working with conservation authorities.

BA 2536

MOVED BY: Brad Clark

SECONDED BY: Maureen Wilson

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.

CARRIED

8. New Business

8.1. Bylaw review with respect to Board member resignation of citizen Brian McHattie

Lisa Burnside indicated that a review of HCA's administrative Bylaws confirms that the HCA is to request a replacement through the municipality from which the Board member was appointed.

Staff direction was provided to notify the City of Hamilton clerk of the vacancy for a citizen member.

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

There was none.

10. Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Budget and Administration Committee will be held on Thursday, October 16, 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.



TOWNSHIP OF O'CONNOR

330 Highway 595, R.R. #1, Kakabeka Falls, Ontario P0T 1W0
 Tel. (807) 476-1451 Fax (807) 473-0891
 E-Mail - twpoconn@tbaytel.net www.oconnortownship.ca

Mayor
 Jim Vezina

Clerk-Treasurer
 Lorna Buob

Councillors
 Alex Crane
 Brendan Rea
 John Sobolka
 Carly Torkkeli

November 26, 2025

Honourable Todd McCarthy
 Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks
 Macdonald Block Mailing Facility
 77 Wellesley St W, 11th Fl
 Toronto, ON
 M7A 1N3

minister.mepc@ontario.ca

Dear Minister McCarthy:

Council, at their meeting held on November 24, 2025, passed a resolution calling on the Government of Ontario to maintain local, independent, municipally governed, water-shed conservation authorities. The Township of O'Connor is opposed to the proposed Huron-Superior Regional Conservation Authority boundary configuration outlined in the Environmental Registry Notice 025-1257.

I have enclosed a copy of the resolution for your consideration and trust you will give it your full consideration and support.

Yours truly

Lorna Buob
 Clerk-Treasurer

Encl.

Cc: Kevin Holland, MPP – Thunder Bay – Atikokan kevin.holland@pc.ola.gc.ca
 Lise Vaugeois, MPP, Thunder Bay – Superior North LVaugeois-QP@ndp.on.ca
 Marcus Powlowski, MP – Thunder Bay – Rainy River marcus.powlowski@parl.gc.ca
 Hon. Patty Hajdu – MP Thunder Bay – Superior North patty.hajdu@parl.gc.ca
 Association of Municipalities of Ontario amo@amo.on.ca
 Conservation Ontario bfox@conservationontario.ca
 Lakehead Region Conservation Authority tammy@lakeheadca.com
 All local municipalities
 All Conservation Authorities in Ontario

TOWNSHIP OF O'CONNOR
R. R. #1 KAKABEKA FALLS, ONTARIO POT 1W0

NOVEMBER 24, 2025 NO. 10

Moved by J. Sobolta

Seconded by C. Torkkeli

WHEREAS the Conservation Authorities Act (1946) enables municipalities to establish local conservation authorities, and when municipalities choose to form such authorities, they assume responsibility for governance and funding through the appointment of a Board of Directors and the provision of an annual levy to cover expenses;

AND WHEREAS the municipalities within Lakehead Region established the Neebing Valley Conservation Authority in 1954 which enlarged to the Lakehead Region Conservation Authority (LRCA) in 1963;

AND WHEREAS local municipalities currently provide approximately 50% of total conservation authority funding, while the Province of Ontario provides approximately 5%;

AND WHEREAS municipalities have governed their respective conservation authorities for decades, tailoring programs and services to local watershed needs, maintaining accountable service standards, and ensuring fair and predictable costs for ratepayers;

AND WHEREAS conservation authorities collectively own and manage thousands of hectares of land, much of which was donated by local residents and entrusted to conservation authorities as a personal legacy for long-term protection, stewardship, and the public good, with the expectation that such lands would be cared for by locally governed conservation authorities;

AND WHEREAS Bill 68 (Schedule 3) proposes the creation of the Ontario Provincial Conservation Agency, a Crown corporation that would assume governance responsibilities and consolidate Ontario's 36 conservation authorities into seven regional authorities, with municipal cost apportionment yet to be defined;

AND WHEREAS the Province already possesses the authority to establish overarching legislation, regulations, and standards through the Conservation Authorities Act and the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Township of O'Connor calls on the Government of Ontario to maintain local, independent, municipally governed, watershed-based conservation authorities to ensure strong local representation in decisions related to municipal levies, community-focused service delivery, and the protection and management of conservation lands;

AND THAT while the supports provincial goals for consistent permit approval processes, shared services, and digital modernization, imposing a new top-down agency structure

without strong local accountability and governance risks creating unnecessary cost, red tape, and bureaucracy, thereby undermining efficiency and responsiveness to local community needs;

AND THAT the Township of O'Connor supports efforts to balance expertise, capacity, and program delivery across the province, and requests that the Province work collaboratively with municipalities and local conservation authorities to determine the most effective level of strategic consolidation to achieve both provincial and local objectives;

AND THAT the Township of O'Connor is opposed to the proposed "Huron-Superior Regional Conservation Authority" boundary configuration outlined in Environmental Registry Notice 025-1257;

AND THAT the Township of O'Connor recommends that the Lakehead Region Conservation Authority form the "Northwestern Ontario Regional Conservation Authority";

AND THAT the Ministry engage directly with affected municipalities of the Lakehead Region Conservation Authority, before finalizing any consolidation boundaries or legislative amendments;

AND THAT a copy of this resolution be forwarded to the Environmental Registry of Ontario consultations and to:

- the Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks and his Opposition critics;
- local Members of Provincial Parliament;
- local Members of Parliament;
- the Association of Municipalities of Ontario;
- Conservation Ontario;
- All local municipalities; and
- All Conservation Authorities in Ontario.

J. Vezina

MAYOR

CERTIFIED TRUE COPY
TOWNSHIP OF O'CONNOR



CARRIED



DEFEATED

RECORDED VOTE

ALEX CRANE



BRENDAN REA



JOHN SOBOLTA



Lana Buob

CLERK-TREASURER

CARLY TORKKELI



JIM VEZINA



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November 26, 2025

Re: Bill 68 - Proposed New Ontario Provincial Conservation Agency and ERO #025-1257

Adelaide Metcalfe

Bluelwater

Central Huron

Huron East

Lambton Shores

Lucan Biddulph

Middlesex Centre

North Middlesex

Perth South

South Huron

Warwick

West Perth

On October 31, 2025, the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks (MECP) circulated a media release “Ontario Creating New Conservation Authority Agency to Improve Service Delivery and Protect Communities”.

On November 6, 2025, Bill 68, Plan to Protect Ontario Act (Budget Measures), 2025 (No. 2) introduced changes to the Conservation Authorities Act enabling the creation of the Ontario Provincial Conservation Agency (OPCA). As proposed, the OPCA will be tasked with the streamlining and standardization of more consistent service delivery by setting provincewide standards and supporting those standards through improved tools, platforms and resources. The OPCA would be further tasked with overseeing the consolidation of the 36 Conservation Authorities (CAs), into 7 Regional Conservation Authorities.

On Friday, November 7th, the MECP posted Environmental Registry Notice No. 025-1257 (“Proposed Boundaries for the Regional Consolidation of Ontario’s Conservation Authorities”), the ERO posting remains open for public comment for a total of 45 days until December 22, 2025 at 11:59 p.m.

Under this proposal, the Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority (ABCA) would be merged into a new proposed “Huron-Superior Regional Conservation Authority” together with the Maitland Valley CA, Saugeen Valley CA, Grey Sauble CA, Nottawasaga Valley CA, Lake Simcoe Region CA and the Lakehead Region CA (Thunder Bay), which will include 80 municipalities across the proposed region.

The ABCA (formerly the Ausable River Conservation Authority) was the first CA created almost 80 years ago by local municipalities, to provide local management of water, soils and natural environments within its rural watershed.

Watershed-based management, which is the founding principal of CA boundaries, is recognized internationally as the most effective means of balancing environmental, economic, and societal needs across the landscape. The watershed model is most

effective when implemented at a scale that is reflective of the local landscape and economic drivers. Watershed management, supported by strong local governance, breaks down boundaries, and provides a framework to work collaboratively to meet the needs of the community, and the environment. This framework, and strong local governance and support has led to 80 years of effective, and efficient watershed management.

The ABCA recognizes and supports the province's desired outcome of improved consistency and modernized digital permitting processes, aligned with its goals and objectives for cutting red tape and getting more homes built faster, and safely. However, as an alternative to the proposed large-scale regional consolidation, the ABCA encourages the Province to achieve their goals and objectives by building on the proven strengths and relationships of local CAs and its umbrella organization, Conservation Ontario.

The current framework provides the opportunity to share resources, improve consistency and modernization across the province, without the potential costs associated with amalgamating the 36 CAs into 7 regions. The ABCA encourages a more geographically coherent, cost-effective and locally accountable alternative through engagement with directly affected municipalities and CAs across Southwestern Ontario before finalizing any consolidation boundaries.

Further, any modernization of CAs through tools and consolidation should be supported with Provincial funding. In recent years, the average annual funding from the Province to ABCA's annual operations amounts to 1% of our total budget. Member municipalities fund approximately 30% of ABCA's budget. The remainder of our budget is funded primarily through partnerships and self generated revenue.

The ABCA Board of Directors, consisting of 9 Members who represent 12 municipalities, have unanimously expressed concern regarding effective local representation if CAs are amalgamated into larger regions. Under the current framework, our member municipalities have direct input into our local programs and services. The programs are delivered efficiently and effectively by knowledgeable staff in partnership with the community to meet our local environmental, economical and societal needs.

There is a significant amount of uncertainty with this proposal. To date, very few details regarding planned governance structure, local input, representation, budgeting, and CA assets have been shared. The ABCA is one of many CAs that has a supporting, charitable foundation, and clarity is needed around the future relationships with their partner CAs.

The ABCA Board of Directors encourages the MECP undertake a fulsome consultation process with both CAs, as well as municipalities before any decisions and changes are made as a result of the Province's proposal.

Attached is a resolution passed by the ABCA Board of Directors at their meeting held on November 20, 2025. The ABCA also encourages all partners to review the posting [ERO #025-1257 Proposed boundaries for the regional consolidation of Ontario's Conservation Authorities](#), and submit comments well in advance of the closing date of December 22, 2025.

For further information, please contact me by email through our office at info@abca.ca.

Sincerely,
AUSABLE BAYFIELD CONSERVATION AUTHORITY



Ray Chartrand
Chair

Encl.: ABCA Board Resolution #BD 80/25, November 20, 2025

Cc: The Honourable Todd McCarthy, Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks
The Conservation Authorities Office, Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks
Hassan Bassit, Ontario's Chief Conservation Executive
Local Members of Provincial Parliament: The Honourable Lisa Thompson, Huron-Bruce, Minister of Rural Affairs; Steve Pinsonneault, Lambton-Kent-Middlesex; Matthew Rae, Perth-Wellington
Local Members of Parliament: Ben Lobb, Huron-Bruce; Lianne Rood, Middlesex-London; John Nater, Perth-Wellington
Local Municipalities and Counties
The Association of Municipalities of Ontario, and the Rural Ontario Municipal Association
The Ausable Bayfield Conservation Foundation
Conservation Ontario and All Conservation Authorities in Ontario

AUSABLE BAYFIELD CONSERVATION AUTHORITY**RESOLUTION #BD 80/25, November 20, 2025****Moved by Wayne Shipley****Seconded by David Jewitt**

WHEREAS the Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority (ABCA) Board of Directors acknowledges and supports the Province's goals of improved efficiency of watershed management, through the implementation of digital applications and permitting system, consistent policies, flood standards, fees, and technology; and

WHEREAS consistent policies, and resources across the existing Conservation Authorities boundaries could be achieved through direction and tools such as technical guidelines provided by the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks; or Conservation Ontario; and

WHEREAS Conservation Authorities are locally based, grassroots organizations formed by municipal governments in response to the challenges posed by a changing landscape; especially, the increased exposure to flooding and erosion hazards and the resulting risks to lives and property. In the case of ABCA, this vision has proved a successful model for 80 years; and

WHEREAS the ABCA, with the guidance and support of our 12 Member Municipalities, demonstrates fiscal prudence in conservation delivery, ensuring stable growth through stable funding. ABCA has successfully leveraged funding to support programs and services that are locally important and are driven by community engagement through ABCA's Conservation Strategy and the Watershed Based Resource Management Strategy; and

WHEREAS Conservation Authorities across the Province operate efficiently by working in close partnership with approximately eight Member Municipalities for every one conservation authority. This structure enables resources to be directed toward on-the-ground initiatives that advance our mandate while addressing local community needs, achieving an effective balance in scale, management and service delivery; and

WHEREAS plans to regionalize conservation authorities through consolidation would dilute local accountability and municipal partnership and is contrary to the basic principle that decisions are best made closest to the communities they affect. Effective representation by municipal partners remains core to the success of conservation authorities. The ABCA, while not unique among conservation authorities in this respect, is effective in working with our community to support sustainable development, and keeping communities safe; and

WHEREAS being front-line means being responsive and accountable to the community by delivering the services that are essential and valued to the best interest of the community. The

front line of provincial priorities on housing, the economy, infrastructure, and climate resilience are in the decisions between municipalities working together to address issues around floodplain (and hazard) protection and resilient upland and landscape management. Further, ABCA staff and Board Members are responsive and accountable to the needs of the watershed community, while meeting or exceeding provincial service standards, and are reachable through publicly available contact information. Local governance and direction combined with local service provision allows ABCA to continue to be responsive to our community; and

WHEREAS consolidation will result in substantial transition costs, not the least of which is time. In all facets, that would divert resources from front-line service delivery and delay desired outcomes. Further, the loss of local watershed knowledge and community relationships will add greater uncertainty, loss of trust, and delay for our watershed residents. This includes the agricultural community, businesses, builders, developers, and our municipal partners that seek timely and effective local advice, which is provided through local pre-consultation; and

WHEREAS a proposed regional watershed would create a geographically vast and administratively complex organization when joining northern municipalities with those that are rural, such as ABCA, where agriculture is the main economic driver. The differences are distinguishable between the Lake Superior and Georgian Bay watersheds to those in Southwestern Ontario on the shores of Lake Huron. The ABCA serves Southwestern Ontario agricultural communities facing vastly different geographies, climate, and infrastructure realities which would be ill-served by a broad regional administrative structure. This would be considerably worse if local offices do not remain available and accountable to its membership, partners and the communities they serve.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED:

THAT the Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority Board of Directors does not support the proposed “Huron-Superior Regional Conservation Authority” boundary configuration as outlined in Environmental Registry Notice 025-1257; and

FURTHER THAT meaningful modernization can occur within the current watershed-based governance framework; and

FURTHER THAT the ABCA Board endorses further provincial evaluation of a more focused specific model as a geographically coherent, cost-effective and locally accountable alternative that advances the government’s priorities of efficiency, red-tape reduction and timely home construction; and

FURTHER THAT the Board asks that the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks engage directly with affected municipalities and conservation authorities across Southwestern Ontario through a working group before finalizing any consolidation boundaries or legislative amendments; and

FURTHER THAT a forthcoming ERO response at the approval of the ABCA Board be forwarded to the Environmental Registry of Ontario consultations; and

FURTHER THAT a letter from the Chair containing this resolution, and ERO response, be forwarded to:

- the Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks and his Opposition critics,
- the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks (CA Office),
- Ontario's Chief Conservation Executive,
- local Members of Provincial Parliament,
- local Members of Parliament,
- Local Municipalities and Counties,
- The Association of Municipalities of Ontario, and the Rural Ontario Municipal Association,
- Ausable Bayfield Conservation Foundation, and
- Conservation Ontario and all Conservation Authorities in Ontario.

Carried.



CATFISH CREEK CONSERVATION AUTHORITY

8079 Springwater Road, RR# 5, Aylmer, Ontario N5H 2R4

PHONE: (519) 773-9037 • FAX: 519-765-1489

e-mail: admin@catfishcreek.ca • www.catfishcreek.ca

Re: Resolution (Bill 68 and ERO Posting 025-1257)

On October 31, 2025, the Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks (MECP) released a media statement titled “Ontario Creating New Conservation Authority Agency to Improve Service Delivery and Protect Communities,” announcing the Province’s intention to establish a new, board-governed Ontario Provincial Conservation Agency “[Ontario Creating New Conservation Authority Agency to Improve Service Delivery and Protect Communities | Ontario Newsroom](#)”. This new agency is expected to provide leadership, governance, and strategic oversight to all Conservation Authorities (CAs) across Ontario. The announcement was made without prior consultation with Conservation Authorities—including the Catfish Creek Conservation Authority (CCCA)—or with the watershed experts, municipal partners, and staff who possess decades of local, on-the-ground knowledge. For a watershed the size of Catfish Creek, which relies heavily on close local partnerships, this absence of engagement raises significant concerns about transparency and informed decision-making.

Shortly after this announcement, on November 6, 2025, the government introduced Bill 68, Plan to Protect Ontario Act (Budget Measures), 2025 (No. 2) “[Bill 68, Plan to Protect Ontario Act \(Budget Measures\), 2025 \(No. 2\) - Legislative Assembly of Ontario](#)”. The bill passed First Reading and is expected to move quickly through the Legislature, with enactment anticipated in early December 2025. Schedule 3 of Bill 68 proposes amendments to the Conservation Authorities Act to formally create the Ontario Provincial Conservation Agency, outlining its objects, governance structure, and funding model. For a smaller watershed authority like CCCA, these proposed changes represent substantial structural and operational shifts, the impacts of which have not yet been fully articulated by the Province.

On November 7, 2025, the MECP posted Environmental Registry of Ontario (ERO) posting #025-1257, Proposed boundaries for the regional consolidation of Ontario’s Conservation Authorities, with a public commenting period running to December 22, 2025 “[Proposed boundaries for the regional consolidation of Ontario’s conservation authorities | Environmental Registry of Ontario](#)”. This proposal reduces Ontario’s 36 Conservation Authorities to seven large regional entities. As a watershed-based agency, CCCA’s jurisdiction is defined by ecological and hydrological boundaries rather than municipal borders. The proposed regional map places Catfish Creek into an extremely large regional authority where watershed conditions, community needs, development pressures, and local priorities differ substantially from those of neighbouring watersheds. The geographic scale of this proposed region surpasses what is practical for meaningful representation of Catfish Creek’s specific watershed characteristics.

The consolidation proposal carries potentially significant implications for municipalities, residents, and partner organizations within the Catfish Creek watershed. No evidence-based analysis has been provided by the Province to justify the transition to such large regional entities, nor has a detailed rationale been offered for establishing a separate provincial oversight agency to replace functions historically carried out by a Ministry. The dissolution of 36 Conservation Authorities—including Catfish Creek—and the creation of shared provincial systems for finance, HR, IT, and administration would create substantial costs and added layers of complexity. Instead of streamlining service delivery, this approach may fragment existing networks and delay local decision-making.

The absence of meaningful consultation is especially concerning. If the Province intends to proceed transparently, then all existing Conservation Authorities, including Catfish Creek—should be fully engaged before legislation advances to Second and Third readings. At present, consultation is limited to the boundary-setting ERO posting. This leaves numerous critical questions unanswered. These include the funding model for the proposed Ontario Provincial Conservation Agency; the governance model for the new regional CAs and whether Catfish Creek’s municipalities will have adequate local representation; the feasibility of merging diverse watershed policies into a “one-size-fits-all” framework; and the risks associated with centralizing programs that are currently tailored to local watershed conditions, needs, and funding capacities.

Significant human-resource and organizational concerns also remain unresolved, including how staff redeployment will occur across large geographic distances; how charitable foundations that support individual conservation authorities will be affected; how dissolution may impact foundations’ status under the Income Tax Act; and how locally owned assets—such as conservation areas, infrastructure, and other capital holdings—will be transferred or managed under a regional model. For Catfish Creek, which manages a unique suite of natural areas and infrastructure on behalf of its partner municipalities, these uncertainties pose real operational risks.

Under the proposed regional structure, Catfish Creek would join an amalgamated entity encompassing numerous municipalities—far too many for any one watershed to maintain meaningful influence. This stands in contrast to CCCA’s current governance model, which ensures strong local representation and accountability to its participating municipalities. The proposed system risks creating an unwieldy regional board disconnected from the day-to-day realities of the Catfish Creek watershed, and it may dilute the ability of local municipal councils and residents to shape watershed priorities.

As the Province advances its consolidation plan, Catfish Creek Conservation Authority encourages the government to commit to full and meaningful consultation with municipalities regarding both the funding of the new Agency and the establishment of new regional conservation authorities. CCCA emphasizes the need to preserve a strong local voice accountable to watershed residents; maintain local expertise capable of delivering programming rooted in local conditions; retain accessible local offices;

provide clarity regarding the future of charitable foundations; and transparently disclose the anticipated costs of amalgamation. These measures are essential to safeguarding the long-standing, community-based watershed management model that has served the Catfish Creek region effectively for decades.

Attached to this correspondence is a resolution passed by the CCCA Board of Directors at a meeting held November 27, 2025.

Sincerely,



Morgaine Griffin
Chairperson
Catfish Creek Conservation Authority



Dusty Underhill
General Manager/ Secretary Treasurer
Catfish Creek Conservation Authority

Attached: CCCA Recommendation Resolution

CC: The Honourable Todd McCarthy, Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks
Rob Flack, MPP (Elgin, Middlesex, London); Ernie Hardeman MPP (Oxford);
Local Municipal Councils
Chief Todd Cornelius, Oneida Nation
Association of Municipalities of Ontario
Conservation Ontario
Conservation Authorities in Ontario
Local environmental groups and other stakeholders

Moved By: Paul Buchner

Seconded By: Arthur Oslach

WHEREAS the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks has posted Environmental Registry Notice No. 025-1257 (“Proposed Boundaries for the Regional Consolidation of Ontario’s Conservation Authorities”), proposing to reduce Ontario’s 36 conservation authorities to 7 regional entities as part of a broader restructuring that would create a new Ontario Provincial Conservation Agency to provide centralized oversight and direction under the *Conservation Authorities Act*; and

WHEREAS under this proposal, the Catfish Creek Conservation Authority (CCCA) would be merged into a new “Lake Erie Regional Conservation Authority” together with the:

- Lower Thames Valley CA
- St. Clair Region CA
- Upper Thames River CA
- Kettle Creek CA
- Essex Region CA
- Long Point Region CA
- Grand River CA

forming a single organization stretching from Windsor, Essex County and Pelee Island, through north of Waterloo region; and

WHEREAS the Board acknowledges and supports the Province’s goals of improved efficiency, consistency and fiscal prudence in conservation delivery, but finds that the proposed “Lake Erie Region” configuration would:

1. Create a geographically vast and administratively complex entity, joining northern, rural and fast-growing southern municipalities throughout the province with little shared watershed connection or economic alignment;
2. Dilute local accountability and municipal partnership, contrary to the principle that decisions are best made closest to the communities they affect;

3. Generate substantial transition costs, including human-resources integration, governance restructuring, IT migration and policy harmonization, that would divert resources from front-line service delivery and delay measurable outcomes, contrary to the Province's own business-planning principles of value for money, cost containment and service continuity; and,
4. Risk greater uncertainty and delay for builders, developers and farmers, as local permitting offices and staff familiar with site conditions are replaced by distant regional structures, making it harder for applicants to obtain timely local advice, resolve issues or expedite housing and infrastructure approvals that support the Province's "Get It Done" agenda; and

WHEREAS the CCCA has already undertaken significant modernization work aligned with provincial objectives, including:

- implementation of a digital permitting and inspection system that has reduced turnaround times;
- improvements in transparency and client communication;
- data and network systems, including security and redundancy
- numerous internal reviews to identify opportunities for cost savings and efficiencies
- conversion of redundant support and non-mandatory positions to front-line mandatory service positions
- demonstrating that meaningful modernization can occur within the current watershed-based governance framework; and

WHEREAS the Board further recognizes that the Catfish Creek Conservation Authority serves Southwestern Ontario communities facing vastly different climatic, hydrological and infrastructure realities, which would be ill-served by a larger overarching administrative structure extending over 300 kilometers to townships north of the Kitchener-Waterloo Guelph area;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

The Board of Directors does not support the proposed "Lake Erie Regional Conservation Authority" boundary configuration outlined in Environmental Registry Notice 025-1257; and

The Board instead endorses further provincial evaluation of a more focused specific model as a geographically coherent, cost-effective and locally accountable alternative

that advances the government's priorities of efficiency, red-tape reduction and timely housing delivery; and

The Board requests that the Ministry engage directly with affected municipalities and conservation authorities across Southwestern Ontario most specifically, the municipalities within the Catfish Creek administrative area before finalizing any consolidation boundaries or legislative amendments; and

That this resolution, with a letter from the Chair, be forwarded to the Environmental Registry of Ontario consultations and to:

the Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks and his Opposition critics;

- local Members of Provincial Parliament;
- local Municipal Councils
- the Association of Municipalities of Ontario and Conservation Ontario;
- local First Nations
- local environmental groups and other stakeholders, and
- all Conservation Authorities in Ontario

CARRIED

*Mission Statement: "To communicate and deliver resource management services and programs
In order to achieve social and ecological harmony for the watershed"*





130 Conservation Road, PO Box 10427
 Thunder Bay, ON P7B 6T8
 Phone: (807) 344-5857 | Fax: (807) 345-9156

November 27, 2025

Re: Proposed Regional Consolidation of Conservation Authorities, ERO Notice #025-1257
 Lakehead Region Conservation Authority Resolution #130/25

With the passing of Bill 68 on November 25, 2025, the Province of Ontario has established a new oversight body called the "Ontario Provincial Conservation Agency" (OPCA) to oversee Conservation Authorities (CAs) and the transition to a regional watershed-based framework for CAs in Ontario.

At the November 26, 2025 Lakehead Region Conservation Authority (LRCA) Board Meeting, the LRCA Board of Directors passed a resolution opposing the Province's proposed "Huron-Superior Regional Conservation Authority" boundary configuration as outlined in Environmental Registry Notice 025-1257, which proposes to consolidate the LRCA into a region 1,500 kilometres from the Lakehead Watershed with 72 other southern Ontario municipalities. The resolution also recommends that the LRCA form a stand alone independent Regional Conservation Authority, as the "Northwestern Ontario Regional Conservation Authority" to ensure that the interests of Northwestern Ontario are equitably represented. Additionally, the Board is also requesting that the Ministry engage directly with affected municipalities of the LRCA before finalizing any consolidation boundaries.

The Board of Directors acknowledges the Province's goals in amalgamating conservation authorities; however, strongly believes that the LRCA is unique both in location and the region that it serves and therefore should not be amalgamated with conservation authorities with no watershed or municipal connection.

LRCA Resolution #130/25 has been attached. The LRCA encourages all partners to review the posting <https://ero.ontario.ca/notice/025-1257> and submit comments prior to the closing date of December 22, 2025.

For further information, please contact the undersigned at info@lakeheadca.com.

Yours truly,



Donna Blunt
Chair

Encl.: LRCA Board Resolution #130/25

c.c.:

Hon. Todd McCarthy, Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks
Peter Tabuns, MPP, Critic, Environment, Conservation and Parks
Kevin Holland, MPP, Thunder Bay – Atikokan
Lise Vaugoeis, MPP, Thunder Bay- Superior North
Marcus Powlowski, MP – Thunder Bay – Rainy River
Hon. Patty Hajdu – MP Thunder Bay – Superior North
Association of Municipalities of Ontario
Conservation Ontario
All local municipalities
All Conservation Authorities in Ontario

LRCA Resolution #130/25

Moved by: Sheelagh Hendrick
Seconded by: Brian Kurikka

With Respect to the posting by the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks Environmental Registry Notice No. 025-1257 ("Proposed Boundaries for the Regional Consolidation of Ontario's Conservation Authorities"), proposing to reduce Ontario's 36 conservation authorities to 7 regional entities as part of a broader restructuring that would create a new Ontario Provincial Conservation Agency to provide centralized oversight and direction under the Conservation Authorities Act;

AND THAT *under this proposal, the Lakehead Region Conservation Authority (LRCA) would be merged into a new "Huron-Superior Regional Conservation Authority" together with:*

- *Grey Sauble Conservation*
- *the Saugeen Valley Conservation Authority*
- *the Maitland Valley Conservation Authority*
- *the Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority*
- *the Nottawasaga Valley Conservation Authority*
- *the Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority*

forming a single organization encompassing the eastern shores of Lake Huron, the southern shores of Georgian Bay, Lake Simcoe, and the western shores of Lake Superior in Northwestern Ontario;

AND THAT *the LRCA Board acknowledges and supports the Province's goals of improved efficiency, consistency and fiscal prudence in conservation delivery,*

AND THAT *the Lakehead Region Conservation Authority is a self-sufficient entity that is; accountable to its member municipalities;*

- *financially resilient;*
- *consistently processes permits in less than 7 days;*
- *operates in the City of Thunder Bay that has exceeded their housing target by 143%;*
- *has modern financial and IT processes that prioritize security and redundancy; and*
- *is a locally recognized leader in the conservation and protection of the Lakehead Watershed; and*
- *all staff are front line workers,*

AND THAT *the Board further recognizes that the Lakehead Region Conservation Authority is unique as it does not abut any other Conservation Authority and solely serves Northwestern Ontario communities that face vastly different climatic, hydrological, geographic and infrastructure realities, and would be disconnected to the proposed larger overarching*

administrative structure that is physically based 1,500 kilometres from the north with 72 other municipalities;

The Board finds that the proposed “Huron-Superior Region” configuration would :

- *Create a geographically vast and administratively complex entity, joining Northwestern Ontario with fast-growing Southern Ontario municipalities that are 1,300-1,500 kilometres apart with no shared watershed connection or economic alignment;*
- *dilute local accountability and municipal partnership, contrary to the principle that decisions are best made at the local level;*
- *generate substantial transition costs — including human-resources integration, governance restructuring, IT migration and policy harmonization, rebranding — that would divert resources from front-line service delivery and delay measurable outcomes, contrary to the Province’s business-planning principles of value for money, cost containment and service continuity; and*
- *risk greater uncertainty and delay for builders, developers and farmers, as local permitting offices and staff familiar with local conditions are replaced by distant regional structures, making it harder for applicants to obtain timely local advice, resolve issues or expedite housing and infrastructure approvals that support the Province’s “Get It Done” agenda;*

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

The Board of Directors is opposed to the proposed “Huron-Superior Regional Conservation Authority” boundary configuration outlined in Environmental Registry Notice 025-1257;

AND THAT *the Board recommends that the Lakehead Region Conservation Authority form the 8th Regional Conservation Authority as the “Northwestern Ontario Regional Conservation Authority”;*

AND THAT *further provincial evaluation is conducted with a more focused specific model as a geographically coherent, cost-effective and locally accountable alternative that advances the government’s priorities of efficiency, red-tape reduction and timely housing delivery;*

AND THAT *the Ministry engage directly with affected municipalities of the Lakehead Region Conservation Authority, before finalizing any consolidation boundaries or legislative amendments;*

AND THAT *this resolution, with a letter from the Chair, be forwarded to the Environmental Registry of Ontario consultations and to:*

- *the Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks and his Opposition critics;*
- *local Members of Provincial Parliament;*
- *local Members of Parliament;*
- *the Association of Municipalities of Ontario;*
- *Conservation Ontario;*
- *All local municipalities; and*
- *All Conservation Authorities in Ontario.*

Carried

COUNCIL SERVICES DEPARTMENT

IN REPLY, PLEASE REFER
TO OUR FILE NO. _____

November 28, 2025

Honourable Doug Ford
Premier of Ontario
Premier's Office
Room 281, Legislative Building, Queen's Park
Toronto, ON M7A 1A1

Dear Premier Ford,

Windsor City Council, at its meeting held November 24, 2025, adopted the following resolution:

Decision Number: CR481/2025

WHEREAS Ontario's Conservation Authorities play a critical role in watershed management, environmental protection, flood mitigation, and public safety across the province; and,

WHEREAS the Province of Ontario has introduced Bill 68, which contains significant and far-reaching amendments to the *Conservation Authorities Act* that would alter governance structures, decision-making authorities, and municipal participation in conservation authority oversight; and,

WHEREAS the proposed changes were introduced within an omnibus bill without the benefit of a standalone legislative process that would allow for comprehensive public input, stakeholder consultation, or sufficient scrutiny regarding their long-term environmental, financial, and public safety implications; and,

WHEREAS municipalities are key partners in watershed management and must retain a strong, meaningful voice in any new governance model to ensure that local knowledge, local priorities, and local risks are fully considered in provincial decision-making; and,

WHEREAS the potential impacts of the proposed amendments may increase risks to the public related to flooding, erosion, natural heritage loss, and environmental degradation if not properly analyzed and addressed through an open and transparent legislative process; and,

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Council of the City of Windsor strongly urge the Provincial Government of Ontario to withdraw all sections of Bill 68 related to amendments to the *Conservation Authorities Act*; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the Province be requested to re-introduce any proposed changes as a standalone bill, to proceed through the full and regular legislative process—including First and Second Readings, Committee review, stakeholder submissions, and public consultation—to ensure that the impacts on watershed management, environmental protection, and public safety are fully and transparently considered; and,

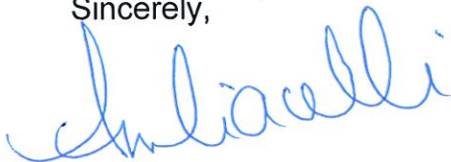
BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the Province ensure that any future governance framework for Ontario's Conservation Authorities includes robust and clearly defined municipal representation, recognizing municipalities as essential partners in protecting watersheds and mitigating environmental risks; and,

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED THAT a copy of this motion be forwarded to the Premier of Ontario, the Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks, local Members of Provincial Parliament, the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO), the Essex Region Conservation Authority (ERCA), and all Ontario municipalities and Conservation Authorities for their information and support.

Carried.

Your consideration to Windsor City Council's resolution would be most appreciated.

Sincerely,



Anna Ciacelli
Deputy City Clerk and Supervisor of Council Services
AC/lh

cc: Mr. Todd McCarthy, the Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks
Mr. Harb Gill, Member of Parliament, Windsor West
Ms. Kathy Borrelli, Member of Parliament, Windsor-Tecumseh-Lakeshore
Mr. Andrew Dowie, Member of Provincial Parliament, Windsor-Tecumseh
Ms. Lisa Gretzky, Member of Provincial Parliament, Windsor West
Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO)

Tim Byrne, Chief Administrative Officer & Secretary Treasurer, Board of
Directors, Essex Region Conservation Authority (ERCA)
Nicole Kupnicki, Manager, Human Resources & Council Services of the
Essex Region Conservation Authority
All Ontario municipalities and Conservation Authorities

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HCA Board Motion re Bill 68/ERO:

WHEREAS Bill 68 (Schedule 3) proposes the creation of the Ontario Provincial Conservation Agency whose objects include overseeing conservation authorities and the transition to a regional watershed-based framework for conservation authorities in Ontario with municipal cost contribution yet to be defined; and

WHEREAS the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks has posted Environmental Registry Notice No. 025-1257 (“Proposed Boundaries for the Regional Consolidation of Ontario’s Conservation Authorities”), proposing to reduce Ontario’s 36 conservation authorities to 7 regional entities as part of a broader restructuring; and

WHEREAS under this proposal, the Hamilton Region Conservation Authority (HCA) would be consolidated into a new “Western Lake Ontario Regional Conservation Authority” together with the Niagara Peninsula CA, Halton Region CA and Credit Valley CA, forming a single organization extending along the western Lake Ontario shoreline from Niagara through Halton and Peel, encompassing urban and rural watershed that support the Greater Toronto-Hamilton corridor; and

WHEREAS the Province already has the authority to establish overarching legislation, regulations and standards through the Conservation Authorities Act and the Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks; and

WHEREAS Conservation Authorities in partnership with their member municipalities have for decades tailored programs and services to local watershed and community needs; and

WHEREAS HCA’s municipalities currently provide 35% of total HCA budget funding, while the province of Ontario provides less than 1%; and

WHEREAS the HCA has already undertaken significant modernization work aligned with provincial objectives, including Information Technology / Information Management, and leveraging technology to streamline planning and permit review processes processing 94% of major permits within the provincial time period in 2024; and

WHEREAS conservation authorities collectively own and manage thousands of acres of lands - including 11,744 acres within HCA - entrusted to them as a legacy for long-term protection, stewardship and public benefit, with the expectation that such lands would be cared for by locally governed conservation authorities.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:

THAT the Board of Directors does not support the proposed “Western Lake Ontario Regional Conservation Authority” boundary configuration outlined in Environmental Registry Notice 025-1257 as the proposal lacks sufficient justification, would significantly diminish local governance, and fails to recognize the effectiveness and efficiencies already achieved within existing watershed-based models; and

THAT the Board affirms that large-scale regional consolidation is unnecessary, would introduce substantial transition costs, and would divert resources away from frontline watershed programs. The Board further asserts that restructuring at this scale would erode local decision-making, weaken municipal accountability, and disrupt long-standing community partnerships that are central to delivering responsive watershed management; and

THAT the Board urges the Province to strengthen centralized standards, resources, and communication rather than undertaking broad structural amalgamation and to provide **sustainable, predictable provincial funding** across conservation authorities—particularly where gaps exist—to enable local CAs to advance ongoing digitization and systemization work that has already resulted in improved efficiency and consistency in recent years; and

THAT the Board requests that the Ministry engage meaningfully and collaboratively with affected municipalities, conservation authorities, and local First Nations before advancing any consolidation, to ensure that any changes reflect both local needs and the practical realities of implementation; and

THAT the Board believes that the Province’s proposed new online permitting portal can be implemented within the existing conservation authority framework without requiring structural amalgamation; and

THAT this resolution be included as part of the HCA submission to the Environmental Registry of Ontario and forwarded to the City of Hamilton, the Township of Puslinch, and all Conservation Authorities in Ontario.



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: November 20, 2025

Subject: HCA Reserves Policy

Recommendation:

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

THAT the HCA Reserves Policy, dated November 2025, as appended to this report, be approved; and further

THAT the Fifty Point Wetland reserve be closed and unused balance of \$85,977.72 be transferred to the Saltfleet CA Wetland Restoration Project reserve.

Executive Summary:

As part of ongoing efforts to strengthen financial management, transparency, and long-term financial sustainability, HCA staff developed a formal Reserves Policy for the Hamilton Conservation Authority (HCA), outlining the purpose, target minimums, reporting requirements, and governance of all HCA reserves.

Currently, reserve activity and balances are reported through the annual budget and year-end financial statements; however, HCA does not have a standalone, Board-approved policy.

A formal Reserves Policy will standardize, support decision making, and align HCA with best practices.

Staff Comment / Discussion:

HCA maintains several reserve accounts that play an essential role in supporting operating stability, capital projects, conservation projects, and risk mitigation. While these reserves have historically been managed through annual budget processes and year-end financial reporting, the absence of a standalone, Board-approved policy was identified as a gap.

The Reserves Policy establishes financial guidelines and controls for the creation, management, and use of HCA reserves and reserve funds. It ensures reserves are managed responsibly to maintain financial stability, support capital planning, and respond to unforeseen events.

Governance and Responsibility

- The Board of Directors holds ultimate authority for establishing, managing, and approving reserve activity.
- The Director of Finance/Secretary-Treasurer is responsible for monitoring balances, recommending transfers, and ensuring compliance with policy.
- Oversight is provided by the Budget & Administration Committee, with annual external audits and reporting.

Reserve Types and Uses

- **Operational Reserves:** Maintain liquidity and financial stability during revenue delays or unexpected costs.
- **Special Projects & Initiatives:** Fund strategic or pilot projects outside core operations.
- **Deferred Funds:** Hold externally restricted funds received in advance for future activities.
- **Discretionary Reserves:** Created at the Board's direction for flexible use.
- **Non-Discretionary Reserves:** Restricted under legislation, contracts, or agreements for specific purposes.

Reserve Management Framework

- Each reserve has defined minimum and optimum target balances to ensure adequacy and prevent over-accumulation.
- Annual review and reporting occur through the audited financial statements and year-end reserve balance report.
- Creation or closure of reserves requires Board approval, except where required under legislative or contractual obligations.
- Transfers to and from reserves are authorized by Board resolution or through the annual budget.

- Interfund borrowing between discretionary reserves is permitted with Board approval.

Policy Review

The policy will be reviewed every four years or sooner if conditions warrant, with any changes requiring Board approval.

Appendix B provides a detailed listing of all current reserves by category. The total balance in reserves as of January 1, 2025, is \$10,091,200, with all minimum target levels met.

As the Fifty Point Wetland Project has been fully completed and all related expenditures finalized, staff recommend closing this reserve and transferring the remaining \$85,977.72 to the Saltfleet CA Wetland Restoration Project Reserve to support ongoing restoration initiatives within the same program area.

Strategic Plan Linkage:

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

- **Strategic Priority Area – Organizational Excellence**

Legal / Financial Implications:

The reserves policy provides a framework to standardize, support decision making, and align HCA with best practices. Reserves support HCA's long-term financial sustainability and spreadsheet in appendix B provides reserve balances as of January 1, 2025.

Related Reports and Appendices:

Appendix A – Reserve Policy, November 2025

Appendix B – HCA Reserves

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Appendix A - Hamilton Conservation Authority

DRAFT Reserves Policy

November, 2025

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Purpose and Objectives

Purpose

The purpose of the Reserves Policy is to establish financial guidelines and appropriate controls for the administration of reserves and reserve funds for Hamilton Conservation Authority (HCA). It provides guidelines on the objectives, standards of care, reporting requirements and responsibilities for the creation and management for reserves and reserve funds.

Application

The Board of Directors and HCA Staff are responsible for the establishment, management, and administration of HCA Reserves.

Applicable Legislation

1. Conservation Authorities Act (RSO 1990)
2. Public Sector Accounting Board (PSAB) accounting standards for Canadian public sector organizations, including Conservation Authorities.

Definitions

HCA Reserves

Funds that HCA has set aside for future projects, contingencies or emergencies that are available for use at the discretion of the Board of Directors.

Appropriations from Reserve

Funds withdrawn from a Reserve Category for a defined use.

Supplements to Reserve

Funds added to an existing Reserve Category.

Designation of Reserves

All reserves are established and overseen by the Board of Directors of the Hamilton Conservation Authority.

HCA Reserves

Purpose of Reserves

Reserves are important tools in the planning and management of HCA's financial resources. Reserves maintain a stable financial position and sustainably manage significant events to:

- Provide a buffer for unanticipated expenditures or loss of revenues
- Protect against known risks and unforeseen events
- Finance multi-year capital initiatives
- Replace tangible capital assets
- Act on unanticipated opportunities (i.e., matched funding agreements)
- Provide a source of internal funding (i.e. land acquisition etc.)

Reserve Funds

Reserves are funded through annual operating surpluses, specific funding allocations, or other revenue sources.

Reserves are classified as either discretionary or non-discretionary.

- **Discretionary reserves** are established and funded at the Board's direction, typically from annual year-end operating surpluses or recommendations included in the annual budget.
- **Non-discretionary reserves** are restricted for specific purposes under legislation, contractual obligations, or funding agreements. These reserves must be used for designated projects or similar activities within the same program area. Examples include matching funding for National Disaster Mitigation Program and Land Acquisition initiatives. Additional to this category would be Construction Capital and Major Maintenance projects through City of Hamilton capital block funding where monies are carried forward to subsequent budgets to complete approved projects, support planned long-term projects or address major maintenance needs.

Operational Reserves

Operational reserves represent funds established to ensure financial stability and sustainability of ongoing operations. These reserves are intended to provide liquidity in the event of unexpected shortfalls, delays in funding, or unforeseen expenditures that may arise. These reserves are typically funded through annual surpluses or Board approved allocations and may be replenished as part of the annual budgeting process.

Deferred Funds

Deferred Funds represent restricted, unspent funds with a pre-determined specific use, received in advance of the fiscal period in which the related activities will occur. These funds are recognized as revenue only when the associated expenses are incurred. Deferred balances in any fund will be carried forward to subsequent budgets to complete approved projects or to fund planned long-term initiatives or special maintenance activities.

Funds that were secured through sole-benefitting levy or other externally restricted sources will be maintained for the intended use only and will not be redirected for any other purpose without the written permission of the funder.

In cases where project costs exceed the available deferred balance, the shortfall will be funded through unrestricted or Board-designated reserves, subject to Board approval. If a project concludes with a surplus, the Foundation will review the applicable funding agreement to determine whether unspent funds must be returned to the donor, reallocated to related projects, or transferred to another reserve in accordance with donor consent.

Special Projects and Initiatives

Special projects and initiatives reserve funds are established to support strategic, pilot projects or time sensitive initiatives that advance the organization's objectives beyond core or mandatory programs and services or operating activities. These reserves provide flexibility to respond to emerging opportunities, innovation or community needs that may not be funded through regular operating budgets. Funding may be provided from operating surpluses, board allocations, or external contributions. Unspent balances at the conclusion of a project will be reviewed to determine whether they should be reallocated to other approved projects, maintained for future use or allocated towards the operational reserves.

Reserve Management Framework

Target Minimum and Optimum Reserve Balances

The adequacy of an individual reserve will be determined on a case-by-case basis, taking into consideration the purpose of the reserve and the scope and timing of the project and funding sources. For each reserve, a target minimum and optimum balance will be established, where applicable. The minimum balance protects the reserve from being drawn down to the point where it can no longer serve its intended purpose. The optimum balance ensures the Authority's financial management objectives are met, while avoiding the accumulation of excess funds that could otherwise be directed to other organizational priorities. Reserve balances will be reviewed annually as part of the year-end financial process. The detailed reserve

balances are provided in *Appendix A*.

Governance

The Board holds ultimate responsibility for ensuring the accuracy of financial reporting and the prudent management of organizational resources, supported by the Budget & Administration Committee through regular review and recommendation.

Each year, an external accounting firm conducts a financial audit, and the Budget & Administration committee reviews the audited financial statements, internal controls, and accounting practices. The committee then recommends approval of the financial statements to the Board.

Management Responsibilities

The Director of Finance/Secretary Treasurer is responsible for monitoring the status of reserves and reserve funds in accordance with this policy and implementing the Board's direction regarding reserves.

The Director of Finance/Secretary Treasurer will:

- Recommend establishing, closing and consolidating reserves and reserve funds
- Monitor reserve and reserve fund balances and report annually
- Recommend transfers of funds to and from reserves and reserve funds
- Manage the reserves and reserve funds

Reserve Lifecycle

Creation of Reserves

A new reserve should only be established if it cannot be accommodated within an existing reserve. A Board Resolution is required to create a new reserve, other than a reserve that falls under one of the exceptions outlined below. If it is determined that a new reserve is required, a Resolution is typically recommended by staff in the annual reserve balance report though may also be recommended in a separate report when a specific transaction takes place.

A staff recommendation from the Director of Finance/Secretary Treasurer to the Board for the creation of a new reserve will include:

- Rationale for creating reserve
- Funding sources
- Target balances if applicable

Exceptions

For non-discretionary reserves that are required under legislation or a contract with

others such as land sale reserves and funds provided by others for future expenses, staff are authorized to create the reserves, with details included in future Board reports.

Closing of Reserves

If the purpose for which the reserve or reserve fund was created have been accomplished and the reserve fund is determined to be no longer necessary, the Director of Finance/Secretary Treasurer will bring forward a recommendation to the Board for closure and will include:

1. Reason for the closure of the reserve or reserve fund
2. The disposition of any remaining funds

Appropriations to/from Reserves

Transfers to reserves must be approved by a Board Resolution, unless the transfer relates to one of the non-discretionary reserve exceptions outlined above and is required by legislation or contract. A resolution to transfer funds to a reserve can be a one-time lump sum amount or can be a protocol for staff to follow (i.e. annual owned-vehicle amortization as a charge to operations to support vehicle and equipment reserve, designation of a percentage of annual pass sales to support initiatives)

All transfers from reserves for the use of reserve funds must be approved by a Board through the adoption of the annual budget or through resolution (if not included in the annual budget).

Reserve Shortfalls

Taking into account current financial position, staff may prepare a budget that includes funding to restore reserve balances to their established target minimum. The timeline for rebuilding reserves will be determined based on the size of the shortfall, the Authority's overall financial position, and other budget priorities, with the objective of returning reserves to these target levels within a defined period.

Reserve Fund Borrowing

Interfund borrowing between reserve and reserve funds is permitted, where sufficient funding is available, is deemed appropriate by the Director of Finance/Secretary Treasurer and with Board approval through resolution authorizing the transfer. Reserve fund borrowing is limited to discretionary reserves.

Financial Management

Reporting

The annual budget process will include information on reserve balances.

The audited financial statements will indicate the total reserves and the financial statement note disclosure will provide summary reserve details, compared to prior year.

Following Board approval of the audited financial statements, staff will bring forward a reserve balance report with recommended surplus allocation (if applicable) for Board approval.

Oversight and Review

Policy Review Schedule

The Reserve Policy will be reviewed and updated every four years or sooner if conditions dictate. Any changes will be approved by resolution by the Board of Directors.

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Appendix B - HCA Reserves

Operational Reserves

Reserve	Purpose	Discretionary or Non-discretionary	Funding Source (s)	Balance as at Jan 1, 2025	Target Minimum \$ Level	Target Optimum \$ Level	Rationale for \$ Levels Established
Vehicle and Equipment Reserve	Reserve fund for the replacement of vehicles and equipment in accordance with the Fleet policy. It will also be used to protect against unexpected expenditures that may occur should a significant piece of equipment require replacement in the fiscal year.	Discretionary	Funded by operating budget contributions derived from departmental charges to operating departments, along with proceeds from the sale or disposal of used equipment	\$405,000	\$150,000	\$450,000	Minimum ensures ~6 months of reserve fund for the purchase of vehicles as per fleet policy. Optimum covers unexpected major equipment replacement.
General Stabilization Reserve	Reserve fund to provide financial resources to respond to unforeseen events. It will be used to accommodate fluctuations in operating revenue and expenses and to protect against unexpected expenditures or unanticipated deficits that may occur in the fiscal year.	Discretionary	Self-generated revenue surplus allocation.	\$3,000,000	\$1,500,000	\$3,000,000	Minimum based on one year equivalent of 10%-15% of non-levy revenue, and optimum based on 2 years equivalent.
Unscheduled Capital	Reserve fund for unanticipated or unbudgeted capital items related to repair or replacement of assets.	Discretionary	Self-generated revenue surplus allocation.	\$700,000	\$500,000	\$1,000,000	Minimum Level ensures an unexpected project requiring funding exceeding 25% of HCA's Annual Capital Block allocation. Optimal Level ensures unexpected project requiring funding of 50%.
Human Resources	Reserve fund for potential human resources needs that could arise including restructuring, severance, sick leaves, job evaluation and emergency personnel costs	Discretionary	Self-generated revenue surplus allocation. WSIB Rebates.	\$463,000	\$250,000	\$500,000	The minimum balance for the Human Resources Reserve is established to financial capacity to address historical HR expenditures related to unforeseen personnel costs. The balance is set at approximately three times the organization's average employee salary, providing a practical benchmark to respond effectively to unexpected HR events.
Legal Issues	Reserve funds to ensure financial capacity to address potential unplanned legal challenges without creating an operating deficit.	Discretionary	Self-generated revenue surplus allocation.	\$300,000	\$150,000	\$300,000	A minimum balance of \$150,000 has been set as a prudent contingency based on historical experience related to regulatory matters and/or other legal obligations including insurance deductibles.
				\$4,868,000	\$2,550,000	\$5,250,000	

Deferred Funds

Reserve	Purpose	Discretionary or Non-discretionary	Funding Source (s)	Balance as at Jan 1, 2025	Target Minimum \$ Level	Target Optimum \$ Level	Rationale for \$ Levels Established
Construction Capital and Major Maintenance	Reserve fund to hold funds for approved construction capital and major maintenance projects which are incomplete at year end or are multi-year in nature. This reserve fund ensures that approved project funding is preserved and carried forward until the work is completed.	Non-Discretionary	City of Hamilton Public Works Capital Funding program or specific grants and/or donations.	\$2,267,000	N/A	N/A	Carry-forward balance will fluctuate based on project needs and schedules.
Watershed Management Services	Reserve fund to hold funds for watershed management services projects or studies which are incomplete at year end and have been carried over to the next fiscal period for completion. Some projects are planned to span multiple fiscal years, while others may extend beyond their original schedule due to unforeseen delays. This reserve fund ensures that approved funding is preserved and carried forward until the work is completed, eliminating the need to re-budget ongoing projects each year.	Non-Discretionary	Federal and Provincial grants, as well as allocation from self-generated revenue surplus.	\$451,000	N/A	N/A	Carry-forward balance will fluctuate based on project needs and schedules.
				\$2,718,000	\$0	\$0	

Special Projects and Initiatives

Reserve	Purpose	Discretionary or Non-discretionary	Funding Source (s)	Balance as at Jan 1, 2025	Target Minimum \$ Level	Target Optimum \$ Level	Rationale for \$ Levels Established
Climate Change Initiatives	Reserve fund to support HCA’s initiatives to mitigate and adapt to the impacts of climate change within the watershed. The fund enables implementation of actions identified in the Corporate Climate Change Strategy, including projects that strengthen climate resilience, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and advance the Authority’s long-term commitment to net-zero operations.	Funding Dependant	Federal and Provincial grants, as well as allocation from self-generated revenue surplus and 10% of Annual Pass Sales.	\$181,000	\$130,000	NA	Minimum is based off 10% of annual membership pass sales.
Saltfleet CA Wetland Restoration Project	Reserve fund to support the construction and restoration of wetlands within the Saltfleet Conservation Area.	Funding Dependant	Federal and Provincial grants, as well as allocation from self-generated revenue surplus. Grants from Heritage Green Community Trust and others.	\$1,729,000	\$1,000,000	NA	Minimum ensures monies available for phasing design and archaeological cost. Optimum will be based on projections to complete final two wetlands.
Fifty Point Wetland	Reserve fund to support the construction, restoration, and enhancement of the wetland at Fifty Point Conservation Area.	Discretionary	Federal and Provincial grants, as well as allocation from self-generated revenue surplus.	\$119,000	NA	NA	Project complete and reserved to be closed.
Records Management & Information Technology (IT)	Reserve fund to support HCA’s initiatives to advance HCA’s records and information management and IT objectives. The fund helps enable implementation of actions identified in the IT Modernization Strategy and Digital Transformation Plan, including system upgrades, digitization, and implementation of updated procedures.	Discretionary	Self-generated revenue surplus allocation.	\$417,000	\$200,000	\$400,000	Minimum ensures front loaded costs of records management and information techonology initiatives are covered with reserve fund.
General Land Acquisition	Reserve fund for the future purchase of land and associated costs as identified in the HCA land acquisition strategy or otherwise approved by the Board of Directors.	Funding Dependant	Federal and Provincial grants, disposition of surplus lands, as well as allocation from self-generated revenue surplus or specific donation. Special municipal funding by agreement. 10% of Annual Pass Sales.	\$1,218,000	\$500,000	NA	The minimum is to help fund the purchase and associated cost of one property, and/or matching monies to qualify for funding. The optimal balance will be based on amounts to be determined through specific Land Acquisition priorities.
Westfield: Friends Of Westfield & Endowment Fund	Reserve fund for not yet dispersed funding for the augmentation of Westfield Heritage Village and Conservation area. This reserve is separate from items found in the Construction Capital and Major Maintenance reserve found above.	Non-Discretionary	Friends of Westfield Fundraising and Endowment.	\$268,000	NA	NA	Balance fluctuates with project needs, timing, and fundraising activity; no fixed target established.
				\$3,932,000	\$1,330,000	\$400,000	
Total				\$11,518,000	\$3,880,000	\$5,650,000	

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Report to: Budget & Administration Committee

Approved for Circulation By: Lisa Burnside, CAO

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

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

Meeting Date: November 20, 2025

Subject: Project Technical Advisory Committee – Insurance Coverage for 2026

Recommendation:

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

THAT the Project Technical Advisory Committee members be submitted for annual insurance coverage purposes.

Executive Summary:

The Project Technical Advisory Committee (PTAC) was formally established by the Advisory Boards and the full Boards of Directors of the Hamilton Conservation Authority and Conservation Halton in 2009. PTAC acts as a review and approval committee for funding applications under the Hamilton-Halton Watershed Stewardship Program's (HHWSP) Water Quality and Habitat Improvement Projects (WQHIP) grant program, which supports stewardship projects on private lands.

The purpose of this report is to recognize the volunteer committee members, as identified in Appendix A, for insurance purposes.

Staff Comment / Discussion:

Staff of the HHWSP appreciate the commitment that of PTAC members to assist

in the delivery of the HHWSP to watershed landowners. This report serves to formally recognize their work, as well as to identify committee membership.

Strategic Plan Linkage:

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

- **Strategic Priority Area – Water Resources Management**
 - Initiative - Promote our Watershed Stewardship Program to further strengthen landowner education and restoration efforts on private lands and to align with the heightened public focus on climate change.
- **Strategic Priority Area – Natural Heritage Conservation**
 - Initiative - Engage our watershed residents and stakeholders to enhance and restore natural features through participation in stewardship programs, education initiatives, and adoption of best management practices.
- **Strategic Priority Area – Connecting People to Nature**
 - Initiative - Enhance volunteer engagement opportunities and outreach efforts, promoting a sense of stewardship and community involvement.

Agency Comments:

N/A

Legal / Financial Implications:

The members on the committee are not paid for their services but they are undertaking work on behalf of Hamilton Conservation Authority. The committee has been formally recognized since its establishment in 2009, and the volunteer committee members can be provided with insurance for their decisions through the Hamilton Conservation Authority's insurer. Adding the members as volunteers to our insurance does not affect HCA's premiums.

Related Reports and Appendices:

- Appendix A, Project Technical Advisory Committee Members

Appendix A

PROJECT TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBERS

City of Hamilton

Kara Bunn

Fisheries and Oceans Canada

Sarah Matchett

Watershed Resident Members

Paul Smith

Sheila O’Neil

Alba Dicenso

Graham Buck

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Report to: Board of Directors

Approved for Circulation By: Lisa Burnside, CAO

Reviewed & Prepared By: Lisa Burnside, CAO

Meeting Date: December 4, 2025

Subject: Final HCA 2026 Budget Approval

Recommendation:

THAT the 2026 draft budget be formally and finally approved in accordance with the Conservation Authorities Act and Ontario Regulation 402/22, subject to Board review and confirmation of the preferred approach to the special land acquisition funding request, as outlined in this report.

Executive Summary:

The 2026 HCA draft budget is returning to the Board for final approval. While the budget remains unchanged from the version previously endorsed, the Province has recently introduced proposed changes through Bill 68 (creation of the Ontario Provincial Conservation Agency) and the regional consolidation proposal posted on the Environmental Registry (ERO 025-1257).

Given the long-term nature of the special land acquisition funding request—and uncertainty regarding future priorities under a potential Western Lake Ontario Regional Conservation Authority—three options have been developed for Board consideration before finalizing the budget.

Staff Comment / Discussion:

The total 2026 budget is \$20.7M, consisting of \$18.2M in operating and \$2.5M in capital. The operating budget requires a 3.3% levy increase, supported by enhanced self-generated revenue and the use of reserves.

The capital program continues to rely on the City of Hamilton's \$2.0M block funding for capital and major maintenance, supplemented by \$500,000 from reserves.

In addition, as part of the draft budget, the Board requested that the City of Hamilton allocate special funding of \$500,000 annually (CPI-indexed) for 10 years to support HCA's land acquisition program.

Following Board approval of the draft budget, the operating and capital budgets along with the additional special land acquisition funding request were circulated to both participating municipalities for comment. No feedback was received, and the final budgets remain unchanged.

On October 31, 2025, the Province announced significant changes to conservation authorities through Bill 68, which received Royal Assent on November 27, 2025. The legislation establishes the Ontario Provincial Conservation Agency, an oversight body responsible for, among other items, the transition to a regional watershed-based framework. The associated regional consolidation proposal is posted on the ERO until December 22, 2025. Under this proposal, HCA would become part of the Western Lake Ontario Regional CA with a regional Board of Directors.

Given the uncertainty surrounding future land acquisition priorities under a potential regional model, staff have identified three options regarding the 10-year special funding request to the City of Hamilton:

Option 1 – Proceed

Proceed with the special funding request included in the draft 2026 budget on the basis that land acquisition activities would continue under a regional model.

Option 2 – Table and Revisit

Table the special funding request in the 2026 budget and revisit the request once there is greater clarity regarding regional consolidation.

Option 3 – Redirect to a City Fund

Table the request in the 2026 budget and instead request that the City consider contributing funds to the **Natural Area Acquisition Fund**, supporting City-wide land securement efforts by various agencies and partners.

Agency Comments:

No comments were received from the City of Hamilton or the Town of Puslinch regarding the 2026 Budgets

Legal / Financial Implications:

The special funding request is an **additional item** and is **not included** in the

\$20.7M total budget.

The land acquisition program relies on a multi-partner funding model that includes:

- 10% of HCA annual pass revenues
- \$20,000 annually from the Hamilton Conservation Foundation
- Federal grant applications
- Private partnerships and contributions through the Ecological Gifts Program

If the Board chooses to table the special funding request, these other funding sources will continue to contribute to the land acquisition reserve, though at a significantly reduced level.

Related Reports and Appendices:

Draft 2026 Operating and Capital Budgets – October 2, 2025

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HCA 2026 Draft Budgets

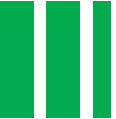
Budget & Administration Committee – September 18, 2025





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.





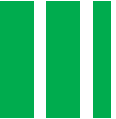
Revenues & Expenses

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	-	-	-

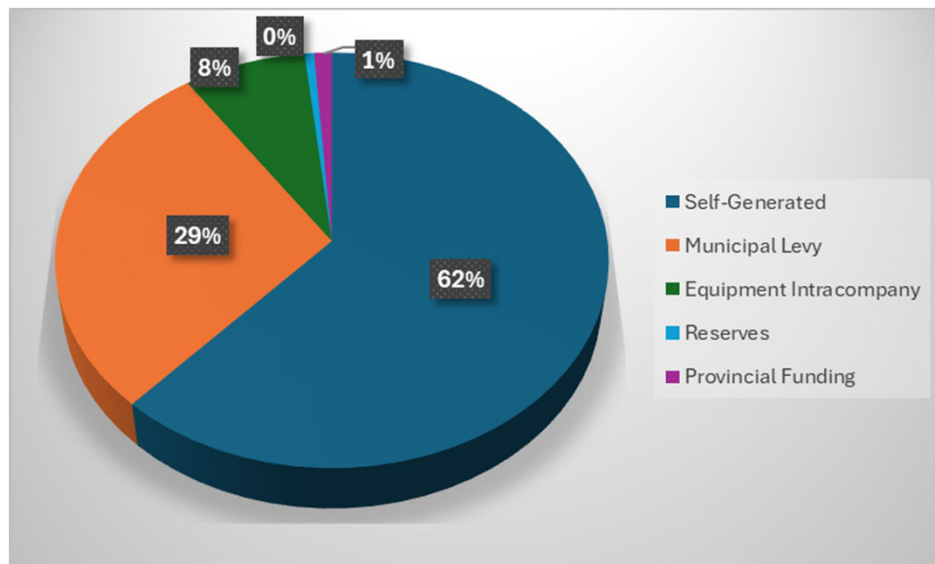
Westfield Heritage Village & Conservation Area	2026 Draft Budget	2026 Draft Operating Budget Funding Sources			
		General Revenue	Municipal Levy	Provincial Grants	Reserves
Westfield Operations	1,043,244	347,750	695,494		
Total Westfield Heritage Village & Conservation Area	1,043,244	347,750	695,494	-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

2026 Draft Operating Budget Summary

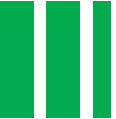
Central Support Services	2026 Draft Budget	2026 Draft Operating Budget Funding Sources			
		General Revenue	Municipal Levy	Provincial Grants	Reserves
Administration	2,973,614	1,134,500	1,949,602		50,000
Information Technology	345,329				44,000
Equipment Pool Operation & Maintenance	923,708	1,419,160			
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

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>				
#	Location	\$ Amount	Subtotal By Area	Percent of Projects
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)

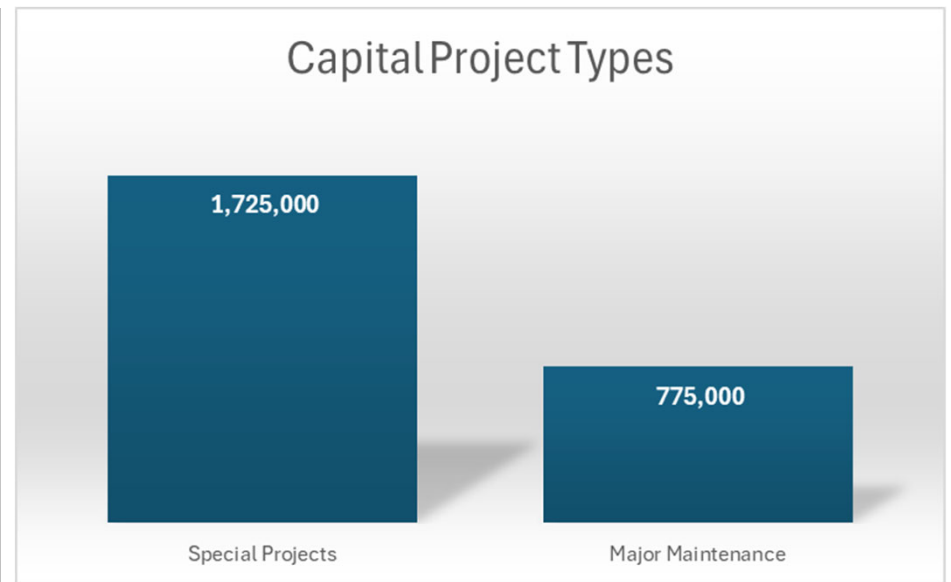
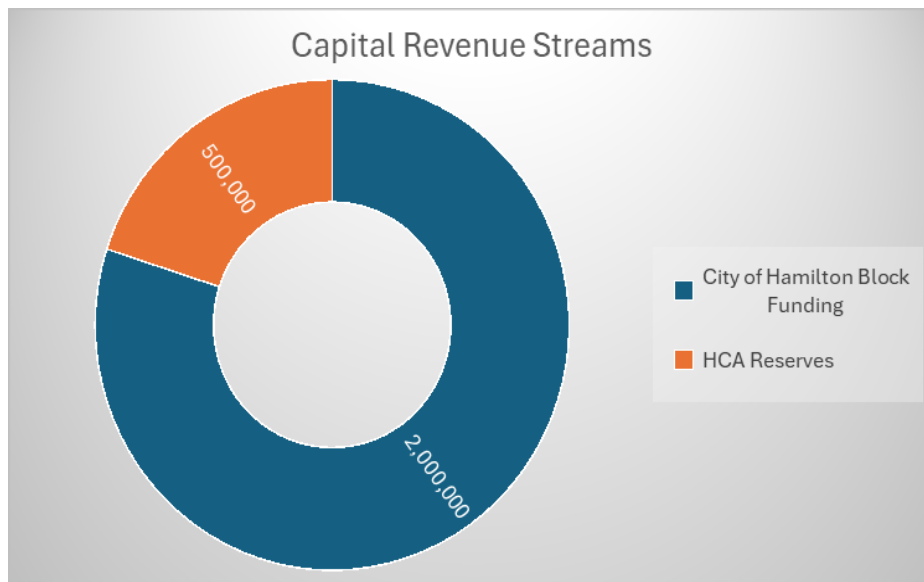
2,000,000
500,000

Total Capital Budget Funding

\$ 2,500,000

2026 Sources of Capital Budget Revenue

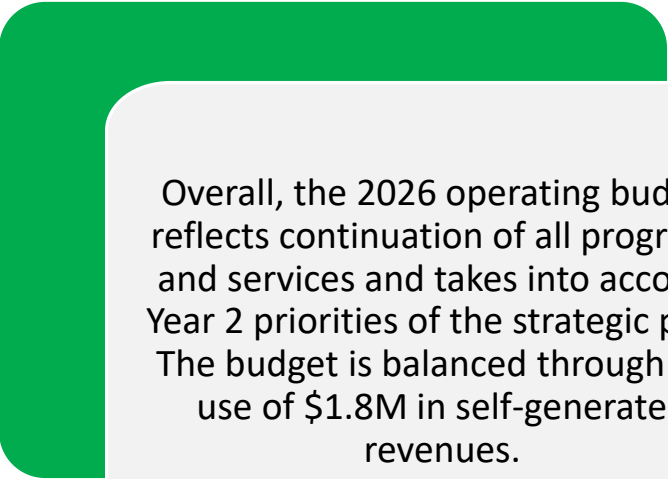
\$2.5M Capital budget revenue breakdown



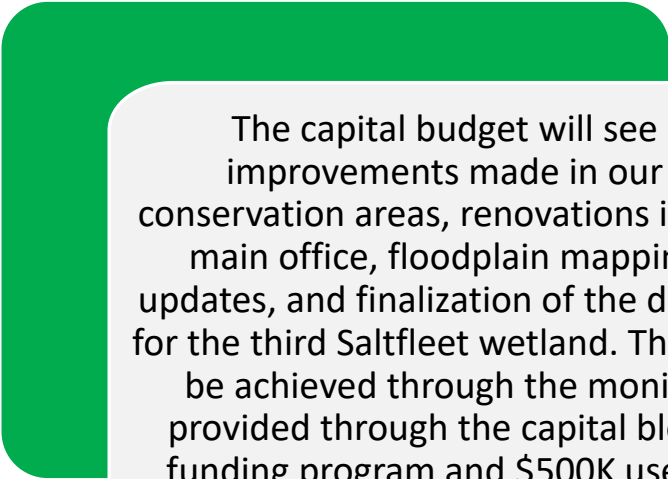
Reserve Funds

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

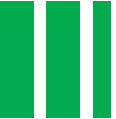
Budget Summary



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?



Hamilton Conservation Authority
Draft 2026 Programs & Services Budget

Category	Inventory Key Program Areas	Total Expenses	Program Revenue	%	Other Funding	%	Provincial Funding	%	Reserve Funding	%	City of Hamilton Capital Block Funding	%	Municipal Levy	%	Balance	City of Hamilton Municipal Levy	%	Township of Puslinch Municipal Levy	%	Total
1	Natural Hazards Management	2,696,904	204,500	8%	131,324	5%	89,996	3%	5,200	0%		0%	2,265,884	84%	-	2,248,664	99.24%	17,221	0.76%	2,265,884
	Conservation Lands and Conservation Areas	4,946,581	2,369,211	48%		0%		0%	11,500	0%	1,300,000	26%	1,265,870	26%	-	1,256,249	99.24%	9,621	0.76%	1,265,870
	Water Quality & Quantity Monitoring	537,238		0%		0%	115,000	21%		0%		0%	422,238	79%	-	419,029	99.24%	3,209	0.76%	422,238
	Core Watershed-based Resource Management Strategies	94,175		0%		0%		0%		0%		0%	94,175	100%	-	93,460	99.24%	716	0.76%	94,175
	Drinking Water Source Protection	1,470		0%	1,470	100%		0%		0%		0%		0%	-					-
	Total Category 1	8,276,368	2,573,711	31%	132,794	2%	204,996	2%	16,700	0%	1,300,000	16%	4,048,168	49%	-	4,017,401	99%	30,766	1%	4,048,168
2	Conservation Lands and Conservation Areas	1,355,494	600,000	44%	60,000	4%		0%		0%		0%	695,494	51%	-	695,494	100.00%		0.00%	695,494
	Water Quality & Quantity Monitoring	165,645		0%	56,000	34%		0%		0%		0%	109,645	66%	-	108,812	99.24%	833	0.76%	109,645
	Core Watershed-based Resource Management Strategies	573,818	135,000	24%	73,000	13%		0%		0%		0%	365,818	64%	-	363,038	99.24%	2,780	0.76%	365,818
	Drinking Water Source Protection	3,300		0%	3,300	100%		0%		0%		0%		0%	-					-
3	Total Category 2	2,098,258	735,000	35%	192,300	9%	-	0%	-	0%	-	0%	1,170,957	56%	-	1,167,344	100%	3,614	0%	1,170,958
	Conservation Lands and Conservation Areas	10,329,104	9,035,104	87%		0%		0%	594,000	6%	700,000	7%	-	0%	-	-		-		-
	Total Category 3	10,329,104	9,035,104	87%	-	0%	-	0%	594,000	6%	700,000	7%	-	0%	-	-		-		-
Total Programs and Services		20,703,730	12,343,815	60%	325,094	<1%	204,996	1%	610,700	3%	2,000,000	10%	5,219,125	25%	-	5,184,745	99%	34,380	1%	5,219,125

Note: An additional \$500,000 Special Funding Request to the City of Hamilton has been requested by the HCA Board of Directors, this funding is not reflected above but would be part of Category 3 Funding.

Summary	
40%	of the 2026 Draft Budget is Category 1 Programs & Services
78%	of the 2026 Municipal Levy is funding Category 1 Programs & Services
35%	of the 2026 Category 1 Programs & Services are funded by Self-Generated Revenue, Other Funding, Provincial Funding, or Reserve Funding

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Memorandum 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: Jonathan Bastien, P. Eng., Manager, Water Resources Engineering

Meeting Date: December 4th, 2025

Subject: Watershed Conditions Memorandum

Executive Summary:

During the period of October 27th to November 24th 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 within baseflow conditions to slightly elevated but well below thresholds for significant water safety concerns.

The average monthly flows for November so far have ranged between significantly below long-term averages to near long-term averages. October average recorded flows ranged between significantly below long-term averages to below long-term averages. September average recorded flows ranged between significantly below long-term averages to well below long-term averages. August average recorded flows ranged between significantly below long-term averages to well below 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 below preferred summer operating levels and above preferred winter operating levels. Increased outflows from the reservoir continue, to enable winter drawdown of the reservoir.

Valens Lake levels are currently not available but are expected to be within the preferred winter operating levels. Winter drawdown of the reservoir was recently completed.

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, reduced demand for water sourced from creeks and groundwater, and the fact that fall typically has increased amounts of precipitation, HCA staff have deferred notifying the Low Water Response Team to suggest declaration and will reassess conditions at the beginning of December.

There are currently no significant rainfall or snowmelt events, nor significant Lake Ontario shoreline flooding, forecasted for the watershed 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 – November 24th, 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 within 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 November so far have ranged between significantly below long-term averages to near long-term averages. Monthly flow in Upper Spencer Creek at Safari Road has been 101% (considered near average). However, Upper Spencer Creek at Safari Road gauge may be experiencing new or continuing debris related issues that are artificially elevating recorded flows. Monthly flow in Middle Spencer Creek at Highway 5 has been 28% (considered significantly below average). Monthly flow in Lower Spencer Creek at Market Street has been 37% (considered significantly below average). Monthly flow in Ancaster Creek at Wilson Street has been 57% (considered below average). Monthly flow in Red Hill Creek at Barton Street has been 53% (considered well below average). It is noted that streamflows in Spencer Creek are increased as a result of the winter drawdowns of the Valens Lake reservoir (October 20 to November 6) and the Christie Lake reservoir (October 24 to present).

October 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 70% of long-term averages (considered below average). However, up until recently, flow data

was not available for the majority of October at Upper Spencer Creek at Safari Road due to a debris related issue that artificially elevated flows. Recently, Water Survey of Canada updated flows at this gauge to correct for this issue. Monthly flow in Middle Spencer Creek at Highway 5 was 31% (considered significantly below average). Monthly flow in Lower Spencer Creek at Market Street was 22% (considered significantly below average). Monthly flow in Ancaster Creek at Wilson Street was 55% (considered well below average). Monthly flow in Red Hill Creek at Barton Street was 62% (considered 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. It is noted that streamflows in Spencer Creek are increased as a result of the winter drawdowns of the Valens Lake reservoir (October 20 to November 6) and the Christie Lake reservoir (October 24 to present).

September average recorded flows ranged between significantly below long-term averages to well below long-term averages. Monthly flow in Upper Spencer Creek at Safari Road was 26% of long-term averages (considered significantly below average). Monthly flow in Middle Spencer Creek at Highway 5 was 21% (considered significantly below average). Monthly flow in Lower Spencer Creek at Market Street was 31% (considered significantly below average). Monthly flow in Ancaster Creek at Wilson Street was 53% (considered well below average). Monthly flow in Red Hill Creek at Barton Street was 48% (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.

August average recorded flows ranged between significantly below long-term averages to well below long-term averages. Monthly flow in Upper Spencer Creek at Safari Road was 30% of long-term averages (considered significantly 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 32% (considered significantly below average). Monthly flow in Ancaster Creek at Wilson Street was 55% (considered well below average). Monthly flow in Red Hill Creek at Barton Street was 54% (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.

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 74.49 m IGLD85 as of yesterday. The Lake Ontario mean daily water level

averaged across the entire lake (74.48 m IGLD85 as of yesterday) is 6 cm below average for this time of year.

Current Storages in HCA Reservoirs

Christie Lake levels (768.89 ft) are currently below preferred summer operating levels (771.00 to 771.50 ft) and above preferred winter operating levels (765.30 to 765.80 ft). Increased outflows from the reservoir continue (since October 24), to enable winter drawdown of the reservoir.

Valens Lake levels are currently not available but are expected to be within the preferred winter operating levels (274.15 to 274.40 m). Winter drawdown of the reservoir was recently completed (October 20 to November 6).

Current Soil Conditions

Surface and root-zone soils are considered wet to saturated, and fully thawed, across the watershed.

RECENT STORM EVENTS

During the period of October 27th to November 24th 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 October 31) indicated that Level 1 Low Water Conditions are an appropriate overall characterization of the watershed at this time. Given the time of year, reduced demand for water sourced from creeks and groundwater, and the fact that fall typically has increased amounts of precipitation, HCA staff have deferred notifying the Low Water Response Team to suggest declaration and will reassess conditions at the beginning of December.

FORECASTED WATERSHED CONDITIONS

Watercourse Flooding

There are currently no significant rainfall or snowmelt 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 or snowmelt are not expected to result in significant watercourse flooding.

Lake Ontario Shoreline Flooding

In the next 2 weeks, no significant Lake Ontario shoreline flooding is currently expected.

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.

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Memorandum to: Board of Directors

Approved for Circulation By: Lisa Burnside, CAO

Reviewed By: Gord Costie, Director, Conservation Area Services

Prepared By: Brandon Good, Senior Manager of Conservation Area Services

Meeting Date: December 4, 2025

Subject: Conservation Area Services Update

Executive Summary:

Hamilton Conservation Authority continues to advance key initiatives and events across its Conservation Areas with various updates provided below. Winter operations are also in place across all Conservation Areas, ensuring safe access and continued outdoor experiences year-round.

Staff Comment / Discussion:

Valens Lake Conservation Area – West Campground Expansion

Site preparations began in November for the campground expansion at Valens Lake CA, marking the start of this highly anticipated project. Work has started on ground preparation including tree removal and transplant. Subject to receiving all final required development approvals, it is anticipated that the new expanded campground area will open for the 2026 season, offering visitors a new premium camping experience.

Spencer Gorge and Christie Lake Conservation Areas – Trail Signage

The design and installation of new trailhead maps and wayfinding signs at Spencer Gorge and Christie Lake Conservation Areas have been completed, providing visitors with clearer, more intuitive navigation throughout the trail systems. The updated signage enhances both the user experience and overall safety by offering consistent, easy-to-follow information. New trail signage at Valens Lake, Fletchers Creek, and Westfield Heritage Village Conservation Areas are planned for 2026.

Fifty Point Conservation Area – Accessible Fishing Bridge

The accessible fishing bridge at Fifty Point Conservation Area has now been fully

completed and installed, providing a safe and barrier-free space for visitors to access and enjoy recreational fishing. The new fishing bridge supports our commitment to creating equitable access to outdoor recreation across our Conservation Areas.

Conservation Areas - Winter Operations

With winter upon us, seasonal facilities have been winterized with assistance from the CaPSS department, and snow removal equipment has been installed across our fleet to maintain parking lot and internal road access during snowfall events. All of our Conservation Areas are open throughout the winter for our visitors to enjoy with the exception of Christmas Day. Camping and cabin rentals are also available, providing many opportunities for outdoor experiences even in the colder months.

Westfield Heritage Village Conservation Area – Christmas Events

Westfield Heritage Village is excited to be hosting two distinct and engaging Christmas events this season. The ever-popular *Christmas in the Woods* will be held on December 7th and 14th this year, and will once again transform the Village into a winter wonderland with natural greenery, festive décor, wagon rides, and caroling, offering families a chance to connect with nature during the holiday season. New this year, *A Christmas Carol* is an immersive, walking theatrical experience created in partnership with Penny & Pound Theatre, guiding visitors through candlelit streets and historic buildings as Dickens' classic story unfolds.