



2026 Budget

**As approved by
the Board of Directors on
December 4, 2025**

Executive Summary

- The 2026 budget approved by the HCA Board of Directors contain details for HCA's planned operations and capital activities.
- It reflects a balanced budget that reflects a continuation of all programs and services and also addresses year-two priorities of HCA's Strategic Plan.
- The 2026 budget for HCA invests \$20.7 million to protect natural spaces, enhance public accessibility, and support environmental initiatives across the watershed.
- The total budget of \$20.7M is \$18.2 million in operating and \$2.5 million in capital.
- The operating budget contains a 3.3% increase to municipal levy (3% in 2025), and is balanced in part by significant self-generated revenue, with \$1.8 million coming from our conservation areas.
- The Capital budget holds the \$2 million block funding from the City of Hamilton.

Goals

Operating Budget:

- Support HCA's 2025-2029 Strategic plan and engage in year 2 priorities
- 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 budget with a zero-based approach – staff expenditures are HCA's biggest expense and self-generated revenues are HCA's biggest revenue source.
- Operate on a cash neutral basis (break-even) – this requires maintaining and growing the funding revenues that come from non-levy sources, primarily the commercial operations at conservation areas and supplemented by the Hamilton Conservation Foundation, corporate, and government grants. The expenditure side of the equation is dominated by the cost of staff salaries, wages, and benefits.

Capital Budget:

- The draft capital budget is composed of two areas: the first being special projects and the second being major maintenance.
- HCA has much to maintain with close to 100 bridges, 15km of internal roadways, 2km of boardwalk, 170 buildings, over 145km of trails and countless other items such as fencing, utilities, gates, etc.
- The 2026 capital budget is supported with \$500,000 from HCA reserves to finalize the design for the third wetland at Saltfleet.
- The capital budget will see improvements to our conservation areas including accessibility enhancements and marina channel dredging, renovations in the main office to support technological upgrades and floodplain mapping updates to improve flood risk identification and inform land use planning. Further progress on the Saltfleet Wetland Restoration Project will also take place supported by HCA reserves for the third wetland as we look to move to construction in 2027 once the design is finalized in 2026. The Saltfleet Wetland Restoration Project reduces flooding and erosion risks while creating new natural areas and recreational opportunities for the community.



2026 Budget

Operating Budget (in 000's)

<u>Division</u>	<u>Expenditures</u>	<u>Revenues</u>	<u>% Split</u>	<u>Revenue Description</u>
Watershed Management Services	\$ 3,537	\$ 2,574 963		Levy Other Revenues
Conservation Areas Operations	6,591	- 8,425		Levy Other Revenues
Westfield Heritage Village	1,043	695 348		Levy Other Revenues
Central Support Services	7,032	1,950 3,248		Levy Other Revenues
Total		5,219 12,984	28.7% 71.3%	Levy Other Revenues
Budget Surplus (Deficit)	\$ 18,203	\$ 18,203	100.0%	

2025 Levy	\$ 5,052
2026 Levy	5,219
Levy Increase	\$ 167
% Increase	3.3%

Municipal Levy Apportionment

<u>Municipal Levy</u>	<u>Levy</u>	
Total Levy	\$ 5,219,125	Including Westfield Heritage Village Levy
Less: Westfield Heritage Village	695,494	City of Hamilton only
Municipal Levy to Apportion	4,523,631	Levy to apportion to municipalities
City of Hamilton	99.24%	4,489,251
Township of Puslinch	0.76%	34,380
Total Municipal Levy	\$ 4,523,631	

Capital Budget (in 000's)

<u>Capital</u>	<u>Expenditures</u>	<u>Revenues</u>	
Special Projects	\$ 1,725	\$ 1,725	
Major Maintenance	775	775	
Total		2,000 500	Hamilton Capital Block Funding HCA Reserves
Budget Surplus (Deficit)	\$ 2,500	\$ 2,500	

Consolidated Budget (in 000's)

<u>Consolidated</u>	<u>Expenditures</u>	<u>Revenues</u>
Operating	\$ 18,203	\$ 18,203
Capital	2,500	2,500
Total	\$ 20,703	\$ 20,703
Budget Surplus (Deficit)		\$ -



2026 Divisional Summary (in 000's)

Watershed Management Services

<u>Expenses</u>		<u>Revenues</u>	
Staffing	\$ 2,913	Municipal levy	\$ 2,574
Contractors	313	Grants	456
Supplies	107	Permits, fees	295
Other	204	Other	212
Total	<u>\$ 3,537</u>	Total	<u>\$ 3,537</u>

Conservation Area Services

<u>Expenses</u>		<u>Revenues</u>	
Staffing	\$ 3,952	Admissions	\$ 3,796
Equipment	708	Camping	2,289
Utilities	399	Marina	1,659
Materials/supplies	335	Other	681
Other	1,197		
Total	<u>\$ 6,591</u>	Total	<u>\$ 8,425</u>

Westfield Heritage Village & Conservation Area

<u>Expenses</u>		<u>Revenues</u>	
Staffing	\$ 674	Municipal levy	\$ 695
Promotion	92	Events	145
Utilities	63	Admissions	85
Materials/supplies	45	School Programs	65
Other	169	Other	53
Total	<u>\$ 1,043</u>	Total	<u>\$ 1,043</u>

Central Support Services

<u>Expenses</u>		<u>Revenues</u>	
Staff	\$ 4,957	Municipal levy	\$ 1,950
Utilities	359	Equipment rental	1,413
Contractors	144	Management fees	600
Supplies	69	Transfer from Reserves	94
Other	1,503	Other	1,141
Total	<u>\$ 7,032</u>	Total	<u>\$ 5,198</u>

Capital & Major Maintenance

<u>Expenses</u>		<u>Revenues</u>	
Special Projects	\$ 1,725	City of Hamilton Block Funding	\$ 2,000
Major Maintenance	775	HCA Reserves	500
Total	<u>\$ 2,500</u>	Total	<u>\$ 2,500</u>

Hamilton Conservation Authority

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%	-					
	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
3	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

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