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November 5, 2024
SENT ELECTRONICALLY

Regional Chair Bradley and Council
Regional Municipality of Niagara
1815 Sir Isaac Brock Way
Thorold, ON
L2V 4T7

Dear Regional Chair Bradley and Council,

Please be advised that at its meeting of October 18, 2024, the Board of Directors of the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority adopted the following as Resolution No. FA-107-2024:

Moved by Member Brian Grant
Seconded by Member Donna Cridland

THAT Report No. FA-50-24 RE: 2025 Draft Budgets and Municipal Levies **BE RECEIVED**;

THAT the 2025 Draft Budgets & Municipal Levies **BE APPROVED BY WEIGHTED LEVY VOTE** for discussion with municipal staff, in accordance with Board approved Budget Assumptions;

THAT the list of 2025 unfunded pressures **BE PROVIDED** to partner municipalities for any future opportunities outside the 2025 budget through collaborative projects or external funding;

AND FURTHER THAT NPCA staff **REPORT** the results of discussions with municipal staff to the 2025 Q2 Finance Committee and Board of Directors meetings

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Included herewith for reference is a copy of the aforementioned Report No. FA-50-24 and associated appendices.

Should you have any questions on this matter, please feel free to contact CAO/Secretary – Treasurer, Leilani Lee-Yates at lee-yates@npca.ca or 905-788-3135 ext. 251.

Respectfully,

John Metcalfe
Chair, Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority



Report To: Board of Directors

Subject: 2025 Draft Budgets and Municipal Levies

Report No: FA-50-24

Date: October 18, 2024

Recommendation:

THAT Report No. FA-50-24 RE: 2025 Draft Budgets and Municipal Levies **BE RECEIVED**;

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THAT the list of 2025 unfunded pressures **BE PROVIDED** to partner municipalities for any future opportunities outside the 2025 budget through collaborative projects or external funding;

AND FURTHER THAT NPCA staff **REPORT** the results of discussions with municipal staff to the 2025 Q2 Finance Committee and Board of Directors meetings.

Purpose:

The purpose of this report is to provide the Board of Directors with:

- 2025 General Levy Apportionment;
- 2025 Draft Budgets & Municipal Levies; and
- 2025 Unfunded Budget Priorities.

Full details of the 2025 Draft Budgets and Municipal Levies are outlined in Appendix 1 and 2. Please note that Appendix 2 represents the 2025 Draft Budgets and Municipal Levies in the *Conservation Authorities Act* Programs and Services Inventory format.

Background:

In the development of the recommended budget assumptions for the 2025 budget process, staff has reviewed and considered the following:

- Funding municipalities' guidelines when available
- Cost of living adjustments (COLA) and grid step increases, including the ongoing impact of the compensation review project completed in 2023
- Inflation (Consumer Price Index – CPI)
- Multi-year contractual obligations
- Operating, capital and program pressures
- Board approved Fee Policy and full cost accounting
- Focus on internal efficiencies
- General economic outlook
- Impacts on service delivery
- Asset management and state-of-good repair
- Priority technical studies and management plans required under the *Conservation Authorities Act*

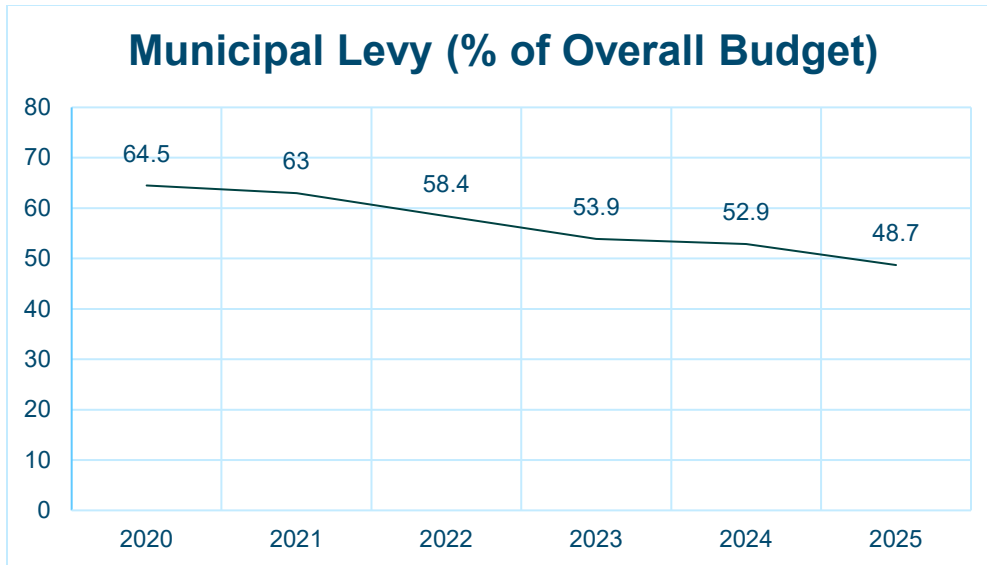
On September 25, 2024, the Finance Committee passed Recommendation No. FC-19-2024, endorsing the 2025 Draft Budgets and Municipal Levies for approval by the Board of Directors.

Discussion:2025 Draft Operating Budgets

NPCA's overall 2025 operating budget of \$16.096M is supported by \$7.84M municipal levy, \$5.699M in authority-generated revenue, and \$2.552M in grant funding. Overall, the operating volume in this zero-based budget is projected to increase by 20.18% (\$2.793M).

While the operating volume has increased to address gaps and achieve required service levels, growth in 2025 is largely due to programs that are fully funded through grants and partnership funding.

Municipal contributions to the overall budget envelope continue a pattern of reduced reliance on the municipal levy, as reflected in the chart below:



Of the year-over-year operating increase, 63% is attributed to substantial growth in fully funded programs, which is offset by corresponding revenues. The residual balance is required to support COLA (2.25% on the salary envelope), step increases, residual impacts of the compensation review project and inflation.

2025 Capital, Special Projects and Land Securement

The 2025 Draft Capital and Special Projects budget represents past backlog and current critical priorities. NPCA's asset management initiative has identified critical infrastructure projects that must be addressed in 2025 to meet service level needs, health and safety and state of good repair priorities. These essential capital projects in Niagara Region and the City of Hamilton are reflected in the capital budget envelope.

Three additional capital projects have been identified by Staff as critical priorities for 2025:

1. Hamilton:
 - a. Binbrook Conservation Area Comfort Station \$500,000
2. Niagara:
 - a. Restoration of heritage sites (Balls Falls Conservation Area) \$100,000
 - b. Centre for Conservation – roof/skylight \$400,000

Given that these three capital projects represent a significant financial impact on the special levy, staff have approached both City of Hamilton and Niagara Region finance staff to explore an alternative funding source. Recognizing the critical nature of these priorities, both municipal partners have expressed a willingness to consider sourcing funds for these projects through the capital levy reserve with

replenishment through NPCA's operating general levy over a multi-year time frame.

In 2024, NPCA successfully acquired five properties (55 hectares) into public ownership, leveraging \$2.205M of external funding. Land securement provisions have been factored into the 2025 budget to continue to support this successful program and provide matching funding for grant opportunities.

NPCA's 2025 budgets include a provision for land securement from each municipality as follows:

- Niagara Region \$269,750
- City of Hamilton \$159,734
- Haldimand County \$14,299

Summary - 2025 Draft Municipal Levy

The levy apportionment ratios are calculated from assessment data provided by MPAC and further revised based on Ontario Regulation 401/22 under the *Conservation Authorities Act*. 2025 Levy Apportionment Ratios break down as follows:

Table 1: 2025 Levy Apportionment

Municipality	2025	2024	Variance
Niagara	76.9078%	76.9641%	-0.0563%
Hamilton	21.1713%	21.1370%	0.0343%
Haldimand	1.9209%	1.8989%	0.0220%

A breakdown of municipal levies, including capital and land securement special levies, is provided in Table 2 below.

Table 2: 2025 Levy Summary, by Municipality

LEVY SUMMARY - 2025					
		2025	2024	Variance	
				Amount	%
NIAGARA					
General Levy		6,034,060	5,418,955	615,105	11.35%
Special Levy - Capital		1,655,273	1,601,271	54,002	3.37%
Special Levy - Land Securement		269,750	250,000	19,750	7.90%
TOTAL		7,959,083	7,270,226	688,857	9.48%
HAMILTON					
General Levy		1,661,065	1,488,232	172,833	11.61%
Special Levy - Capital		254,503	263,309	- 8,806	-3.34%
Special Levy - Land Securement		159,734	148,039	11,695	7.90%
TOTAL		2,075,302	1,899,580	175,722	9.25%
HALDIMAND					
General Levy		150,711	133,699	17,012	12.72%
Special Levy - Capital		19,924	14,679	5,245	35.73%
Special Levy - Land Securement		14,299	13,252	1,047	7.90%
TOTAL		184,934	161,630	23,304	14.42%
CONSOLIDATED					
General Levy		7,845,836	7,040,886	804,950	11.43%
Special Levy - Capital		1,929,700	1,879,259	50,441	2.68%
Special Levy - Land Securement		443,783	411,291	32,492	7.90%
TOTAL		10,219,319	9,331,436	887,883	9.51%

Additional details are included in Appendices 1 and 2.

2025 Unfunded Budget Priorities

In the last several years, NPCA's ability to undertake both operating special projects and capital investments have been significantly impacted by a lack of financial resources. The following issues contributed in part:

- a) NPCA needs to make significant investments in infrastructural upgrades and staffing resources to safely serve our communities. An Asset Management Plan and Financing Strategy is currently being completed and will provide further refinement to the Asset State-of Good Repair Gap and funding requirements.
- b) Staff anticipates significant planning and growth pressures in the coming years in NPCA's jurisdiction requiring NPCA to proactively invest in science and information to support decision making.
- c) Completion of NPCA 10 Year Strategic Plan has identified several gaps and priorities that NPCA must address in the coming years.
- d) *Conservation Authorities Act* amendments and associated regulations requires several priorities to be completed; this includes a significant number of investments in updating conservation areas management plans,

shoreline and coastal resilience technical updates and flood and erosion hazard mitigation projects.

An assessment of current unfunded budget priorities was prioritized by staff. These initiatives (\$16.235M), classified in six categories, are further detailed in Appendix 1.

Financial Implications:

NPCA's 2025 Budgets and Municipal Levies have been developed in accordance with the existing levy guidelines of the *Conservation Authorities Act*. *Conservation Authorities Act* regulations specify the programs and services that Conservation Authorities must provide, requirements for service level agreements with partner municipalities, levy and budgets. Please note that Appendix 2 represents the 2025 Draft Budgets and Municipal Levies in the *Conservation Authorities Programs and Services Inventory* format.

The NPCA is required to prepare annual budgets as part of the fiscal control and financial responsibilities of the organization. The budget is also used in the audit process for evaluation by the external auditing firm. Annual audits are required as per Section 38 of the *Conservation Authorities Act*.

Unfunded budget priorities are currently not included in the 2024 Budget. A diverse range of strategies will be deployed to address these gaps. Staff will investigate external funding sources and liaise with external stakeholders and all levels of governments to look for collaborative opportunities outside the existing budget processes.

Related Reports and Appendices:

Appendix 1: NPCA 2025 Draft Budgets & Municipal Levies – Historical Format

Appendix 2: NPCA 2025 Draft Budgets & Municipal Levies – CA Programs and Services Format

Appendix 3: NPCA 2025 Budget Book (*distributed separately*)

Available upon request:

1. Land Securement Strategy – 2022 to 2032
2. Strategic Plan – 2021 to 2031

Links To Policy/Strategic Plan:

Goal 4.1: Strengthen government relations toward collective outcomes and impact

Goal 5.2: Improve internal operations and processes

Goal 6.1: Ensure responsible, sustainable, and sound fiscal practices

Goal 6.3: Improve asset management and close the state of good repair gap

Authored by:

Original Signed by:

Lise Gagnon, CPA, CGA
Director, Corporate Services

Reviewed and Submitted by:

Original Signed by:

Leilani Lee-Yates, BES, MSPL.RPD, MCIP, RPP
Chief Administrative Officer/Secretary-Treasurer

Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority

2025 DRAFT BUDGETS & MUNICIPAL LEVIES

October 2024



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2025 DRAFT BUDGET SUMMARY

Operating Budget Revenues	2025 Budget	2024 Budget	Variance
Municipal Funding	7,845,836	7,040,886	804,950
Provincial Funding	537,574	540,660	-3,086
Federal Funding	1,562,960	212,323	1,350,637
Program Revenue	4,693,831	4,077,247	616,584
Other	1,455,756	1,432,053	23,703
Total - Operating Revenues	16,095,957	13,303,169	2,792,788
Operating Budget Expenses	2025 Budget	2024 Budget	Variance
Salaries and benefits, Employee Related	10,595,982	8,972,903	1,623,079
Governance	32,764	41,000	-8,236
Professional Fees, Contractor Services	1,581,351	1,043,691	537,660
Materials & Supplies, Vehicles & Equipment	1,082,803	701,109	381,694
Occupancy Costs	838,989	795,892	43,097
Park Maintenance	665,734	654,143	11,591
Information Management/GIS	549,111	455,112	93,999
Marketing, Advertising, Printing, Signs	60,158	91,680	-31,522
Special Events (Festival, Holiday Trail)	215,176	211,260	3,916
Flood Forecasting & Water Quality	155,950	144,400	11,550
Miscellaneous	317,939	191,979	125,960
Total - Operating Expenses	16,095,957	13,303,169	2,792,788
Capital and Special Projects	2025 Budget	2024 Budget	Variance
Facilities	2,028,787	972,853	1,055,934
Equipment	314,598	552,158	- 237,560
Infrastructure (excluding facilities)	239,323	105,173	134,150
Data and Technology Assets	212,016	517,267	- 305,251
Land Management Plans	83,062	105,173	- 22,111
Health and Safety	51,915	52,587	-672
Total - Capital & Special Projects	2,929,701	2,305,211	624,490
Land Securement	443,783	411,291	32,492

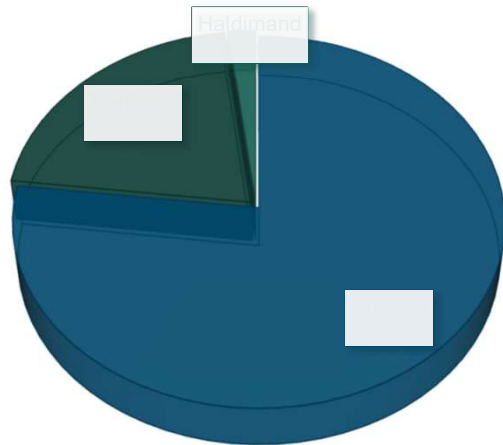
2025 MUNICIPAL LEVY SUMMARY

Levy Apportionment - 2025

The levy apportionment ratios are calculated from assessment data provided by MPAC, and further revised based on the Conservation Authority Levies Regulation.

Municipality	% in CA	Municipal Population	Municipal Population in CA	Prior Year CVA in CA	2025 Levy Apportionment	2024 Levy Apportionment	Variance
Haldimand	25%	42,461	10,488	\$1.913B	1.9209%	1.8989%	0.0220%
Hamilton	21%	450,212	94,995	\$21.082B	21.1713%	21.1370%	0.0343%
Niagara	100%	373,586	373,586	\$76.583B	76.9078%	76.9641%	-0.0563%
Total		866,259	479,069	\$99.578B	100.0000%	100.0000%	

2025 MUNICIPAL LEVY - CONSOLIDATED



LEVY SUMMARY 2025				
	2025	2024	Variance	
			Amount	%
NIAGARA				
General Levy	6,034,060	5,418,955	615,105	11.35%
Special Levy - Capital	1,655,273	1,601,271	54,002	3.37%
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TOTAL	10,219,319	9,331,436	887,883	9.51%

2025 UNFUNDED BUDGET PRIORITIES					
Description	2025 Unfunded Priority	Proposed Funding Sources			
		Municipal Funding			Other
		Niagara	Hamilton	Haldimand	
Integrated Watershed Strategies					
Four Mile Creek Water Budget & Subwatershed Planning	100,000	100,000			
Invasive Species Strategy - Phase 2	20,000	15,382	4,234	384	
Climate Change Action Program Corporate Risk & Vulnerability Assessment	150,000	115,362	31,757	2,881	
Lakewood CA Restoration Plan Implementation	150,000	150,000			
Flood and Erosion Mitigation - Assessment and Design	2,000,000	1,538,156	423,426	38,418	
Non-Point Source Water Quality Best Management Practices Stewardship	200,000	153,816	42,343	3,842	
Shoreline Climate Modeling and Risk Assessment (incl Lake Erie Shoreline Hazard Mapping)	500,000	500,000			
Sustainable Technologies Program	260,000	199,960	55,045	4,994	
Urban Climate Stewardship for Nearshore Watershed (Land to Lake Initiative)	240,000	184,579	50,811	4,610	
Total - Integrated Watershed Strategies	3,620,000	2,957,254			-
Natural Hazard Management					
Upper Virgil Dam Erosion Protection	200,000	200,000			
Lower Virgil Dam Erosion Protection	200,000	200,000			
Total - Natural Hazard Management	400,000	400,000	-	-	-
Conservation Authority Act Requirements					
Land Management Plans	125,000	96,135	26,464	2,401	
Total - Conservation Authority Act Requirements	125,000	96,135	26,464	2,401	-
Corporate Services and Asset Management					
Strategic Asset Management Policy/Planning	80,000	61,526	16,937	1,537	
Sustainable Technologies and Green Infrastructure	100,000	76,908	21,171	1,921	
IT Security Audit	50,000	38,454	10,586	960	
IT Equipment Upgrades	50,000	38,454	10,586	960	
Growth FTE's - Compliance Tech, GIS Tech, Records Management	250,000	192,270	52,928	4,802	
Operationalize Digital Strategy	500,000	384,539	105,857	9,605	
Corporate Support - Process Reviews	100,000	76,908	21,171	1,921	
Facilities - furniture, upgrades, EV Stations, etc.	250,000	192,270	52,928	4,802	
Total - Corporate Services and Asset Management	1,380,000	1,061,328	292,164	26,508	-
Corporate Administration					
NPCA Website Technical Maintenance & Redesign	50,000	38,454	10,586	960	
Total - Corporate Administration	50,000	38,454	10,586	960	-
State of Good Repair (SOGR) / Health and Safety					
Asset replacement and sustainment (amortization)	1,400,000	1,076,709	296,398	26,893	
Campground Upgrades	530,000	530,000			
Barn Storage Facility	200,000	200,000			
Automated Gates	330,000	330,000			
Furniture	25,000	19,227	5,293	480	
Lime Kiln Restoration	100,000	100,000			
New Metal Stairs for Bruce Trail	200,000				200,000
Interpretive and Wayfinding Signage	500,000	384,539	105,857	9,605	
Pavilion 1 Demolition	50,000		50,000		
Natural Playgrounds	750,000	500,000	250,000		
Main Boat Launch Upgrade	500,000		500,000		

2025 UNFUNDED BUDGET PRIORITIES					
Description	2025 Unfunded Priority	Proposed Funding Sources			
		Municipal Funding			Other
		Niagara	Hamilton	Haldimand	
Northside Playground	125,000	125,000			
Drainage South Side	100,000	100,000			
Rebuild Comfort station #2 South Side	400,000	400,000			
Beach Washroom Renovations	50,000	50,000			
Electrical Upgrades	1,000,000	1,000,000			
New Pavilion	125,000	125,000			
Tile Drain in Day Use	125,000	125,000			
Roadway Improvements	1,000,000	769,078	211,713	19,209	
St. Johns Valley Centre Septic System	225,000	225,000			
Fencing for All Parks	300,000	230,723	63,514	5,763	
Waste bins for All Parks	30,000	23,072	6,351	576	
Outdoor Education Natural and Cultural Heritage Campus	1,000,000	1,000,000			
Morgan's Point Washroom Renovations	300,000	300,000			
Morgan's Point Boardwalk	150,000	150,000			
EV Charging Stations	170,000	140,000	30,000		
CFC - Back Up Generator	100,000	100,000			
CFC - Front Entrance (Pond Replacement)	300,000	300,000			
CFC - Replace Windows and Repair Siding	200,000	200,000			
Campground Upgrades - AODA Accessibility	100,000	100,000			
NPCA Net Zero Headquarters Planning, Feasibility Assessment & Design	75,000	57,681	15,878	1,441	
Historical Buildings Roof Repair	200,000	200,000			
Total - State of Good Repair / Health and Safety	10,660,000	8,861,030	1,535,004	63,966	200,000
TOTAL 2025 UNFUNDED BUDGET PRIORITIES	16,235,000	13,414,200	2,471,834	148,966	200,000

2025 Unfunded Budget Priorities					
Classification	Niagara	Hamilton	Haldimand	External	TOTAL
Integrated Watershed Strategies	2,957,254	607,616	55,130	-	3,620,000
Natural Hazard Management	400,000	-	-	-	400,000
Conservation Authority Act Requirements	96,135	26,464	2,401	-	125,000
Corporate Services and Asset Management	1,061,328	292,164	26,508	-	1,380,000
Corporate Administration	38,454	10,586	960	-	50,000
State of Good Repair (SOGR) / Health and Safety	8,861,030	1,535,004	63,966	200,000	10,660,000
	13,414,200	2,471,834	148,966	200,000	16,235,000

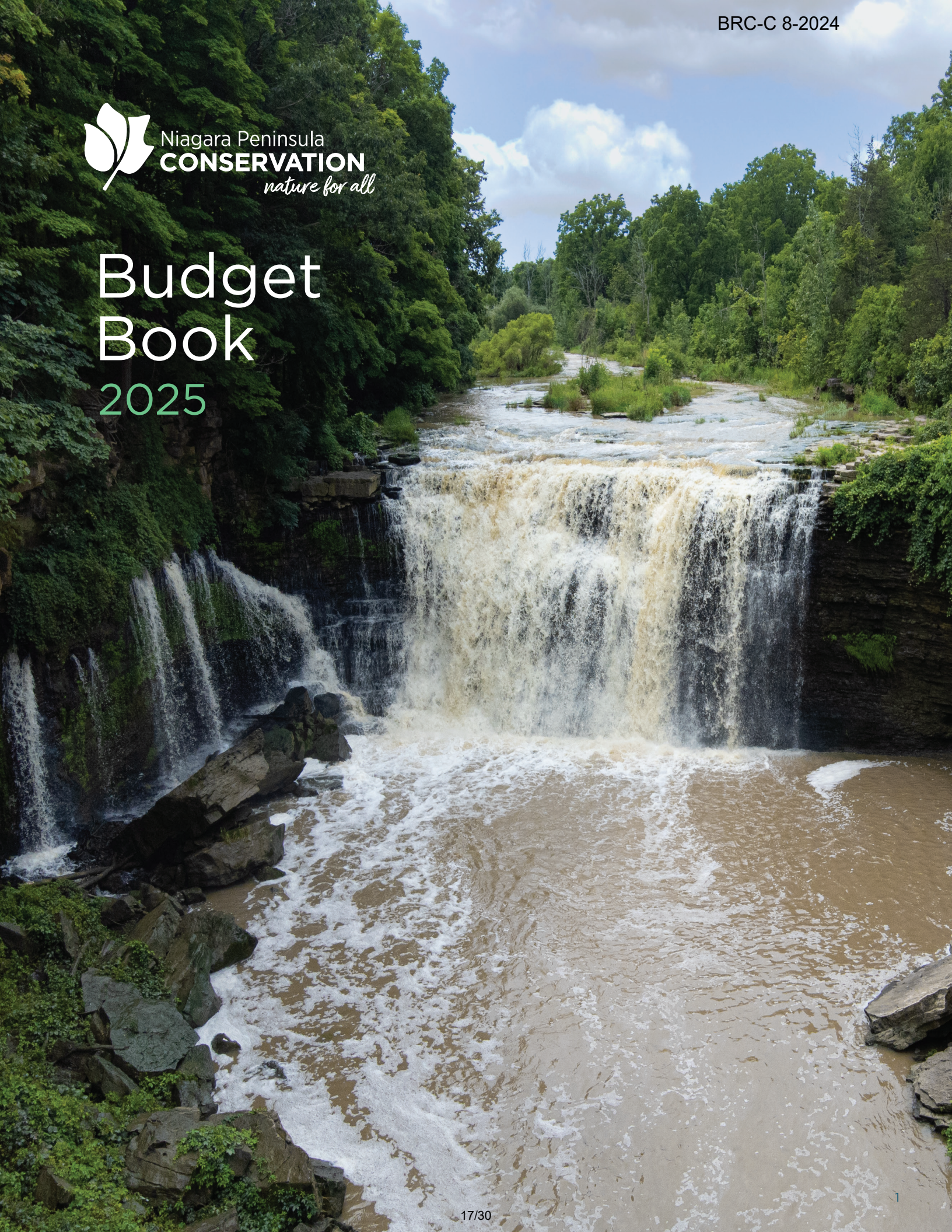
Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority										
2025 Budgets and Municipal Levies (Budget by Programs and Services)										
Appendix 2 Report No. FA-50 24			Levy				Non-Levy			TOTAL
Dept	Description	Category	Niagara	Hamilton	Haldimand	Total Levy	Provincial	Federal	Self-Generated	BUDGET
General Levy Category 1 and 2										
Natural Hazard Management										
301	Flood Forecasting and Warning	1	246,229	67,782	6,150	320,161	31,000			351,161
157	Flood and Erosion Management	1	56,243	15,483	1,405	73,131	5,200			78,331
323	Water Resources	1	46,448	12,786	1,160	60,394				60,394
345	Environmental Planning and Policy	1 & 2	214,126	58,945	5,348	278,419			170,000	448,419
361	Planning and Permitting	1 & 2	223,986	61,659	5,594	291,239	38,600		601,000	930,839
371	Compliance and Enforcement	1	491,365	135,264	12,273	638,901			55,100	694,001
391	Planning Ecology	1 & 2	175,854	48,409	4,392	228,655				228,655
125	Regulatory Mapping Technical Studies	1	85,694	23,590	2,140	111,424				111,424
TOTAL			1,539,943	423,918	38,463	2,002,324	74,800		826,100	2,903,224
Watershed Resource Management and Climate Change										
New	Watershed-based Resource Management Strategy	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
265	Watershed Monitoring and Reporting	1	297,419	81,874	7,429	386,721				386,721
217	Special Projects (groundwater sampling)	1	12,690	3,493	317	16,500				16,500
303	Climate Change Resilience	1	73,225	20,158	1,829	95,212		29,323	5,000	129,535
TOTAL			383,334	105,525	9,574	498,433		29,323	5,000	532,756
Other Watershed Related Programs										
205	Drinking Source Water Protection	1				-	181,234			181,234
TOTAL							181,234			181,234
Conservation Authority Lands and Conservation Areas										
489	Section 29 Enforcement and Compliance	1	76,577	21,080	1,913	99,570				99,570
427	Land Care Program	1	77,076	21,218	1,925	100,219			80,000	180,219
357	Land Management Planning	1	281,073	77,374	7,020	365,467				365,467
119	Ecology	1	110,138	30,319	2,751	143,208				143,208
TOTAL			544,864	149,991	13,609	708,464			80,000	788,464
Enabling Services										
101/107/127	Corporate Services (incl HR, Corp Sup, AM)	1	752,774	207,224	18,802	978,800	37,840	252,069	845,651	2,114,360
105	Financial Services	1	265,816	73,174	6,639	345,630				345,630
109/131	Information Management and Technology	1	697,286	191,950	17,416	906,652				906,652
103/150	Governance and Corporate Administration	1	407,288	112,119	10,173	529,579	15,200			544,779
111	Communications, Marketing and Public Relations	1	400,197	110,167	9,996	520,359				520,359
801	Vehicles and Equipment	1	218,137	60,049	5,448	283,635				283,635
153/155	Asset Management	1	59,245	16,309	1,480	77,034				77,034
TOTAL			2,800,743	770,993	69,953	3,641,689	53,040	252,069	845,651	4,792,449
TOTAL GENERAL LEVY			5,268,884	1,450,426	131,599	6,850,910	309,074	281,392	1,756,751	9,198,127
General Levy Category 3 Cost Apportionment MOU										
Watershed Resource Management and Climate Change										
227	Restoration	3	209,670	57,718	5,237	272,625			21,181	293,806
123	Community Engagement and Stewardship	3	211,685	58,273	5,287	275,245				275,245
343	Integrated Watershed Planning	3	343,822	94,648	8,588	447,057				447,057
TOTAL			765,176	210,639	19,112	994,927			21,181	1,016,108
TOTAL GENERAL LEVY CATEGORY 3			765,176	210,639	19,112	994,927			21,181	1,016,108
Special Levy										
TDB	Capital and Special Projects	1	1,655,273	254,503	19,924	1,929,700			1,000,000	2,929,700
TDB	Land Securement	2	269,750	159,734	14,299	443,783				443,783
TOTAL SPECIAL LEVY			1,925,023	414,237	34,223	2,373,483			1,000,000	3,373,483
Fee for Service Schedule A										

Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority										
2025 Budgets and Municipal Levies (Budget by Programs and Services)										
Appendix 2 Report No. FA-50 24			Levy				Non-Levy			TOTAL
Dept	Description	Category	Niagara	Hamilton	Haldimand	Total Levy	Provincial	Federal	Self-Generated	BUDGET
265	Watershed Monitoring and Reporting						-	-	191,500	191,500
TOTAL FEE FOR SERVICE SCHEDULE A										
Provincial, Federal, Authority Generated										
Other Watershed Related Programs										
241	Niagara River Remedial Action Plan	3					228,500	120,000		348,500
307	Trees for All	3					-	697,009	563,651	1,260,660
133	Natural Asset Management	3							108,000	108,000
321/335	Climate Resilient Coastal Communities Program	3						364,559		364,559
TOTAL							228,500	1,181,568	671,651	2,081,719
Conservation Authority Lands and Conservation Areas										
395/401/403/405	Active Recreation Programs	3						100,000	3,005,980	3,105,980
407/411										
413	Educational Programming	3							502,524	502,524
New	Land Management, Other Agencies	3					-			-
TOTAL								100,000	3,508,504	3,608,504
TOTAL PROVINCIAL, FEDERAL, AUTHORITY GENERATED							228,500	1,281,568	4,180,155	5,690,223
GRAND TOTAL										
			7,959,084	2,075,302	184,934	10,219,320	537,574	1,562,960	7,149,587	19,469,441

SUMMARY									
Operating	6,034,061	1,661,065	150,711	7,845,837	537,574	1,562,960	6,149,587	16,095,958	
Capital	1,655,273	254,503	19,924	1,929,700	-	-	1,000,000	2,929,700	
Land Securement	269,750	159,734	14,299	443,783	-	-	-	443,783	
TOTAL	7,959,084	2,075,302	184,934	10,219,320	537,574	1,562,960	7,149,587	19,469,441	



Budget Book 2025





Nature for All

INTRODUCTION

Ontario's 36 conservation authorities operate under the Conservation Authorities Act, administered by the Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR). Originally enacted in 1946, and the Act has undergone several amendments to reflect evolving environmental priorities and governance requirements.

The Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority (NPCA) was established in 1959 under the Act. It is mandated to develop and deliver programs and services focussed on the conservation, restoration, development, and management of natural resources within its watershed.

NPCA serves three participating municipalities: Niagara Region, the City of Hamilton, and Haldimand County.

Funding contributions are based on Current Value Assessment (CVA) data from the Municipal Property Assessment Corporation (MPAC) and are appointed according to Ontario Regulation 402/22 under the Conservation Authorities Act. Lower-tier municipalities in Niagara Region work with NPCA through various collaboration initiatives, as appropriate.



ABOUT THE NIAGARA PENINSULA CONSERVATION AUTHORITY

NPCA is a community-based natural resource management agency dedicated to protecting, enhancing, and sustaining healthy watersheds. With over 60 years of expertise, NPCA delivers programs and services that focus on flood and hazard management, source water protection, ecosystem restoration, community stewardship, and land management. NPCA manages 41 conservation areas within the Niagara Peninsula watershed, held in public trust for recreation, heritage preservation, conservation, and education.

The NPCA watershed covers 2,424 square kilometres, encompassing the entire Regional Municipality of Niagara and parts of the City of Hamilton (21%) and Haldimand County (25%). Since time immemorial, this land has been the home of Indigenous peoples – a place for sharing, trading, hunting, gathering, stewardship, and friendship.

The watershed supports a population of approximately 479,069 people and is recognized as a unique natural treasure with distinct cultural, geological, hydrological, and biological aspects not found elsewhere in North America. It is part of the Carolinian life zone, the most biodiverse yet threatened eco-region in Canada, and

includes approximately 30% natural cover, providing critical habitats such as forested woodlots, slough forests, alvars, and coastal wetlands. These habitats support rich biodiversity, including numerous rare plants and animal species.

Uniquely situated between two Great Lakes, with the Niagara River as its shared boundary with the United States, the watershed features notable natural landmarks including the Niagara Escarpment Biosphere Reserve, Niagara Falls, the Wainfleet Bog, Ball's Falls, Willoughby Marsh, and the Fonthill Kame.

The micro-climate created by the Niagara Escarpment and region's rich soils support one of Ontario's most productive agricultural areas, including vineyards, tender fruit orchards, livestock farms, and various specialty crops such as greenhouses, flower farms, sod farms, and mushroom operations.

These unique watershed features provide life-sustaining benefits for all and countless opportunities for residents and visitors to discover the area's rich natural and cultural heritage.



NPCA by the Numbers

- 479,069** Residents
- 242,980** Hectares Watershed Jurisdiction
- 41** Conservation Areas
- 2,946** Hectares NPCA Land Holdings
- 202** Local Waterways
- 2** Great Lakes
- 15** Municipalities (Upper and Lower Tier)
- 4** Flagship Properties
- 80** Surface Water Monitoring Stations
- 46** Groundwater Wells



Watershed Management by the Numbers (Annual Average)

- 474** Permits Issued
- 1,150** Planning Applications Reviewed
- 330** Complaints / Potential Violations Received
- 980** Surface Water Quality Samples Collected
- 36** Groundwater Samples Collected



Conservation Areas by the Numbers (Annual Average)

- 160,000** Paid Day-Use Visitors At All Parks
- 1,200** Natureplus Memberships Sold
- 30,000** People Attended NPCA's Signature Events



Restoration by the Numbers (Annual Average)

- 70,700** Trees Planted
- 4,109** Shrubs Planted
- 27** Hectares Of Reforestation
- 3.0** Hectares Of Riparian Area/Shoreline Enhancement
- 3.9** Hectares Of Enhanced Wetland Area
- 9** Agricultural Best Management Practises Projects Completed



1

Healthy and Climate Resilient Watersheds

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

**2**

Supporting Sustainable Growth

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

**3**

Connecting People to Nature

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

**4**

Partner of Choice

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

**5**

Organizational Excellence

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

**6**

Financial Sustainability

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



STRATEGIC PLAN

In 2020, the NPCA Board of Directors approved the development of a staff-led process to create a new strategic plan that would guide NPCA for the next ten years while reflecting its mandate as per the Conservation Authorities Act and fulfilling its significant role within the community.

The plan charts the course for future actions and collective outcomes through six overarching strategic priorities, twenty-one specific goals, and measurable actions. The strategic priorities guide our efforts toward a vision of the Niagara Peninsula watershed with robust nature, thriving agriculture, and resilient urban areas vital to the health and well-being of our residents.

The strategic plan lays the groundwork for guiding strategies for further 10-year direction on programs and services:

- **Watershed Resource Management Strategy**
- **Climate Action Plan**
- **Conservation Areas Strategy**
- **Stewardship Outreach, Education Strategy, and Cultural Heritage Strategy**
- **Marketing and Ecotourism Strategy**
- **Talent Management Strategy**
- **Digital Transformation Strategy**

The NPCA is committed to undertaking specific goals and actions with its partners and communities to achieve a thriving environment that sustains life for future generations.



NPCA Summer Day Camp

NPCA PROGRAMS & SERVICES

Under Ontario Regulation 687/21 Conservation Authority Act, the NPCA programs and services include:

Category 1:

Mandatory programs and services as identified in Ontario Regulation 686/21.

Category 2:

Municipal programs and services provided at the municipality's request. These programs can be funded through government and other agency grants and/or municipal funding under a memorandum of understanding (MOU) or agreement with the municipality.

Category 3:

Other programs and services that an Authority (Board) determines are advisable. These programs can be funded through authority-generated revenue, user fees, government and other agency grants, donations, etc. or levy subject to cost apportioning.

Key NPCA Services Areas

Natural Hazard Management

Protecting people and properties from flood, erosion, and other natural hazards.

Watershed Resource Management and Climate Change

Understanding the current conditions, cumulative impacts, and risks to watersheds. Strategies and measures to protect, enhance, and restore watersheds toward creating healthy and climate-resilient watersheds.

Other Watershed-Related Programs

Drinking Water Source Protection, Niagara Remedial Action Plan (RAP), and other projects/programs funded through external funding sources that benefit partners and the watershed.

Conservation Authority Lands and Conservation Areas

Management of 3,000 hectares of land, including 41 conservation areas essential to watershed management, environmental protection, cultural heritage, and recreation.

Enabling Services

Support to NPCA programs, the Board of Directors, member municipalities, and the public to enable NPCA to operate in an accountable, transparent, efficient, and effective manner.

NPCA BUDGET & FUNDING BREAKDOWN

The NPCA's expenditures are focused on programs and services to reduce flood damage, improve water quality, maintain a reliable water supply, protect natural areas and biodiversity, provide environmental education, operate conservation areas and trails, and manage other sensitive environmental lands.

The NPCA has three main sources of revenue:

MUNICIPAL LEVY

Municipal levy represents 48.7 percent of the total conservation authority budget.

AUTHORITY-GENERATED FUNDS

\$5.699M of 2025 revenues are derived from fees for services and other sources, such as user fees, educational programs, and planning fees.

OTHER REVENUES AND GRANT FUNDING

Make up the balance, equating to \$2.552M.

To deliver on our mandate and commitment, the NPCA provides programs and services in the following areas:

Natural Hazard Management

Watershed Resource Management & Climate Change

Other Watershed Related Programs

Conservation Authority Lands & Conservation Areas

Enabling Services



Beamer Memorial Conservation Area

NPCA 2025 BUDGET

In the development of the 2025 budgets, the following issues were considered:

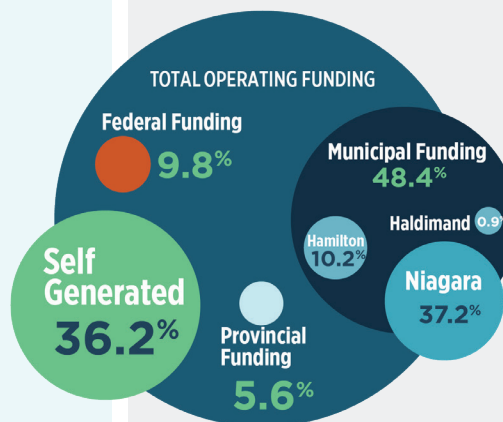
- Budget strategies from municipal partners
- Cost of Living Adjustments (COLA) and grid step increases, including the ongoing impact of the compensation review project Inflation (Consumer Price Index – CPI)
- Multi-year contractual obligations
- Operating, capital and program pressures
- Focus on internal efficiencies
- Impacts on service delivery
- Asset management, state of good repair for asset base, capital funding gaps, deferred capital projects and building a sustainable capital plan
- Impacts and transition of Conservation Authorities Act amendments
- Current program gaps and pressures
- Approved programs and services inventory

2025 Draft Operating Budgets

NPCA’s overall 2025 operating budget of \$16.096M is supported by \$7.84M municipal levy, \$5.699M in authority-generated revenue, and \$2.552M in grant funding.

Overall, the operating volume in this zero-based budget is projected to increase by 20.18% (\$2.684M). While the operating volume has increased to address gaps and achieve required service levels, growth in 2025 is largely due to programs that are fully funded through grants and partnership funding. Municipal contributions in the overall budget envelope continue a pattern of reduced reliance on the municipal levy:

2025 - 48.7% | 2024 - 52.9% | 2023 - 53.9%
2022 - 58.4% | 2021 - 63.0% | 2020 - 64.5%



For every municipal dollar, other sources contribute:

\$2.07

Sources of Operating Revenue 2024

	2025 Budget	2024 Budget	Variance
Municipal Funding	7,845,836	7,040,886	804,950
Provincial Funding	537,574	540,660	-3,086
Federal Funding	1,562,960	212,323	1,350,637
Program Revenue	4,693,831	4,077,247	616,584
Other	1,455,756	1,432,053	23,703
Total - Operating Revenues	16,095,957	13,303,169	2,792,788

2024 Operating Expenses

	2025 Budget	2024 Budget	Variance
Salaries and benefits, Employee Related	10,595,982	8,972,903	1,623,079
Governance	32,764	41,000	-8,236
Professional Fees, Contractor Services	1,581,351	1,043,691	537,660
Materials & Supplies Vehicles & Equipment	1,082,803	701,109	381,694
Occupancy Costs	838,989	795,892	43,097
Park Maintenance	665,734	654,143	11,591
Information Management/GIS	549,111	455,112	93,999
Marketing, Advertising, Printing, Signs	60,158	91,680	-31,522
Special Events (Festival, Holiday Trail)	215,176	211,260	3,916
Flood Forecasting & Water Quality	155,950	144,400	11,550
Miscellaneous	317,939	191,979	125,960
Total - Operating Expenses	16,095,957	13,303,169	2,792,788

2025 Draft Capital, Special Projects and Land Securement

The 2025 Draft Capital and Special Projects budget addresses both the backlog of previously deferred projects and current critical priorities. NPCA's asset management initiative has identified critical infrastructure projects that must be completed in 2025 to maintain service levels, ensure health and safety, and meet state-of-good-repair standards. These priority projects, located in Niagara and Hamilton, are included in the capital budget. In 2024, NPCA successfully acquired five properties (55 hectares) into public ownership, leveraging \$2.205M of external funding. The 2025 budget includes provisions to maintain land acquisition efforts at 2024 levels, ensuring continued support for this program and providing matching funds for future grant opportunities.

Capital and Special Projects	2025 Budget	2024 Budget
Facilities	2,028,787	972,853
Equipment	314,598	552,158
Infrastructure (excluding facilities)	239,323	105,173
Data and Technology Assets	212,016	517,267
Land Management Plans	83,062	105,173
Health and Safety	51,915	52,587
Sub Total	2,929,701	2,305,211

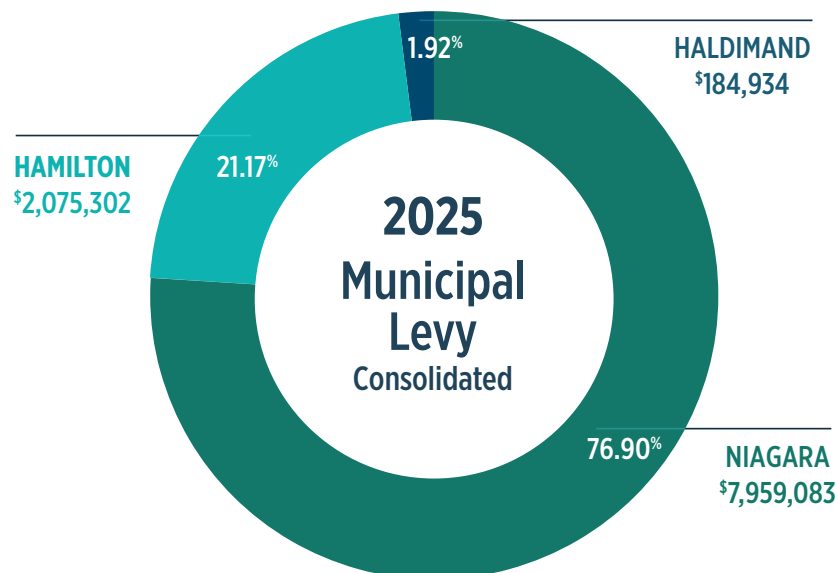
Land Securement	2025 Budget	2024 Budget
Niagara	269,750	250,000
Hamilton	159,734	148,039
Haldimand	14,299	13,252
Total	443,783	411,291



Beamer Memorial Conservation Area

Municipal Funding

The levy apportionment ratios are calculated from assessment data provided by MPAC, and further revised based on the Conservation Authority Levies Regulation. Consolidated municipal funding for 2025 is \$10,219,319 (excluding land securement). Levy apportionment based on Current Value Assessment is:



Levy Summary 2024

NIAGARA			Variance	
	2025	2024		
General Levy	6,034,060	5,418,955		
Special Levy- Capital	1,655,273	1,601,271		
Special Levy - Land Securement	269,750	250,000		
TOTAL	7,959,083	7,270,226		

HAMILTON			Variance	
	2025	2024	Amount	%
General Levy	1,661,065	1,488,232	172,833	11.61%
Special Levy - Capital	254,503	263,309	- 8,806	-3.34%
Special Levy - Land Securement	159,734	148,039	11,695	7.90%
TOTAL	2,075,302	1,899,580	175,722	9.25%

HALDIMAND			Variance	
	2025	2024	Amount	%
General Levy	150,711	133,699	17,012	12.72%
Special Levy - Capital	19,924	14,679	5,245	35.73%
Special Levy - Land Securement	14,299	13,252	1,047	7.90%
TOTAL	184,934	161,630	23,304	14.42%

CONSOLIDATED			Variance	
	2025	202v4	Amount	%
General Levy	7,845,836	7,040,886	804,950	11.43%
Special Levy - Capital	1,929,700	1,879,259	50,441	2.68%
Special Levy - Land Securement	443,783	411,291	32,492	7.90%
TOTAL	10,219,319	9,331,436	887,883	9.51%



Cave Springs Conservation Area

2025 Unfunded Priorities (Outside 2025 Proposed Municipal Levy)

In the last several years, NPCA’s ability to undertake both operational special projects and capital investments has been significantly constrained by limited financial resources. Several factors have contributed to this situation:

Infrastructure & Staffing Needs: NPCA must investment in infrastructure upgrades and staffing to continue serving our communities safely and efficiently. An Asset Management Plan and Financing Strategy are currently underway to further define the Asset State-of-Good-Repair gap and associated funding requirements.

Planning & Growth Pressures: Anticipated growth and development within NPCA’s jurisdiction will require proactive investment in science and data to support informed decision-making. The completion of NPCA

10-Year Strategic Plan has identified critical gaps and priorities, including climate vulnerability and risk mitigation, that must be addressed.

Conservation Authorities Act Changes: Conservation Authorities Act amendments and associated regulations requires several priorities to be completed; this includes a significant number of investments in updating conservation areas management plans, shoreline and coastal resilience technical updates and flood and erosion hazard mitigation projects.

An assessment of current unfunded pressures was prioritized by staff; these initiatives totaling \$16.235M, classified in six categories are summarized below.

Classification	Niagara	Hamilton	Haldimand	External	TOTAL
Integrated Watershed Strategies	2,957,254	607,616	55,130	-	3,620,000
Natural Hazard Management	400,000	-	-	-	400,000
Conservation Authority Act Transition	96,135	26,464	2,401	-	125,000
Corporate Services and Asset Management	1,061,328	292,164	26,508	-	1,380,000
Corporate Administration	38,454	10,586	960	-	50,000
State of Good Repair / Health and Safety	8,861,030	1,535,004	63,966	200,000	10,660,000
	13,414,200	2,471,834	148,966	200,000	16,235,000

These unfunded priorities are not included in the 2025 budget. To address these gaps, NPCA will employ a range of strategies, including exploring external funding sources, collaborating with stakeholders, and engaging with all levels of governments to pursue opportunities beyond the existing budget framework.