



Board of Directors
Meeting No. BOD-02-24
Friday, February 23, 2024
9:00 a.m.

Amended Agenda

Meeting Location:

120 Bayview Parkway, Newmarket
Minutes and agendas are available at www.LSRCA.on.ca

Upcoming Events

Board of Directors' Meeting

Friday, March 22, 2024
120 Bayview Parkway, Newmarket

Lake Simcoe Conservation Foundation

35th Annual Conservation Dinner

Wednesday June 12, 2024
The Manor at Carrying Place

5th Annual Invitational Golf Tournament

Monday, August 26, 2024
King Valley Golf Club

A full listing of events can be found at www.LSRCA.on.ca

I. Acknowledgement of Indigenous Territory

II. Declarations of Pecuniary Interest and Conflicts of Interest

III. Approval of Agenda

Pages 1 - 6

Recommended: That the content of the Agenda for the February 23, 2024 meeting of the Board of Directors be approved as amended to include Item VI c), a presentation entitled "Conservation Authorities Act Updates: O. Reg. 41/24: Prohibited Activities, Exemptions and Permits, and O. Reg. 686/21: Mandatory Programs and Services".

IV. Adoption of Minutes

a) Board of Directors

Pages 7 - 14

Included in the agenda is a copy of the minutes of the Board of Directors' Annual General Meeting, No. BOD-01-24, held on Friday, January 26, 2024.

Recommended: That the minutes of the Board of Directors' Annual General Meeting, No. BOD-01-24, held on Friday, January 26, 2024 be approved as circulated.

V. Announcements

VI. Presentations

a) Strategic Plan Reporting and 2023 Annual Priorities Updates

Pages 15 - 24

CAO, Rob Baldwin, will provide a presentation on the progress of **Transformation 2022-2024**, the Conservation Authority's Strategic Plan, along with an update on the 2023 Annual Priorities. This presentation will be provided at the meeting and will be available on the Conservation Authority's website following the meeting.

Recommended: That the presentation by CAO Rob Baldwin regarding the progress of **Transformation 2022-2024**, the Conservation Authority's Strategic Plan and an update on the 2023 Annual Priorities be received for information.

Staff Report No. 04-24-BOD regarding the progress of **Transformation 2022-2024**, the Conservation Authority's Strategic Plan is included in the agenda.

Recommended: That the Staff Report No. 04-24-BOD regarding the progress of **Transformation 2022-2024**, the Conservation Authority's Strategic Plan be received for information.

b) 2023 Enabling Services Year in Review

Pages 25 - 27

General Manager, Corporate and Financial Services/CFO, Mark Critch, will provide a presentation on the Conservation Authority's Enabling Services Internal Customer Satisfaction Survey results. This presentation will be provided at the meeting and will be available on the Conservation Authority's website following the meeting.

Recommended: That the presentation by General Manager, Corporate and Financial Services/CFO, Mark Critch, regarding the Conservation Authority's Enabling Services Internal Customer Satisfaction Survey results be received for information.

Staff Report No. 05-24-BOD regarding the Conservation Authority's Enabling Services Internal Customer Satisfaction Survey is included in the agenda.

Recommended: That the Staff Report No. 05-24-BOD regarding the Conservation Authority's Enabling Services Internal Customer Satisfaction Survey be received for information.

c) Conservation Authorities Act Updates: O. Reg. 41/24: Prohibited Activities, Exemptions and Permits, and O. Reg. 686/21: Mandatory Programs and Services

CAO, Rob Baldwin, will provide a presentation on Ontario Regulation 41/24: Prohibited Activities, Exemptions and Permits, and amendments to Ontario Regulation 686/21: Mandatory Programs and Services made under the Conservation Authorities Act, all of which come into effect on April 1, 2024. This presentation will be provided at the meeting and will be available on the Conservation Authority's website following the meeting.

Recommended: That the presentation by CAO Rob Baldwin on Ontario Regulation 41/24: Prohibited Activities, Exemptions and Permits, and amendments to Ontario Regulation 686/21: Mandatory Programs and Services made under the Conservation Authorities Act be received for information.

VII. Hearings

There are no Hearings scheduled for this meeting.

VIII. Deputations

There are no Deputations scheduled for this meeting.

IX. Determination of Items Requiring Separate Discussion

(Reference Pages 5 and 6 of the agenda)

X. Adoption of Items Not Requiring Separate Discussion

XI. Consideration of Items Requiring Separate Discussion

XII. Closed Session

The Board will move to Closed Session to deal with confidential legal and human resources matters.

Recommended: That the Board move to Closed Session to deal with confidential legal and human resources matters; and

Further that the Chief Administrative Officer and members of the Executive Leadership Team remain in the meeting for the discussion on Items a), b), and c); and

Further that the Sr. Director, Human Resources and the Chief of Staff remain in the meeting for the discussion on Item d).

The Board will rise from Closed Session and report findings.

Recommended: That the Board rise from Closed Session and report findings.

a) Confidential Legal Matter

Confidential Staff Report No. 12-24-BOD will be sent to Board members prior to the meeting.

Recommended: That Confidential Staff Report No. 12-24-BOD regarding a confidential legal matter be received for information.

b) Confidential Legal Matter

Confidential Staff Report No. 13-24-BOD will be sent to Board members prior to the meeting.

Recommended: That Confidential Staff Report No. 13-24-BOD regarding a confidential legal matter be received for information.

c) Confidential Human Resources Matter

Confidential Staff Report No. 14-24-BOD will be sent to Board members prior to the meeting.

Recommended: That Confidential Staff Report No. 14-24-BOD regarding a confidential human resources matter be received; and

Further that the recommendations contained within the report be approved.

d) Confidential Human Resources Matter

A confidential human resources matter will be discussed at the meeting.

Recommended: That the discussion on the Confidential Human Resources matter be received; and

Further that the Sr. Director, Human Resources be directed to implement recommendations approved by the Board of Directors.

XIII. Other Business

Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Board of Directors will be held on Friday, March 22, 2024. This meeting will be held in person at the Conservation Authority's Newmarket offices located at 120 Bayview Parkway, Newmarket.

XIV. Adjournment

Agenda Items

1. Correspondence

Pages 28 - 31

- a) December 13, 2023 Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry letter to all Conservation Authorities regarding extension to Minister's Direction on Fee Changes associated with Planning, Development and Permitting.

Recommended: That Correspondence item a) be received for information.

2. Monitoring Report - Planning and Development Applications for the period January 1 to December 31, 2023

Pages 32 - 40

Recommended: That Staff Report No. 06-24-BOD regarding the total number of planning and development applications for the period January 1 through December 31, 2023 be received for information.

3. Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act: Annual Statistical Report

Pages 41 - 51

Recommended: That Staff Report No. 07-24-BOD regarding the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act 2023 Annual Statistical Report be received for information.

4. Conservation Authority Board Member Appointment to Lake Simcoe Conservation Foundation for 2024

Pages 52 - 53

Recommended: That Staff Report No. 08-24-BOD regarding the appointment of two members to represent the Conservation Authority on the Lake Simcoe Conservation Foundation Board of Directors be received; and

Further that the Conservation Authority's Chair, Councillor Clare Riepma, and Vice Chair, Mayor Randy Greenlaw, be appointed to the Lake Simcoe Conservation Foundation Board of Directors for 2024.

5. 2024 Annual Priorities

Pages 54 - 58

Recommended: That Staff Report No. 09-24-BOD regarding the Conservation Authority's 2024 Annual Priorities be received for information.

6. Bill 23 More Homes Built Faster Act, 2022 – Impacts on Development Services Department

Pages 59 - 67

Recommended: That Staff Report No. 10-24-BOD regarding an end-of-year overview and update on the impacts of Bill 23 to the Development Services Department be received for information.

7. Georgina Island Fixed Link Project Update

Pages 68 - 79

Recommended: That Staff Report No. 11-24-BOD regarding an update on staff's review and involvement with the Georgina Island Fixed Link project be received for information.

Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority

73rd Annual General Meeting

Board of Directors' Meeting No. BOD-01-24

Friday, January 26, 2024

120 Bayview Parkway, Newmarket

Meeting Minutes

Board Members Present

Councillor S. Bell, Councillor A. Courser, Councillor F. Drodge, Councillor A. Eek, Regional Chairman W. Emmerson, Councillor P. Ferragine, Regional Councillor B. Garrod, Mayor R. Greenlaw, Councillor S. Harrison-McIntyre, Mayor I. Lovatt, Councillor C. Pettingill, Mayor M. Quirk, Councillor C. Riepma, Councillor M. Thompson, Deputy Mayor and Regional Councillor T. Vegh

Board Members Absent

Mayor V. Hackson, Councillor D. Le Roy, Councillor E. Yeo

Staff Present

R. Baldwin, T. Barnett, A. Brown, S. Connor, M. Critch, A. Cullen, P. Davies, R. Doyle, B. Ginn, N. Hamley, D. Lembcke, G. MacMillan, G. Peat, C. Taylor, K. Yemm

Guests in Attendance

J.L. Durnford, J. Payne, K. Tuyen, M. Walters

I. Chair Emmerson's Welcome

Chair Emmerson welcomed everyone to the 73rd Annual General meeting of the Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority and acknowledged the Lake Simcoe watershed as traditional Indigenous territory.

Roll Call – 2023 Board Members

The 2023 Board Members introduced themselves and advised which municipality they represent. Chair Emmerson mentioned members who were not in attendance.

II. Declarations of Pecuniary Interest and Conflict of Interest

None noted for the meeting.

III. Approval of Agenda

Moved by: T. Vegh

Seconded: M. Thompson

BOD-001-24 **Resolved That** the content of the Agenda for the Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority's 73rd Annual General Meeting held on Friday, January 26, 2024 be approved as presented. **Carried**

IV. Adoption of Minutes

a) Board of Directors

Moved by: A. Courser

Seconded by: S. Harrison-McIntyre

BOD-002-24 **Resolved That** the minutes of the Board of Directors Meeting No. BOD-10-23 held on Friday, December 15, 2023 be approved as circulated. **Carried**

V. Presentations

a) Lake Management

Limnologist, Dr. Brian Ginn, provided an update on how phosphorus loads and phosphorus use within the lake have changed, along with lake management implications, noting that since 2010 the environmental state of Lake Simcoe has not responded to fluctuations in phosphorus loads in the manner expected. Despite increases and decreases in annual nutrient inputs, key in-lake health indicators have not fluctuated in turn and are within the range of the Lake Simcoe Protection Plan (the Plan) targets. He explained that over the past 3 years, the Conservation Authority has investigated why the lake has not responded to changing phosphorus loads and is apparently "decoupled" from well-established ecological relationships that are the foundation of lake management strategies.

Dr. Ginn noted that climate change has altered precipitation patterns and tributary flows that are the main drivers of phosphorus loads, and the variation in loads between years is dependent on how and when precipitation falls, as well as delivery of nutrients to the lake by tributaries. Invasive quagga mussels are another factor and are the dominant species in Lake Simcoe, redefining the nutrient pathways to patterns that could not have been predicted when the Plan was written before 2009. He explained these new patterns of phosphorus delivery and use in Lake Simcoe are occurring on other lakes across the Great Lakes region. Through collaborations, the team is now understanding where changes may be required in lake management plans, and how to develop new models to better predict ecological changes in the lake and across the Great Lakes system. One example is as long as quagga mussel populations grow, in-lake phosphorus concentrations are expected to further decline. If quagga mussel populations decline, in-lake phosphorus concentrations and amounts of algae would be expected to increase. As a result, phosphorus load targets would need to be flexible to protect the sustainability of the lake ecosystem.

Dr. Ginn advised that the phosphorus decoupling scenario being investigated on Lake Simcoe should serve as a cautionary tale for lake management. A single metric, such as phosphorus loads, does not always accurately reflect lake health, ecological trends, or the effectiveness of a management strategy. For example, climate change is extending the length of water column stratification, which impacts late year deepwater oxygen; a lack of winter ice cover and warmer water temperatures can change amounts of algae and larval fish development; chloride run-off is an emerging concern for freshwater ecosystems including Lake Simcoe. Lakes have many complex relationships that must be monitored, assessed, and tracked over time to provide a more complete picture of lake health. He noted the importance Conservation Authority staff's continuing to evaluate and re-visit metrics to ensure a sustainable future for the lake's ecosystem.

To view this presentation, please click this link: [Lake Management Update Presentation](#)

Moved by: P. Ferragine

Seconded by: I. Lovatt

BOD-003-24 **Resolved That** the presentation by Limnologist, Dr. Brian Ginn, regarding Phosphorus Loads and Lake Simcoe Management be received for information. **Carried**

Staff Report No. 01-24-BOD regarding Phosphorus Loads and Lake Simcoe Management was included in the agenda.

Moved by: P. Ferragine

Seconded by: I. Lovatt

BOD-004-24 **Resolved That** Staff Report No. 01-24-BOD providing an update on phosphorus in Lake Simcoe be received for information. **Carried**

b) 2023 Year in Review

The Conservation Authority's Chief Administrative Officer, Rob Baldwin, congratulated staff on their many accomplishments of 2023, noting that staff are the reason for our success and what a privilege and honour it is to lead such a talented team. CAO Baldwin shared a video that captures the many highlights and accomplishments from 2023. To view the video, please click this link: [2023 Year in Review Video](#). These highlights and accomplishments are also captured in the [2023 Year in Review Infographics](#)

Moved by: S. Harrison-McIntyre

Seconded by: F. Drodge

BOD-005-24 **Resolved That** the presentation by Chief Administrative Officer, Rob Baldwin, on the Conservation Authority's 2023 highlights and accomplishments be received for information. **Carried**

VI. 2023 Business is Concluded

Chair Emmerson concluded the business of 2023 and deemed the Chair vacant.

Moved by: T. Vegh

Seconded by: M. Thompson

BOD-006-24 **Resolved That** the Board of Directors conclude the business of 2023; and **Further That** the Chair be declared vacant. **Carried**

VII. 2024 Business

After a short break, the 2024 Business portion of the meeting was called to order by the Conservation Authority's Chief Administrative Officer, Rob Baldwin.

Roll Call – 2024 Board Members

The 2024 Board Members introduced themselves and advised which municipality they represent. CAO Baldwin mentioned members who were not in attendance.

VIII. Election of Officers

CAO Baldwin conducted the election of officers, outlining the general rules and noting that positions are required for Chair and Vice Chair for 2024 and must be appointed members of the Board of Directors.

A. Appointment of Scrutineers

Moved by: C. Pettingill

Seconded by: F. Drodge

BOD-007-24 **Resolved That** in the event of a vote by ballot, Mr. Jeff Payne and Mr. Mike Walters will act as scrutineers; and

Further that all ballots be destroyed following the election. **Carried**

B. Election of Officers – 2024

i. Chair of the Authority

Councillor Clare Riepma was nominated for the position of Chair by Regional Chairman Wayne Emmerson. Nominations were called for three times. No further nominations were put forward.

Moved by: M. Quirk

Seconded by: A. Eek

BOD-008-24 **Resolved that** the nominations for the position of Chair be closed. **Carried**

Councillor Riepma accepted the nomination for the position of Chair, and CAO Baldwin offered congratulations to Councillor Riepma as the 2024 Chair.

ii. Vice Chair of the Authority

Mayor Randy Greenlaw was nominated for the position of Vice Chair by Mayor Margaret Quirk. Nominations were called for three times and no further nominations were put forward.

Moved by: P. Ferragine

Seconded by: W. Emmerson

BOD-009-24 **Resolved that** the nominations for the position of Vice Chair be closed. **Carried**

Mayor Greenlaw accepted the nomination for the position of Vice Chair, and CAO Baldwin congratulated Mayor Greenlaw as the 2024 Vice Chair.

Chair Riepma chaired the remainder of the meeting.

C. Appointment of the Regulations Sub-committee for 2024

In the event of a Hearing by the Board of Directors under Ontario Regulation 179/06, a Regulations Sub-Committee is formed to review the circumstances and report to the Board.

Moved by: A. Eek

Seconded by: F. Drodge

BOD-010-24 **Resolved that** the Chair and Vice Chair, along with the Member representing the local municipality in which the application under Ontario Regulation 179/06 is received shall be members of the sub-committee to review applications and report to the Board of Directors. **Carried**

D. Appointment to Conservation Ontario for 2024

The Chair, or his/her designate, and the Chief Administrative Officer represent the Conservation Authority on Conservation Ontario's Council. Chair Riepma agreed to represent the Conservation Authority for 2024.

Moved by: T. Vegh

Seconded by: M. Thompson

BOD-011-24 **Resolved that** the 2024 Chair, Councillor Clare Riepma, be appointed as the Conservation Authority's voting delegate to Conservation Ontario; and

Further that the Chief Administrative Officer be the alternate delegate. **Carried**

E. Appointment to the Lake Simcoe Conservation Foundation Board of Directors for 2024

Chair Riepma advised that the Chair and Vice Chair or their designates are appointed to the Lake Simcoe Conservation Foundation Board of Directors. Chair Riepma requested that this appointment be deferred to the February 2024 Board of Directors' meeting.

Moved by: A. Courser

Seconded by: F. Drodge

BOD-012-24 **Resolved that** the appointed of Board members to the Lake Simcoe Conservation Foundation Board of Directors for 2024 be deferred to the February 2024 meeting. **Carried**

F. Appointment of Solicitors for 2024

The Conservation Authority currently utilizes the services of five (5) legal firms; namely, Stiver Vale for general administrative advice and land management; Hicks Morley for employment and labour related matters; HHL Law Firm (formerly Hill Hunter Losell) for floodplain regulation advice; Barriston LLP for general administrative and regulations advice; and Beard Winter for floodplain regulation advice, litigation and real estate.

Moved by: I. Lovatt

Seconded by: W. Emmerson

BOD-013-24 **Resolved that** Stiver Vale, Hicks Morley, HHL Law Firm, Barriston Law and Beard Winter be appointed as Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority's legal firms for 2024; and

Further that a review of legal firms be conducted for 2025. **Carried**

G. Signing Officers for 2024

Each year the Conservation Authority appoints four signing officers: namely, the Chair, the Vice Chair, the Chief Administrative Officer and the General Manager, Corporate and Financial Services/CFO.

Moved by: R. Greenlaw

Seconded by: P. Ferragine

BOD-014-24 **Resolved that** an account in the name of Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority (hereinafter called the "Organization") be kept at the Bank of Nova Scotia (hereinafter called the "Bank"; and

Further that the Authority's Chair, Vice Chair, the Chief Administrative Officer/Secretary-Treasurer, and the General Manager, Corporate and Financial Services/CFO, or any two of them are hereby authorized to sign, make, draw, accept, endorse and deliver cheques, promissory notes, bills of exchange, orders for the payment of money and such agreements and instruments as may be necessary or useful in connection with the operation of the said account; and

Further that any one of the above-mentioned officers is hereby authorized for and in the name of the Organization to endorse and transfer to the Bank for deposit or discount with or collection by the Bank (but for the credit of the Organization only) cheques, promissory notes, bills of exchange, orders for the payment of money and other instruments, to arrange, settle, balance and certify all books and accounts with the Bank and to sign receipts for vouchers. **Carried**

H. Borrowing Resolution

The borrowing resolution authorizes the Conservation Authority to borrow an amount up to \$500,000.

Moved by: C. Pettingill

Seconded by: M. Quirk

BOD-015-24 **Resolved that** signing officers for the Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority be empowered to borrow up to \$500,000 on an Operating Loan Agreement, as required, for administration and/or capital expenditures. **Carried**

IX. Staff Reports

a) Draft 2024 Budget - Ontario Regulation 402/22, Section 14

Staff Report No. 02-24-BOD regarding the Draft 2024 Budget in accordance with Ontario Regulation 402/22, Section 14 was included in the agenda.

Moved by: A. Courser

Seconded by: F. Drodge

BOD-016-24 **Resolved That** Staff Report No. 02-24-BOD regarding the Draft 2024 Budget be received; and

Further that the Board of Directors vote to approve the Draft 2024 Budget for use in consultation with the participating municipalities; and

Further that the Draft 2024 Budget be made available on the Conservation Authority's Governance webpage for the general public and participating municipalities to view in advance of the 2024 Budget vote planned for March 2024. **Carried**

b) Board of Directors' Meeting Schedule 2024

Staff Report No. 03-24-BOD, which outlined the recommended Board of Director's 2024 meeting schedule was included in the agenda.

Moved by: R. Greenlaw

Seconded by: W. Emmerson

BOD-017-24 **Resolved that** Staff Report No. 03-24-BOD regarding the Board of Directors' Meeting Schedule for 2024 be received; and

Further that the proposed schedule be approved. **Carried**

X. Closing Remarks

Vice Chair Greenlaw and Chair Riepma thanked the Board of Directors for their trust and confidence in them, both noting they look forward to serving as Chair and Vice Chair.

XI. Adjournment

Moved by: M. Quirk

Seconded by: C. Pettingill

BOD-018-24 **Resolved That** the meeting be adjourned at 10:50 a.m. **Carried**

Original to be signed by:

Councillor Clare Riepma
Chair

Original to be signed by:

Rob Baldwin
Chief Administrative Officer

Staff Report

To: Board of Directors

From: Rob Baldwin, Chief Administrative Officer

Date: February 16, 2024

Subject:

Transformation 2022–2024: Strategic Plan Progress Report

Recommendation:

That Staff Report No. 04-24-BOD providing an update on the progress made on the Conservation Authority's Strategic Plan: **Transformation 2022-2024** be received for information.

Purpose of this Staff Report:

The purpose of this Staff Report No. 04-24-BOD and accompanying presentation is to provide the Board with an update on the progress made on the Conservation Authority's strategic plan: **Transformation 2022-2024**.

Background:

Developed throughout 2021, and at a time when COVID and the *Conservation Authorities Act* changes created uncertainty, **Transformation 2022-2024** reaffirmed our vision, and the mission we aspire to achieve. It is a plan that shifted our focus to transforming the way we consider our work and its impacts, constituting a different approach to the way we've planned and implemented our work, as well as our reporting.

In the past, our strategic plans were predominantly developed with outputs, such as projects and products, as the key deliverables and their completion being the measures of success.

Transformation 2022-2024 is our first plan to truly focus on the outcomes we seek to achieve in the watershed. As you will note, the five strategic directions identify our fundamental areas of focus and underpin our planned actions:

1. Champion watershed health and climate resilience

- 1.1 People, property and infrastructure are protected from natural hazards through planning, permits, enforcement of regulations and flood management and warning activities.
- 1.2 Healthy communities are supported through effective plan review services for our municipal clients.

- 1.3 Drinking water sources are protected through our leadership of the source water protection program.
- 1.4 A resilient watershed is achieved through nature-based restoration solutions and an increase in protected areas on rural, urban and agricultural lands.

2. Drive evidence-based decision-making

- 2.1 Knowledge of watershed health and management decisions are improved through comprehensive, leading-edge science.
- 2.2 Decision makers access, understand and implement integrated watershed management plans and their recommendations.
- 2.3 Effectively and securely managed data facilitates collaboration and analysis, improving decision-making.
- 2.4 Climate change considerations drive internal and external programs, policies, plans and practices.

3. Spark a passion and action for nature

- 3.1 Landholdings provide ecological and human health benefits in a sustainable way.
- 3.2 Mutually beneficial partnerships leverage knowledge and resources for watershed health outcomes.
- 3.3 Target audiences are aware of our organization's purpose, programs and services.
- 3.4 Watershed communities consider us a trusted, transparent and inclusive organization.
- 3.5 Watershed communities are engaged, educated and inspired to care and take action for watershed health.

4. Advance organizational effectiveness and excellence

- 4.1 Proactive financial management and reliable funding sources support sustainable operations.
- 4.2 Internal and external clients receive excellent service and have their diverse needs met.
- 4.3 Legal business obligations are upheld through proactive measures.
- 4.4 Effective and efficient business processes demonstrate a commitment to continuous improvement and environmental sustainability.

5. Nurture people and talent

- 5.1 Skilled talent is attracted and committed to our vision and have opportunities to grow and develop.

5.2 Employees feel a sense of belonging and contribute to a safe and healthy culture where diversity, equity, inclusion and wellness are celebrated and promoted.

5.3 Staff are highly engaged and have the technical resources, knowledge, and collaborative opportunities to do their jobs effectively, securely and efficiently.

The objectives under each strategic direction are formulated as statements to capture the desired state we are working to achieve.

In the attached status report, we've relied on metrics where available, anecdotal evidence and commentary on status, trends, and some new baseline information, which will also support our efforts for meaningful reporting in the future. This status report summarizes our progress on the strategic plan to date.

Issues

Not only is this our first outcome-focused plan, but it's also the first one developed in-house, led by a team in our Communications department. Formulating and articulating this plan and our new approach took considerable time and effort, and it was developed through multiple staff and board engagement and consultation sessions.

A large part of the work planned for completion as part of the project was the identification of success indicators, associated targets, and a tracking and reporting framework. Much progress was made on this work; however, some key staffing changes lead to a pause on finalizing these aspects of the project.

The process of reporting on the progress for the current Strategic Plan revealed that until we finalize the tracking and reporting aspects, we face challenges around articulating clear and indicative indicators. Though we consistently complete annual reporting through various publications, including our Budget Companion, year-end infographic and our video compilation, historically, our reporting has focused on outputs and anecdotal accounts as our measures of success.

In many cases we have consistently demonstrated year-over-year achievements through numbers; number of students we've engaged; the number of kms of trails we've maintained and improved; the number of permits we've issued and applications we've processed, etc., and we haven't reported corresponding targets to prove our success.

With a view to applying a consistent, disciplined and meaningful approach to measuring our progress, we are working to devise a dashboard tool to help us better report how our progress aligns with our standards of service and is measured against our targets.

Relevance to Conservation Authority Policy:

The Strategic Plan sets out our long-term vision and guides our annual work planning and as such influences and upholds all Conservation Authority policies.

Impact on Conservation Authority Finances:

The Strategic Plan helps shape the Conservation Authority's annual budget through our yearly workplans and annual priorities. The activities undertaken to achieve the goals and objectives of the Strategic Plan are identified, either as business as usual, or as special projects which are funded within each annual budget.

Summary and Recommendations:

It is therefore **Recommended That** Staff Report No. 04-24-BOD providing an update on the progress made on the Conservation Authority's Strategic Plan: **Transformation 2022-2024** be received for information.

Signed by:

Rob Baldwin
Chief Administrative Officer

Attachments

Strategic Plan Status Report








1

Strategic Direction One - Champion Watershed Health and Climate Resilience



Our work on the land

We commit to protecting people, property, drinking water sources and restoring protected areas as we find a balance between what society and our environment needs.

1.1 	1.2 	1.3 	1.4 
<p>OBJECTIVE</p> <p>People, property, and infrastructure is protected from natural hazards through planning, permits, enforcement of regulations, and flood management and warning activities.</p>	<p>OBJECTIVE</p> <p>Healthy communities are supported through effective plan review services for our municipal clients.</p>	<p>OBJECTIVE</p> <p>Drinking water sources are protected through our leadership of the source water protection program.</p>	<p>OBJECTIVE</p> <p>A resilient watershed is achieved through nature-based restoration solutions and an increase in protected areas on rural, urban, and agricultural lands.</p>
<p>INDICATOR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % of development applications within legislated timelines • # of flood messages 	<p>INDICATOR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • # of development applications commented on 	<p>INDICATOR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % of source protection plan policies implemented • # of municipal risk management plans in place 	<p>INDICATOR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Total hectares restored and total hectares protected through our organization's actions
<p>COMMENTARY</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Over 2022 and 2023, 96% of development applications were reviewed within Conservation Authorities Liaison Committee timelines. • Over 2022 and 2023, 95% of development applications were reviewed within Conservation Ontario timelines. • 28 flood messages issued. No flood watches or warnings required to be issued. 	<p>COMMENTARY</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1807 planning applications reviewed and commented on. • 36 Environmental Assessments reviewed and commented on. • 1726 permit applications issued. • Bill 23 significantly changed development planning in Ontario. The Authority continues to adjust and track the changes in workload and revenue. 	<p>COMMENTARY</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 100% of policies within source protection plan are being implemented. • 318 of 355 risk management plans are in place. • 8 new municipal drinking water wells have been added to the Source Protection Plan to ensure that new residents to the Source Protection Region have safe and protected drinking water. • Sources of municipal drinking water are protected from incompatible land use and accidental spills. Groundwater resources are sustainably managed, despite changes in climate and land use. • Due to a number of unanticipated new drinking water systems that were assessed and included in Source Protection Plans, planned broader policy updates were deferred. 	<p>COMMENTARY</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 200 projects resulted in 61 hectares of land being restored in 2022 and 2023. • We worked with the Province, and the original landowner to ensure that 359.6 hectares of wetland and woodlot were transferred into our ownership so we can ensure it is protected in perpetuity.
<p>Status Legend</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">  On Track  On Track with Changes  Off Track 			

2

Strategic Direction Two - Drive Evidence-Based Decision-Making

Our science and knowledge

We use environmental science, collaborative research, and data to protect the integrity and strengthen our watershed management decisions.



2.1	2.2	2.3	2.4
<p>OBJECTIVE</p> <p>Knowledge of watershed health and management decisions are improved through comprehensive, leading-edge science.</p>	<p>OBJECTIVE</p> <p>Decision makers access, understand, and implement integrated watershed management plans and their recommendations.</p>	<p>OBJECTIVE</p> <p>Effectively and securely managed data facilitates collaboration and analysis, improving decision-making.</p>	<p>OBJECTIVE</p> <p>Climate change considerations drive internal and external programs, policies, plans, and practices.</p>
<p>INDICATOR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> # of visits to the Sustainable Technologies Evaluation Program (STEP) Water Wiki Increasing lake knowledge # of monitoring stations and monitoring parameters available on the data portal 	<p>INDICATOR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> # of watershed plan recommendations being implemented 	<p>INDICATOR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Secure Open Data Portal is managed and updated 	<p>INDICATOR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> % of internal corporate climate change policies implemented
<p>COMMENTARY</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> We manage, support, and centrally house environmental monitoring data and reports, available to consultants, academics, and municipal staff who work on planning and development projects. The STEP Water Wiki, designed to provide Low Impact Development stormwater management planning and design guidance, was visited 43,654 times by industry practitioners and professionals. Our lake science program studies the nearshore to assess and track environmental changes related to climate, invasive species, nutrients, and other stressors. Over 2022 and 2023, we collected aquatic species and water samples from over 800 sites. Leading edge nutrient and invasive species monitoring providing critical data to better understand nutrient decoupling in Lake Simcoe and the Great Lakes basin, guiding future management. We have 85 monitoring stations and 28 monitoring parameters available through our open data portal. 	<p>COMMENTARY</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 92% of recommendations from existing plans have been implemented. Staff are revisiting priorities and metrics through the phased watershed planning modernization project. 	<p>COMMENTARY</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> We are considered a leader among conservation authorities in offering a secure open data portal which significantly reduces or eliminates the need for staff inquiries and requests. 	<p>COMMENTARY</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 56% of internal climate change recommendations have been implemented, resulting in a 34% reduction in corporate carbon emissions. We're walking the talk and supporting implementation of municipal climate crisis actions among our partner municipalities.

Status Legend

- On Track
- On Track with Changes
- Off Track

3

Strategic Direction Three - Spark a Passion and Action for Nature

Our role in fostering the people & nature relationship

We protect that which we love. We inspire awareness and action by fostering an appreciation of nature - through leading edge education programming, outdoor opportunities, and communications.



3.1



OBJECTIVE

Landholdings provide ecological and human health benefits in a sustainable way.

INDICATOR

- # of visitors to the Authority's open land parcels
- Implementation of priorities in the Land Acquisition and Disposition Strategy

COMMENTARY

- 326,000 visitors enjoyed our popular conservation areas, which contributes directly to improved physical and mental health, leading to stronger connections with nature.
- As part of our Land Acquisition and Disposition Strategy, to ensure that we can focus our management activities only on the lands that provide opportunities to meet climate change and other environmental goals, we transferred 5 properties to the Town of Georgina. The transfer also allows the Town to enhance recreation opportunities for watershed residents and visitors.

3.2



OBJECTIVE

Mutually beneficial partnerships leverage knowledge and resources for watershed health outcomes.

INDICATOR

- Agency partnerships to improve watershed health

COMMENTARY

- We're aligned and making progress with a consortium of municipal, provincial, environmental non-government organizations, and industry staff in reducing road salt use.
- We are a collaborating member of the Sustainable Technologies Evaluation Program, with 2 other conservation authorities, leading transformation through innovation in stormwater management.
- Approximately 1/3 of watershed municipalities are directly partnering with us to deliver stormwater management facility inspections and maintenance. This collaboration is improving the effectiveness of stormwater management across the watershed, which has a direct impact on watershed health.

3.3



OBJECTIVE

Target audiences are aware of our organization's purpose, programs, and services.

INDICATOR

- # of followers on social media platforms
- % increase in subscriptions to our mailing lists and external newsletters
- # of landowners reached through direct mail campaigns
- # of mentions in media articles

COMMENTARY

- Facebook: 4700
- Instagram: 3693
- LinkedIn: 3448
- X (Twitter): 3905
- We significantly expanded our program reach, realizing a 34% increase in mailing list subscribers for the Do-It-Yourself seedling program, and a 14% growth in subscribers to the Education Programs and Events contact list.
- Over the course of 2022 and 2023, we reached 28,940 watershed landowners through several direct mail campaigns to promote services and programs offered by our restoration and education business units.
- We tracked 103 mentions in media articles.

Status Legend



On Track



On Track with Changes



Off Track



Strategic Direction Three - Spark a Passion and Action for Nature continued

3.4



OBJECTIVE

Watershed communities consider us a trusted, transparent, and inclusive organization.

INDICATOR

- Academic institutions and the Province of Ontario trust our organization's science and research expertise

COMMENTARY

- The Integrated Watershed Management division is engaged in several partnerships with academic institutions to advance watershed research on the following four topics: invasive species (starry stonewort), woodland carbon sequestration, whether wetlands are net sinks or net sources of carbon, and a salt use reduction pilot.
- We have 11 funding agreements through the Integrated Watershed Management division to advance Lake Simcoe Protection Plan objectives.
- We participated on an advisory panel for the Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks (The Ministry), and Toronto Metropolitan University's study of Holland Marsh phosphorus recovery feasibility and we are currently working with the Ministry and the Ontario Clean Water Agency to address remaining questions for Holland Marsh treatment.

3.5



OBJECTIVE

Watershed communities are engaged, educated, and inspired to care and take action for watershed health.

INDICATOR

- Percentage Increase in public education and engagement program uptake
- # of student engagements
- % of students who are meeting curriculum goals
- # of Conservation Awards presented
- % increase in social media following

COMMENTARY

- We facilitated a 5% and 33% increase, respectively, in our Summer and March Break camp enrollment, had 4451 participants in community programs.
- In the 2023/24 school year, we expanded the scope of service agreements with four school boards, including more students and teachers within existing programs, and introducing new programs targeting more grades. We have also created new partnerships to offer more professional development experiences to early childhood educators, and new teachers and their school mentors.
- We continue to have excellent engagement in community initiatives we support, such as the City of Barrie's Winterfest and the Town of East Gwillimbury's Nature Day.
- Over 2022 and 2023 we had 37,000 student engagements.
- We confirmed through class surveys in one of our partner school boards, that 72% of the students met the learning goals set out in the program. Survey results also showed that 58% of students were "pumped and couldn't wait" to go on the field trip to Scanlon Creek, 23% were "excited", 13% were "curious", and 6% were "nervous".
- We are still trending upwards in growth on our social media platforms. 2023 stats:
 - Facebook = 3.5% increase, Instagram = 12% increase, LinkedIn = 10.5% increase
- Social media is still a reasonable tool for measuring awareness and engagement, however growth of these platforms is challenging due to the speed that the platforms are evolving and algorithms are constantly changing. Growth now moves at a slower pace than we previously experienced. Content is not the key factor to achieving engagement and audience growth. Many platforms now require dedicated advertising dollars to achieve engagement.
- In 2022 and 2023 we presented a total of 42 Conservation Awards.

Status Legend



On Track



On Track with Changes



Off Track







4

Strategic Direction Four - Advance Organizational Effectiveness and Excellence



Our behind-the-scenes business operations

We execute our mission effectively and efficiently through excellent organizational practices and transformative digital solutions to reach our Vision.

4.1 	4.2 	4.3 	4.4 
<p>OBJECTIVE</p> <p>Proactive fiscal management and reliable funding sources support sustainable operations.</p>	<p>OBJECTIVE</p> <p>Internal and external clients receive excellent service and have their diverse needs met.</p>	<p>OBJECTIVE</p> <p>Legal business obligations are upheld through proactive measures.</p>	<p>OBJECTIVE</p> <p>Effective and efficient business processes demonstrate a commitment to continuous improvement and environmental sustainability.</p>
<p>INDICATOR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unanimous municipal support for annual budget 	<p>INDICATOR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2023 Survey: provide baseline data on enabling service • Internal satisfaction rating of enabling services 	<p>INDICATOR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bill 229 requirements met as required • % of staff trained to meet legislated requirements 	<p>INDICATOR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Process reviews or improvements made • Existing business practices that foster efficiency and effectiveness of our programs
<p>COMMENTARY</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reserve adequacy evaluation in line with policy. • Annual budget increases can absorb challenging cost pressures and still come within the target. • Investment of reserve balances consistently provides a rate of return greater than inflation • Work diligently with municipal partners to ensure annual budgets are aligned. • No deficit and clean audits build financial sustainability through programming and partnerships. • Bill 23 significantly changes the way budgets are developed with our municipal partners. We continue to adjust and track changes to the budget approval process being used in 2024. 	<p>COMMENTARY</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff were surveyed in early 2024 to determine satisfaction levels with internal services including Communications, Human Resources, Finance, Information Technology, and Management Systems, Geographic Information Systems and Facility Management Services. Staff returned an overall rating of 4.1/5, demonstrating a high level of satisfaction with the internal service needs being delivered. • We are a member of the Municipal Diversity and Inclusion Group and the Ontario Network of Accessibility Professionals. These groups allow for meaningful collaboration with our municipal and provincial partners to share knowledge and resources to stay on top of trends and legislative changes; ensuring we can meet the needs of our clients and staff. • Annually host a financial working group meeting with finance leads from all funding municipalities. 	<p>COMMENTARY</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Successful financial transition for 2024 budget met. • All required Bill 229 deliverables – land inventory, watershed-based resource management strategy, and conservation area management strategy are complete or underway. • We continue to meet legislative requirements ensuring that mandatory and job specific health and safety training is provided to all employees annually. • All Freedom of Information obligations were met and reported to the Information and Privacy Commissioner of Ontario. • 100% of staff are trained and meet our legislated requirements. • Bill 23 significantly changes the way programs and services are agreed upon and memorandums of understanding are developed. 	<p>COMMENTARY</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We completed a procurement audit, introduced a new Amazon Business account, and a new procurement platform to enable more cost-efficient purchasing and we are in the process of piloting a new phone system to support hybrid work arrangements while improving client service. • Our planning and enforcement teams meet and conduct a triage on a weekly basis to review, prioritize, and address critical decisions on the delivery of advice and recommendations to external clients. • Our restoration team meets monthly to review and evaluate the feasibility and quality of environmental outcomes of potential restoration projects. • Our Executive Leadership Team meets weekly to ensure that critical decisions are made in a timely manner, improving business delivery, and immediate response to issues as they arise.
<p>Status Legend</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">  On Track  On Track with Changes  Off Track 			

5

Strategic Direction Five: Nurture People and Talent

Our staff and workplace culture

We strive for a workplace that attracts and retains talent, a welcoming and engaging culture where professional opportunities thrive and engaged staff collaborate for watershed health.



5.1



OBJECTIVE

Skilled talent is attracted and committed to our vision and have opportunities to grow and develop.

INDICATOR

- % of staff who voluntarily leave the organization
- % of staff that involuntarily leave the organization
- % of staff who have experienced promotion in the organization
- % of staff that have experienced growth in the organization, through promotion

COMMENTARY

- The Canadian voluntary turnover average is 15.5%. Our average is 7.14%
- The Canadian involuntary turnover average is 4.1%. Our average is 1.02%
- We are significantly below the Canadian voluntary and involuntary turnover rates.
- 77% of full-time staff have worked in our organization for 5 years or more and 19.4% have been promoted within the last 2 years.
- Throughout 2022 and 2023 we completed a comprehensive market compensation review to ensure competitive salaries to attract and retain skilled employees.
- We encourage employees to participate in many forms of professional development including Harvard ManageMentor's online training program and industry specific conferences and forums. Many of our expert staff are also invited to speak at conferences such as the International Association of Great Lakes Research, and have published reports, articles, and papers on our watershed science and research.

5.2



OBJECTIVE

Employees feel a sense of belonging and contribute to a safe and healthy culture where diversity, equity, inclusion, and wellness are celebrated and promoted.

INDICATOR

- % of staff who feel that we create a sense of belonging in the organization
- % of staff who have received training required for their positions, and have the knowledge to uphold practices to ensure that workplace violence and harassment policies are followed
- # of annual staff celebration and social events

COMMENTARY

- 83% of staff responded to our 2022 internal Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging survey, providing a baseline gauge for their feelings of belonging in the organization. 77% agreed that they feel a sense of belonging and 23% feeling like they sometimes belong.
- 100% of staff received training required for their positions, and have the knowledge to uphold practices to ensure that workplace violence and harassment policies are followed.
- To further address areas for improvement, we worked with a consultant to host staff focus groups. Together with survey results, the focus group work identified gaps and opportunities, out of which came a framework to guide future policy and programs. Recommendations will be implemented in a phased approach.
- To further strengthen our health and safety program, we have joined the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board's Health and Safety Excellence Program.
- Annually, we host our Summer Solstice or Fall Equinox staff events and a Holiday Luncheon in December, as well as other ad hoc events. Staff gather for lunch, social time and team building exercises to strengthen staff bonds and engagement. 75 – 80% of staff take part in these events.

5.3



OBJECTIVE

Staff are highly engaged and have the technical resources, knowledge, and collaborative opportunities to do their jobs effectively, securely, and efficiently.

INDICATOR

- % of staff that have the technology tools to carry out their jobs
- # of annual executive leadership meetings
- # of annual staff meetings
- % of staff that participate in monthly staff meetings

COMMENTARY

- 100% of employees have laptops and cell phones, enabling ongoing collaboration even when working remotely.
- To enable our hybrid work arrangement, our Information Services and Technology department has worked hard to ensure connectivity and increased technical security. With a continued focus on employee training and diligence, we can maintain the integrity of our technical resources while allowing employees the flexibility to work at home and in the office safely.
- The Executive Leadership Team holds 48 meetings per year to ensure and encourage divisional collaboration.
- The CAO and Executive Leadership Team host 10 monthly all-staff meetings, and occasional Town Hall meetings to address significant issues. These meetings also encourage collaboration, reinforce strategic directions, and provide opportunities for employees to present and share their work with the organization. An average of 75% of staff regularly participate in these meetings.

Status Legend



On Track



On Track with Changes



Off Track

Staff Report

To: Board of Directors

From: Mark Critch, General Manager, Corporate and Financial Services/CFO, Kristen Yemm, Sr. Director, Communications and Community Engagement and Alyse Cullen, Sr. Director, Human Resources

Date: February 23, 2024

Subject

2023 Enabling Services Internal Customer Satisfaction Survey Results

Recommendation

That Staff Report No. 05-24-BOD regarding the Conservation Authority's Enabling Services Internal Customer Satisfaction Survey be received for information.

Purpose of this Staff Report

The purpose of this Staff Report No. 05-24-BOD is to share the results of the recent Enabling Services Internal Customer Satisfaction Survey.

Background

The Conservation Authority values our hardworking staff and the enabling services departments (Corporate Communications, Human Resources, Finance, IT/IMS and Facilities) strive to provide exceptional service to our internal clients. By soliciting feedback from staff, we are able to gauge the satisfaction level for current services being provided and subsequently make improvements and changes to enhance our service delivery.

The leaders of the enabling services departments met in Q4 of 2023 to develop a survey for internal staff that would provide us with a benchmark on satisfaction of current service levels. Our goal was to receive an average satisfaction score of at least 3.5 out of 5 across a variety of service areas. The survey was active for a two-week period in January 2024. We received a 67.6% response rate. We are pleased that the average internal customer satisfaction score received was 4.1 out of 5.

Next steps included identifying areas in each of the enabling services departments where we can incorporate survey feedback into 2024 workplan development and also work on addressing concerns raised, some of which are subject to budget availability and approval.

We expect to administer the survey again at the end of 2024, with some minor question changes to gain more meaningful and constructive feedback.

Issues

It is imperative to hear from our staff on the level of satisfaction they experience with our enabling services departments. Addressing identified areas for improvement can help to manage staff morale, engagement, performance, and increase the efficiency and effectiveness of service delivery.

Relevance to Conservation Authority Policy

Overall, the Enabling Services Internal Customer Satisfaction survey is most closely aligned with Strategic Direction 4 – Advance Organizational Effectiveness and Excellence and seeks to establish a baseline to establish how we’re doing as we move towards the following outcome: 4.2 - Internal and external clients receive excellent service and have their diverse needs met, as outlined in the Strategic Plan: Transformation 2022-2024.

Specific questions posed in the survey also sought feedback on the desired outcomes under the following other Strategic Directions:

Direction 2 - Drive evidence-based decision making

- 2.3 – Effectively and securely managed data facilitates collaboration and analysis, improving decision making.

Direction 3 – Spark a passion and action for nature

- 3.3 – Target audiences are aware of our organization’s purpose, programs, and services

Direction 4 – Advance organizational effectiveness and excellence

- 4.1 – Proactive financial management and reliable funding sources support sustainable operations
- 4.4 – Effective and efficient business processes demonstrate a commitment to continuous improvement and environmental sustainability

Direction 5 – Nurture people and talent

- 5.3 – Staff are highly engaged and have the technical resources, knowledge, and collaborative opportunities to do their jobs effectively, securely, and efficiently

Impact on Conservation Authority Finances

Pending approval of the proposed 2024 budget, several items identified in the survey, mainly with respect to facility improvements, would take place over the course of 2024.

Summary and Recommendations

It is therefore **Recommended That** Staff Report No. 05-24-BOD regarding the Enabling Services Internal Customer Satisfaction Survey be received for information.

Pre-Submission Review

This Staff Report has been reviewed by the General Manager, Corporate and Financial Services/CFO, the Sr. Director, Communications and Community Engagement, the Sr. Director, Human Resources and the Chief Administrative Officer.

Signed by:

Mark Critch
General Manager, Corporate and Financial
Services/CFO

Signed by:

Rob Baldwin
Chief Administrative Officer



December 13, 2023

TO: All Conservation Authorities

SUBJECT: Extension of Minister's Direction for Conservation Authorities Regarding Fee Changes Associated with Planning, Development and Permitting Fees

I am writing with regards to conservation authority fees for the 2024 year. As you are aware, a Minister's Direction ("Direction") was issued on December 28, 2022, directing conservation authorities not to change fees for programs and services associated with planning, development and permitting for the 2023 calendar year. I have provided a copy of this previous direction for your reference.

Pursuant to my authority under subsection 21.3 (1) of the *Conservation Authorities Act*, I am issuing a new Direction that extends the previous Direction for the upcoming year (attached to this letter as Attachment A). The Direction will be in effect from January 1, 2024 to December 31, 2024 and applies to fees for the same programs and services specified in the Direction that was in effect for 2023.

If you have any questions, please contact Jennifer Keyes, Director, Resources Planning and Development Policy Branch, at 705-761-4831 or jennifer.keyes@ontario.ca.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Graydon Smith".

The Honourable Graydon Smith
Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry

c: The Honourable Paul Calandra, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing
The Honourable Andrea Khanjin, Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks

**Minister’s Direction Issued Pursuant to Section 21.3 of the *Conservation Authorities Act*
(this “Direction”)**

WHEREAS section 21.2 of the *Conservation Authorities Act* permits a Conservation Authority to charge a fee for a program or service if the program or service is included in the Minister’s list of classes of programs and services in respect of which a Conservation Authority may charge a fee;

AND WHEREAS subsections 21.2 (6) and 21.2 (7) of the *Conservation Authorities Act* provide that a Conservation Authority shall adopt a written fee policy that includes a fee schedule listing the programs and services that it provides in respect of which it charges a fee, and the amount of the fee charged for each program or service or the manner in which the fee is determined (a “**Fee Schedule**”);

AND WHEREAS subsection 21.2 (10) of the *Conservation Authorities Act* provides that a Conservation Authority may make a change to the list of fees set out in the fee schedule or to the amount of any fee or the manner in which a fee is determined, provided the authority shall give notice of the proposed change to the public in a manner it considers appropriate;

AND WHEREAS section 21.3 of the *Conservation Authorities Act* provides the Minister with the authority to give a written direction to an authority directing it not to change the amount of any fee it charges under subsection 21.2 (10), in respect of a program or service set out in the list referred to in subsection 21.2 (2), for the period specified in the direction;

NOW THEREFORE pursuant to the authority of the Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry under section 21.3, the Conservation Authorities set out under Appendix “A” of this Direction (the “**Conservation Authorities**” or each, a “**Conservation Authority**”) are hereby directed as follows:

Fee Changes Prohibition

1. Commencing on the Effective Date and for the duration of the Term of this Direction, a Conservation Authority is prohibited from making a change under subsection 21.2 (10) of the *Conservation Authorities Act* to the amount of any fee or the manner in which a fee is determined in its fee schedule if such a change would have the effect of changing the fee amount for the programs and services described in paragraphs 2 and 3 of this Direction.

Program and Service Fees Impacted

2. This Direction applies to any fee set out in the Fee Schedule of a Conservation Authority, including without limitation fees for any mandatory program or service

(Category 1), municipal program or service (Category 2), or Conservation Authority recommended program or service (Category 3) related to reviewing and commenting on planning and development related proposals, applications, or land use planning policies, or for Conservation Authority permitting.

3. For greater certainty, this Direction applies to any fees in respect of the following programs or services provided under the Mandatory Programs and Services regulation ([O. Reg. 686/21](#)):
 - a. Section 6: programs and services related to reviewing applications and proposals under the *Aggregate Resources Act*, *Drainage Act*, *Environmental Assessment Act*, and the *Niagara Escarpment Planning and Development Act*, for the purpose of commenting on the risks related to natural hazards arising from the proposal,
 - b. Section 7: programs and services related to ensuring that decisions under the *Planning Act* are consistent with the natural hazards policies in the policy statements issued under section 3 of the *Planning Act* and are in conformance with any natural hazard policies included in a provincial plan as defined in section 1 of that Act,
 - c. Section 8: programs and services related to Conservation Authority duties, functions, and responsibilities to administer and enforce section 28 and its regulations, section 28.0.1, and section 30.1 of the *Conservation Authorities Act*,
 - d. Paragraph 4 of subsection 13 (3): programs and services related to reviewing and commenting on any proposal made under another Act for the purpose of determining whether the proposal relates to a significant drinking water threat or may impact any drinking water sources protected by a source protection plan, and
 - e. Subparagraph 4 iv of section 15: programs and services related to reviewing and commenting on proposals made under other Acts for the purpose of determining the proposal's impact on the Lake Simcoe Protection Plan and the Lake Simcoe watershed.

Application

4. This Direction, applies to all Conservation Authorities in Ontario, listed in Appendix "A" to this Direction.
5. For greater certainty, this Direction also applies to the Conservation Authorities listed in Appendix "A" to this Direction when such Conservation Authorities are meeting as a source protection authority under the *Clean Water Act, 2006*.

Effective Date and Term

6. This Direction is effective from January 1, 2024 (the "**Effective Date**").

7. The term of this Direction is the period from the Effective Date to December 31, 2024 (the “**Term**”).

Amendments

8. This Direction may be amended in writing from time to time at the sole discretion of the Minister.

HIS MAJESTY THE KING IN RIGHT OF ONTARIO
as represented by the
Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry



The Honourable Graydon Smith
Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry
December 13, 2023

Staff Report

To: Board of Directors

From: Ashlea Brown, Director, Development Services and Dave Ruggle, Manager Planning

Date: February 23, 2024

Subject:

Monitoring Report – Planning and Development Applications for the Period January 1 through December 31, 2023

Recommendation:

That Staff Report No. 06-24-BOD regarding the total number of planning and development applications for the period January 1 through December 31, 2023 be received for information.

Purpose of this Staff Report:

The purpose of this Staff Report No. 06-24-BOD is to update the Board of Directors on the progress of development applications made under the *Planning Act* (Planning Approvals), and the *Conservation Authorities Act* (Permits), submitted to the Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority for the period January 1 through December 31, 2023.

Background

A summary of the total number of applications for this period is shown in the attached, Appendix A, Tables 1, 2, and 3. These tables summarize the number of applications received by application type and by municipality, as well as the number of pre-consultations, non-application technical reviews, and general inquiries. The types of applications reviewed and processed are statutory requirements under the following legislation:

Planning Act (Table 1 attached)

- Official Plans, Secondary Plans, Community Plans and Amendments
- Comprehensive Zoning By-Laws and Amendments
- Consent and Minor Variance Applications
- Plans of Subdivision and Condominium
- Site Plan Applications

Conservation Authorities Act (Tables 2 and 3 attached)

- Section 28 Permit Applications
- Public Information Requests (PIR)
- Site Clearances
- Solicitor Inquiries

Other Legislation (Table 2 attached)

- Undertakings in accordance with the *Environmental Assessment Act*

To provide a comparison, Attachment A (Tables 4, 5, and 6) summarize the total number of planning and development applications and inquiries for the period January 1 through December 31, 2022.

The attached Tables 1 and 4 also provide the number of non-application technical reviews, peer reviews and pre-consultation reviews which were carried out in 2023 and 2022.

Planning Act and Conservation Authorities Act Applications

In general, the total number of applications reviewed under the *Planning Act* as of December 31, 2023, decreased by 16% from the total number of applications reviewed in 2022. Pre-consultations for Planning Act applications also decreased by 7 % in 2023.

There are a few important elements to look at in this review, including:

1. Implications of legislative changes. Conservation Authority staff saw a 43% decrease in Site Plan applications in 2023, which is considered a result of legislative changes, as well increased development costs and interest rates. Specifically, a development of less than 10 units no longer requires site plan approval in most circumstances. There was also a 67% decrease in the number of site visits attended by staff as a result of reduced Natural Heritage role/review.
2. Overall, staff saw a minor decline in many of the application types with the exception of Minor Consents and Minor Variances. Increased costs of development and interest rates likely contributed to a reduction in the amount of development applications.
3. Uncertainty around legislative changes and requirements for approvals may have also impacted application numbers.

Conservation Authorities Act (Permits)

The total number of applications submitted under Section 28 (including legal inquiries) in 2023 was 1,192. This is a 0.4% decrease from the number of applications received in 2022. Overall, permit numbers decreased slightly (1.3%) in 2023, which can be attributed to approvals being streamlined through the issuance of site clearances which increased by 23% in 2023. Legal

inquiries decreased by 26% overall, and staff continue to monitor trends in legal inquiries and pre-consultations to estimate workloads for the upcoming year.

The attached Tables 3 and 6 summarize the general inquiries regarding the Regulation/permitting for 2023 and 2022 respectively. Regulations staff responded to 1,845 inquiries, a 23% decrease from 2022. The Regulations analysts continue to provide responses to inquiries through email, telephone, or video conferencing; however, 2023 saw an increase of 42% in walk in/counter inquiries over 2022.

In accordance with the Conservation Authority's Client Service Strategy, permit timelines are tracked and reported on annually through two standards. The first is the Ministry Natural Resources and Forestry's 'Policies and Procedures for Conservation Authority Plan Review and Permitting timelines, and the second is Conservation Ontario's Client Service Standards timelines. Timelines for permit issuance range from 14 days to 28 days in accordance with the Client Service Standards, and 30 to 90 days in accordance with the Conservation Authority Plan Review and Permitting timelines.

The Conservation Authority met 98% of the Ministry's timelines for permit issuance, and 97% of Conservation Ontario's timelines. 55% of the permit issuances constituted major review, 26% were minor reviews and 19% were considered routine. The average number of days to issue a permit was 21. Timelines not met can be attributed to the complexity of files and the need for multiple technical reviews. Attachment B provides a summary of the timelines.

Issues

The statistics presented in the attached tables do not provide any indication of the complexity of applications. It has been reported in the past that many of the new development applications are being proposed on lands that have multiple constraints associated with them. Conservation Authority staff continue to highlight this as it has been identified as an increasing challenge each year. Additionally, the increasing pressures of shorter review and approval timelines, coupled with the changes resulting from Bill 229 (Schedule 6), have added layers of intricacy to many of the larger development applications that are reviewed.

The decrease in the number of Planning Applications has resulted in a reduction in revenue for the department. As a result, as certain staff have left the organization, their positions have remained vacant. While this assists with balancing the budget, it can create issues with meeting timelines and customer service targets when applications increase.

Relevance to Conservation Authority Policy

Monitoring the number of applications processed is an important step in understanding workload and ensuring the appropriate staff complement to meet application timelines and address customer service targets. Client service and satisfaction is identified as a significant guiding principle in the Conservation Authority's Strategic Plan. Senior Conservation Authority

staff have continued to work with Conservation Ontario, as well as industry partners, to identify opportunities to further streamline plan and permit review processes to facilitate more timely approvals. Provincial directives continue to focus conservation authorities on streamlining and issuing expedited approvals.

Impact on Conservation Authority Finances

As Plan Review and Permit Review are carried out on a fee-for-service principle, the number of development applications has a direct impact on the department's budget. The decrease in the number of Planning Applications has resulted in a reduction in revenue for the department. Continued monitoring of application numbers is important to understand staffing requirements of the department and to forecast revenue generation for budget planning purposes.

It appears that the general uncertainty of the industry in addition to rising costs, including interest rates, has resulted in an overall decline in Planning Act applications. Based on current information, staff believe that this decline in applications is temporary and is generally a result of these other external factors. Changing market conditions resulting from changes in costs and interest rates could further impact application numbers and dictate staffing needs.

Summary and Recommendations

It is therefore **recommended that** Staff Report No. 06-24-BOD regarding the total number of planning and development applications for the period January 1 through December 31, 2023 be received for information.

Pre-Submission Review

This Staff Report has been reviewed by the General Manager, Development, Engineering and Restoration and the Chief Administrative Officer.

Signed by:

Glenn MacMillan
General Manager, Development,
Engineering and Restoration

Signed by:

Rob Baldwin
Chief Administrative Officer

Attachments:

A - Tables 1, 2, and 3 – Summary of Planning, and Regulations a Program Statistics – January 1 – December 31, 2023, and Tables 5, 6, and 7 – Summary of Planning, and Regulations Program Statistics – January 1 – December 31, 2022

B - Permit Timelines Report

Table #1
Summary of Planning Program Statistics January 1- December 31, 2023 - Review of Applications under the Planning Act

Application Type	City of Kawartha Lakes	City of Orillia	City of Barrie	County of Simcoe					Region of Durham				Region of York						Region of Peel (incl. Caledon)	Township of Essa	Total Number of Applications by Type	
				Bradford West Gwillimbury	Innisfil	New Tecumseth	Oro-Medonte	Ramara	Brock	Scugog	Uxbridge	Region of Durham	Aurora	East Gwillimbury	Georgina	King	Newmarket	Whitchurch-Stouffville				Region of York
Official Plans, Official Plan Amendments/Secondary Plan	0	0	1	0	2	0	0	2	1	0	0	1	1	1	6	2	3	3	0	1	0	24
Official Plan Amendment/Zoning Bylaw	0	0	4	2	0	0	0	2	0	0	1	0	2	1	4	0	4	3	0	0	0	23
Official Plan Amendment/Zoning Bylaw/Site Plan	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Official Plan Amendment/Zoning Bylaw/Subdivision	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	5
Site Visits	0	0	1	1	3	0	1	2	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	1	0	2	0	0	0	14
Zoning By-laws, Min.	2	0	6	4	1	0	2	2	1	0	6	0	1	2	5	5	0	1	0	1	0	39
Zoning By-laws, Major	1	0	2	2	4	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	2	2	2	0	1	0	0	0	0	18
Plans of Subdivision, Plans of Condominium	1	1	4	3	2	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	6	3	9	0	0	1	0	0	0	31
Subdivision Request for Extension/Greater than 3 Submis./Redline	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
Draft Plan of Subdivision Request for Extension of Approval	0	0	4	1	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	11
Site Plans	0	2	20	9	17	0	1	1	1	0	1	0	14	10	9	3	9	4	0	0	0	101
Consents/MV Minor	2	0	11	17	13	0	26	7	7	0	17	0	18	13	35	8	7	38	0	0	0	219
Consents/MV Major	0	0	1	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	6
Peer Review	0	0	1	2		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	5
Tech Review/ Special Studies	0	0	2	1	3	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	3	3	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	17
Preconsultation	2	0	69	21	29	1	6	11	8	1	17	0	26	45	46	19	24	15	0	0	0	340
Total Number of Applications by Municipality	8	3	127	65	79	1	39	27	18	1	45	1	81	82	121	39	49	69	0	2	0	857

Table 2

Summary of Regulations Program Statistics January 1- December 31, 2023 - Review of Applications under the Conservation Authorities Act and Environmental Assessment Act																						
Application Type	City of Kawartha Lakes	City of Orillia	City of Barrie	County of Simcoe					Region of Durham				Region of York						Region of Peel (Incl Caledon)	Total Number of Applications by Type		
				Bradford West Gwillimbury	Innisfil	New Tecumseth	Oro-Medonte	Ramara	Brock	Scugog	Uxbridge	Region of Durham	Aurora	East Gwillimbury	Georgina	King	Newmarket	Whitchurch-Stouffville			Region of York	
Section 28 Applications	8	0	64	35	119	1	66	100	41	5	49	1	34	71	152	45	27	29	10	0	0	857
Legal Inquiries	1	0	12	11	17	0	2	2	2	0	6	0	10	13	15	5	6	1	0	0	0	103
Site Clearances	1	1	23	13	35	1	7	2	4	1	8	0	11	27	31	23	11	13	0	0	0	212
Environmental Assessment Undertakings	0	0	3	0	3	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	1	2	2	2	1	3	0	0	20
Total Number of Applications by Municipality	10	1	102	59	174	2	76	104	48	6	64	1	55	112	200	75	46	44	13	0	0	1192

Table 3

Summary of Regulations Program Customer Service Statistics January 1 - December 31, 2023																						
Application Type	City of Kawartha Lakes	Outside of Watershed & General	City of Barrie	County of Simcoe					Region of Durham				Region of York						Region of Peel (Incl Caledon)	General	Total Number of Applications by Type	
				Bradford West Gwillimbury	Innisfil	New Tecumseth	Oro-Medonte	Ramara	Brock	Scugog	Uxbridge	Region of Durham	Aurora	East Gwillimbury	Georgina	King	Newmarket	Whitchurch-Stouffville				Region of York
Calls / Emails	20	13	89	71	188	8	79	130	103	3	135	0	56	188	455	95	58	58	0	1	28	1778
Counter Visits	0	0	3	7	9	1	4	7	3	0	1	0	3	10	13	3	4	0	0	0	0	68
Total Number of Applications by Municipality	20	13	92	78	197	9	83	137	106	3	136	0	59	198	468	98	62	58	0	1	28	1846

Table 4
Summary of Planning Program Statistics January 1 - December 31, 2022 - Review of Applications under the Planning Act

Application Type	City of Kawartha Lakes	City of Orillia	City of Barrie	County of Simcoe					Region of Durham				Region of York						Region of Peel (Incl Caledon)	Township of Essa	Total Number of Applications by Type	
				Bradford West Gwillimbury	Innisfil	New Tecumseth	Oro-Medonte	Ramara	Brock	Scugog	Uxbridge	Region of Durham	Aurora	East Gwillimbury	Georgina	King	Newmarket	Whitchurch-Stouffville				Region of York
Official Plans, Official Plan Amendments	0	0	3	2	1	0	4	1	3	0	3	1	0	1	2	0	0	3	0	0	0	24
Official Plan Amendment/Zoning Bylaw	0	0	13	1	1	0	2	1	0	0	0	0	2	1	2	0	5	2	0	0	0	30
Official Plan Amendment/Zoning Bylaw/Site Plan	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4
Official Plan Amendment/Zoning Bylaw/Subdivision	0	0	2	0	2	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	2	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	11
Site Visits	0	0	3	1	3	0	3	0	1	0	3	0	4	3	7	2	3	9	0	0	0	42
Zoning By-laws, Min.	0	0	7	5	4	0	1	2	1	0	4	0	0	4	9	2	1	2	0	0	0	42
Zoning By-laws, Major	0	0	9	2	1	0	1	1	2	0	1	0	1	1	3	2	3	2	0	0	0	29
Plans of Subdivision, Plans of Condominium	0	0	8	3	2	0	2	1	2	0	5	0	0	4	7	0	1	1	0	0	0	36
Subdivision Request for Extension/Greater than 3 Submis./Redline	0	0	7	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	14
Site Plans	0	0	21	12	18	0	5	0	3	1	3	0	31	19	7	30	17	10	0	0	0	177
Consents/MV Minor	0	0	15	13	8	0	34	15	17	0	17	0	12	10	27	3	6	19	0	1	0	197
Consents/MV Major	1	0	1	0	2	0	4	0	0	0	1	0	1	3	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	15
Peer Review	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
Tech Review/ Special Studies	0	0	5	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	1	1	4	0	0	0	0	18
Preconsultation	4	0	63	26	37	1	15	5	11	1	12	0	28	25	38	28	28	40	1	1	0	364
Total Number of Applications by Municipality	5	0	159	66	84	1	73	26	41	2	49	1	83	76	110	69	70	88	1	2	0	1006

Table 5

Summary of Regulations Program Statistics January 1 - December 31, 2022 - Review of Applications under the Conservation Authorities Act and Environmental Assessment Act																						
Application Type	City of Kawartha Lakes	City of Orillia	City of Barrie	County of Simcoe					Region of Durham				Region of York						Region of Peel (Incl Caledon)	Total Number of Applications by Type		
				Bradford West Gwillimbury	Innisfil	New Tecumseth	Oro-Medonte	Ramara	Brock	Scugog	Uxbridge	Region of Durham	Aurora	East Gwillimbury	Georgina	King	Newmarket	Whitchurch-Stouffville			Region of York	
Section 28 Applications	13	0	63	36	142	2	85	92	33	0	32	5	34	60	175	42	20	21	14	0	0	869
Legal Inquiries	0	1	17	9	9	0	7	3	7	0	11	0	17	11	26	5	10	7	0	0	0	140
Site Clearances	2	0	17	14	34	3	3	3	2	2	5	0	12	15	34	14	6	7	0	0	0	173
Environmental Assessment Undertakings	0	1	3	2	2	1	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	3	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	16
Total Number of Applications by Municipality	15	2	100	61	187	6	95	98	44	2	48	5	63	89	236	61	37	35	14	0	0	1198

Table 6

Summary of Regulations Program Customer Service Statistics January 1 - December 31, 2022																						
Application Type	City of Kawartha Lakes	Outside of Watershed & General	City of Barrie	County of Simcoe					Region of Durham				Region of York						Region of Peel (Incl Caledon)	General	Total Number of Applications by Type	
				Bradford West Gwillimbury	Innisfil	New Tecumseth	Oro-Medonte	Ramara	Brock	Scugog	Uxbridge	Region of Durham	Aurora	East Gwillimbury	Georgina	King	Newmarket	Whitchurch-Stouffville				Region of York
Calls / Emails	38	17	85	75	301	3	124	167	128	10	158	0	57	260	616	115	83	74	0	3	46	2360
Counter Visits	0	0	0	3	2	1	0	7	0	0	4	0	1	10	11	5	2	2	0	0	0	48
Total Number of Applications by Municipality	38	17	85	78	303	4	124	174	128	10	162	0	58	270	627	120	85	76	0	3	46	2408

Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority

Permit Timelines Report 2023 Full Year

Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry

Policies and Procedures for Conservation Authority Plan Review and Permitting

Permit Type	Major	Minor
Number of permits issued within the timeline	431	355
Number of permits issued outside the timeline	16	2

Conservation Ontario Client Service Standards

Permit type	Major	Minor	Routine
Number of permits issued within the timeline	427	203	147
Number of permits issued outside the timeline	20	4	3

Staff Report

To: Board of Directors

From: Mark Critch, General Manager, Corporate & Financial Services/CFO

Date: February 15, 2024

Subject

Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act: Annual Statistical Report

Recommendation

That Staff Report No. 07-24-BOD regarding the *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act 2023 Annual Statistical Report* be received for information.

Purpose of this Staff Report:

The purpose of this Staff Report No. 07-24-BOD is to provide the Board of Directors with an overview of the number and types of requests made to the Conservation Authority under the auspices of the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (the Act) over the past year.

Background:

The Act provides private individuals, businesses and/or other government agencies the right to request access to conservation authority records including most general records, as well as their own personal information. For the Conservation Authority, this access encompasses, but is not limited to, land use permits and supporting documentation, financial, environmental, watershed and land use reports as well as limited access to complaint and violation records. As well, individuals have the right to request access to their own personnel files and may request changes and/or additions be made to those records.

Section 3 of the Act stipulates that “the members of the council of a municipality may by by-law designate from among themselves an individual or committee of the council to act as the head of the municipality for the purposes of this Act.” The Conservation Authority policy entitled “Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act”, dated May 2005, states the General Manager, Corporate & Financial Services shall act as the Freedom of Information Coordinator.

Issues:

There are no issues, as this is a standard yearly report for the Board.

Relevance to Conservation Authority Policy:

The Freedom of Information Coordinator ensures that each request is discussed with the staff members most familiar with the requested information and that due diligence is completed to determine what, if any information may be released. The work is carried out in accordance with the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act legislation as it pertains to Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority and its records.

2023 Statistical Report:

The Information and Privacy Commissioner of Ontario requires that a statistical report detailing the number and types of information requests received by a municipality be submitted annually. The Conservation Authority's report was completed and filed with the Information and Privacy Commission on January 31, 2024. The Conservation Authority processed a total of 16 Freedom of Information requests from the public between January 1 and December 31, 2023.

By legislation, the Conservation Authority has 30 calendar days in which to respond to each request. In 2023, eight (8) requests were completed in 30 days or less, four (4) requests were completed in 31-60 days, two (2) requests were completed in 61-90 days, and two (2) requests were completed in 90+ days. It should be noted that 14 requests were completed within the statutory time limits. The extended response time for two (2) requests were directly related to discussions with affected third party record holders and the lack of responses from third party record holders, in obtaining approval to release records under their control.

Full access to records was granted for 8 of the 16 requests; no responsive records existed for three (3) requests; and two (2) requests were withdrawn. Three (3) requests were disclosed in part as they contained either third party information where the third party denied access to the record, the record was withheld pending an enforcement investigation, or the record was withheld due to solicitor-client privilege.

No appeals of the Conservation Authority's responses were made to the Information and Privacy Commissioner.

Change in Reporting Methodology:

There were no changes in the reporting methodology in 2023. All requests are reported on based on completion date and excludes third party requests received by the Conservation Authority for access to Conservation Authority owned records.

The number of completed requests reported in 2023 appear to be in line with the number of requests reported in 2022.

Impact on Conservation Authority Finances:

A request for access to information must be accompanied by a legislated fee of \$5.00. Section 45 of the Act and Regulation 823 allows for additional fees to be charged to process the request where warranted. Fees can be levied for computer and/or manual searches for responsive files, record preparation including reading the files and/or redacting personal information, the cost of any invoice(s) issued to the Conservation Authority for the purposes of preparing the response (such as copying of large drawings or maps, courier charges, copying CDs, etc.), and photocopying the records for release. In 2023, the Conservation Authority received legislated fees of \$70.00 representing 14 completed requests. One (1) fee was waived due to the request representing an extension of a previous request from 2022, and one (1) request was abandoned prior to collecting the fee. A total of \$1,181.78 was collected in additional processing fees.

Summary and Recommendations:

It is therefore **Recommended That** Staff Report No. 07-24-BOD regarding the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act 2023 Annual Statistical Report be received for information.

Pre-Submission Review:

This Staff Report has been reviewed by the Chief Administrative Officer.

Signed by:

Signed by:

Mark Critch
FOI Coordinator/General Manager,
Corporate & Financial Services/CFO

Rob Baldwin
Chief Administrative Officer

Attachments:

Year-End Statistical Report for the Reporting Year 2023 for Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act



The Year-End Statistical Report
for the
Information and Privacy Commissioner of Ontario

**Statistical Report of
Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority
for the Reporting Year 2023
for
*Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy
Act***

Section 1: Identification

1.1	Organization Name	Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority
	Head of Institution Name & Title	Robert Baldwin, Chief Administrative Officer
	Head of Institution E-mail Address	r.baldwin@LSRCA.on.ca
	Management Contact Name & Title	Mark Critch, FOI Coordinator, GM, Services
	Management Contact E-mail Address	m.critch@LSRCA.on.ca
	Primary Contact Name & Title	Tammy Bartley
	Primary Contact Email Address	t.bartley@LSRCA.on.ca
	Primary Contact Phone Number	9058951281 ext. 231
	Primary Contact Fax Number	9058535881
	Primary Contact Mailing Address 1	120 Bayview Parkway
	Primary Contact Mailing Address 2	
	Primary Contact Mailing Address 3	
	Primary Contact City	Newmarket
	Primary Contact Postal Code	L3Y3W3
1.2	Your institution is:	Conservation Authority

Section 2: Inconsistent Use of Personal Information

2.1	Whenever your institution uses or discloses personal information in a way that differs from the way the information is normally used or disclosed (an inconsistent use), you must attach a record or notice of the inconsistent use to the affected information.	0
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Your institution received:

- No formal written requests for access or correction
- Formal written requests for access to records
- Requests for correction of records of personal information only

Section 3: Number of Requests Received and Completed

Enter the number of requests that fall into each category.

- 3.1** New Requests received during the reporting year
- 3.2** Total number of requests completed during the reporting year

	Personal Information	General Records
	0	16
	0	16

Section 4: Source of Requests

Enter the number of requests you completed from each source.

- 4.1** Individual/Public
- 4.2** Individual by Agent
- 4.3** Business
- 4.4** Academic/Researcher
- 4.5** Association/Group
- 4.6** Media
- 4.7** Government (all levels)
- 4.8** Other
- 4.9** Total requests (Add Boxes 4.1 to 4.8 = 4.9)

	Personal Information	General Records
	0	12
	0	0
	0	2
	0	0
	0	2
	0	0
	0	0
	0	0
	0	16

BOX 4.9 must equal BOX 3.2

Section 5: Time to Completion

How long did your institution take to complete all requests for information? Enter the number of requests into the appropriate category. How many requests were completed in:

- 5.1** 30 days or less
- 5.2** 31 - 60 days
- 5.3** 61 - 90 days
- 5.4** 91 days or longer
- 5.5** Total requests (Add Boxes 5.1 to 5.4 = 5.5)

	Personal Information	General Records
	0	8
	0	4
	0	2
	0	2
	0	16

BOX 5.5 must equal BOX 3.2

Section 6: Compliance with the Act

In the following charts, please indicate the number of requests completed, within the statutory time limit and in excess of the statutory time limit, under each of the four different situations:

- NO notices issued;
- BOTH a Notice of Extension (s.27(1)) and a Notice to Affected Person (s.28(1)) issued;
- ONLY a Notice of Extension (s.27(1)) issued;
- ONLY a Notice to Affected Person (s.28(1)) issued.

Section 6: Compliance with the Act

Please note that the four different situations are mutually exclusive and the number of requests completed in each situation should add up to the total number of requests completed in Section 3.2.(Add Boxes 6.3 + 6.6 + 6.9 + 6.12 = BOX 6.13 and BOX 6.13 must equal BOX 3.2)

A. No Notices Issued

	Personal Information	General Records
6.1 Number of requests completed within the statutory time limit (30 days) where neither a Notice of Extension (s.20(1)) nor a Notice to Affected Person (s.21(1)) were issued.	0	8
6.2 Number of requests completed in excess of the statutory time limit (30 days) where neither a Notice of Extension (s.20(1)) nor a Notice to Affected Person (s.21(1)) were issued.	0	0
6.3 Total requests (Add Boxes 6.1 + 6.2 = 6.3)	0	8

B. Both a Notice of Extension (s.27(1)) and a Notice to Affected Person (s.28(1)) Issued

	Personal Information	General Records
6.4 Number of requests completed within the time limits permitted under both the Notice of Extension (s.27(1)) and a Notice to Affected Person (s.28(1)).	0	2
6.5 Number of requests completed in excess of the time limit permitted by the Notice of Extension (s.27(1)) and the time limit permitted by the Notice to Affected Person (s.28(1)).	0	1
6.6 Total requests (Add Boxes 6.4 + 6.5 = 6.6)	0	3

C. Only a Notice of Extension (s.27(1)) Issued

	Personal Information	General Records
6.7 Number of requests completed within the time limits permitted under both the Notice of Extension (s.27(1)).	0	2
6.8 Number of requests completed in excess of the time limit permitted by the Notice of Extension (s.27(1)).	0	0
6.9 Total requests (Add Boxes 6.7 + 6.8 = 6.9)	0	2

D. Only a Notice to Affected Person (s.28(1)) Issued

	Personal Information	General Records
6.10 Number of requests completed within the time limits permitted under both the Notice to Affected Person (s.28(1)).	0	2
6.11 Number of requests completed in excess of the time limit permitted by the Notice to Affected Person (s.28(1)).	0	1
6.12 Total requests (Add Boxes 6.10 + 6.11 = 6.12)	0	3

E. Total Completed Requests (sections A to D)

	Personal Information	General Records
6.13 Total requests (Add Boxes 6.3 + 6.6 + 6.9 + 6.12 = 6.13)	0	16

BOX 6.13 must equal BOX 3.2

Section 6a: Contributing Factors

Please outline any factors which may have contributed to your institution not meeting the statutory time limit. If you anticipate circumstances that will improve your ability to comply with the Act in the future, please provide details in the space below.

All requests that did not meet the statutory time limit were directly related to one of the following: 1) discussions with third party record holders and the release of information, 2) lack of responses from record holders, or 3) redirecting Notice to Affected Persons due to change in staffing.

Reason number two above can be improved by strictly adhering to the response deadlines outlined in the Act and not providing courteous reminders and follow ups.

Reason number three above can be improved by seeking out general info mail boxes should email bounce backs be received.

Section 7: Disposition of Requests

What course of action was taken with each of the completed requests? Enter the number of requests into the appropriate category.

	Personal Information	General Records
7.1 All information disclosed	0	8
7.2 Information disclosed in part	0	3
7.3 No information disclosed	0	0
7.4 No responsive records exists	0	3
7.5 Request withdrawn, abandoned or non-jurisdictional	0	2
7.6 Total requests (Add Boxes 7.1 to 7.5 = 7.6)	0	16

BOX 7.6 must be greater than or equal to BOX 3.2

Section 8: Exemptions & Exclusions Applied

For the Total Requests with Exemptions/Exclusions/Frivolous or Vexatious Requests, how many times did your institution apply each of the following? (More than one exemption may be applied to each request)

	Personal Information	General Records
8.1 Section 6 — Draft Bylaws, etc.	0	0
8.2 Section 7 — Advice or Recommendations	0	0
8.3 Section 8 — Law Enforcement ¹	0	1
8.4 Section 8(3) — Refusal to Confirm or Deny	0	0
8.5 Section 8.1 — Civil Remedies Act, 2001	0	0
8.6 Section 8.2 — Prohibiting Profiting from Recounting Crimes Act, 2002	0	0
8.7 Section 9 — Relations with Governments	0	0
8.8 Section 10 — Third Party Information	0	6
8.9 Section 11 — Economic/Other Interests	0	1
8.10 Section 12 — Solicitor-Client Privilege	0	1

Section 8: Exemptions & Exclusions Applied

8.11	Section 13 — Danger to Safety or Health
8.12	Section 14 — Personal Privacy (Third Party) ²
8.13	Section 14(5) — Refusal to Confirm or Deny
8.14	Section 15 — Information soon to be published
8.15	Section 20.1 Frivolous or Vexatious
8.16	Section 38 — Personal Information (Requester)
8.17	Section 52(2) — Act Does Not Apply ³
8.18	Section 52(3) — Labour Relations & Employment Related Records
8.19	Section 53 — Other Acts
8.20	PHIPA Section 8(1) Applies
8.21	Total Exemptions & Exclusions Add Boxes 8.1 to 8.20 = 8.21
	¹ not including Section 8(3)
	² not including Section 14(5)
	³ not including Section 52(3)

0	0
0	11
0	0
0	0
0	0
0	0
0	0
0	0
0	0
0	0
0	20

Section 9: Fees

Did your institution collect fees related to request for access to records?

9.1	Number of REQUESTS where fees other than application fees were collected
9.2.1	Total dollar amount of application fees collected
9.2.2	Total dollar amount of additional fees collected
9.2.3	Total dollar amount of fees collected (Add Boxes 9.2.1 + 9.2.2 = 9.2.3)
9.3	Total dollar amount of fees waived

	Personal Information	General Records	Total
	0	5	5
	\$0.00	\$70.00	\$70.00
	\$0.00	\$1181.78	\$1181.78
	\$0.00	\$1251.78	\$1251.78
	\$0.00	\$5.00	\$5.00

Section 10: Reasons for Additional Fee Collection

Enter the number of REQUESTS for which your institution collected fees other than application fees that apply to each category.

10.1	Search time
10.2	Reproduction
10.3	Preparation
10.4	Shipping
10.5	Computer costs
10.6	Invoice costs(and other as permitted by regulation)
10.7	Total (Add Boxes 10.1 to 10.6 = 10.7)

	Personal Information	General Records	Total
	0	5	5
	0	2	2
	0	5	5
	0	0	0
	0	0	0
	0	2	2
	0	14	14

Section 11: Correction and Statements of Disagreement

Did your institution receive any requests to correct personal information?

- 11.1** Number of correction requests received
- 11.2** Correction requests carried forward from the previous year
- 11.3** Correction requests carried over to next year
- 11.4** Total Corrections Completed [(11.1 + 11.2) - 11.3 = 11.4]

Personal Information

0
0
0
0

BOX 11.4 must equal BOX 11.9

What course of action did your institution take regarding the requests that were received to correct personal information?

- 11.5** Correction(s) made in whole
- 11.6** Correction(s) made in part
- 11.7** Correction refused
- 11.8** Correction requests withdrawn by requester
- 11.9** Total requests (Add Boxes 11.5 to 11.8 = 11.9)

Personal Information

0
0
0
0
0

BOX 11.9 must equal BOX 11.4

In cases where correction requests were denied, in part or in full, were any statements of disagreement attached to the affected personal information?

- 11.10** Number of statements of disagreement attached:

Personal Information

0

If your institution received any requests to correct personal information, the Act requires that you send any person(s) or body who had access to the information in the previous year notification of either the correction or the statement of disagreement. Enter the number of notifications sent, if applicable.

- 11.11** Number of notifications sent:

Personal Information

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Note:

This report is for your records only and should not be faxed or mailed to the Information and Privacy Commissioner of Ontario in lieu of online submission. Faxed or mailed copies of this report will NOT be accepted. Please submit your report online at: <https://statistics.ipc.on.ca>.

Thank You for your cooperation!

Declaration:

I, Mark Critch, FOI Coordinator, GM, Services, confirm that all the information provided in this report, furnished by me to the Information and Privacy Commissioner of Ontario, is true, accurate and complete in all respects.

Signature

Date

Staff Report

To: Board of Directors

From: Rob Baldwin, Chief Administrative Officer

Date: February 16, 2024

Subject:

Conservation Authority Board Member Appointments to Lake Simcoe Conservation Foundation

Recommendation:

That Staff Report No. 08-24-BOD regarding the appointment of two members to represent the Conservation Authority on the Lake Simcoe Conservation Foundation Board of Directors be received; and

Further that the Conservation Authority's Chair, Councillor Clare Riepma, and Vice Chair, Mayor Randy Greenlaw, be appointed to the Lake Simcoe Conservation Foundation Board of Directors for 2024.

Purpose of this Staff Report:

The purpose of this Staff Report No. 08-24-BOD is to appoint two representatives from the Conservation Authority's Board of Directors to serve on the Lake Simcoe Conservation Foundation's Board of Directors for 2024.

Background:

Each year at the Conservation Authority's Annual General Meeting, among the various appointments of Board members to committees, two members are appointed to represent the Conservation Authority on the Lake Simcoe Conservation Foundation (Foundation) Board of Directors for the ensuing year. The Foundation is the leading charitable organization devoted to improving the environmental health of Lake Simcoe and its watershed. The Foundation raises funds to support specific projects of the Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority. The Conservation Authority's Chair and Vice Chair, or their designates, are the two appointed members.

At the 2024 Annual General Meeting held on January 26, 2024, this appointment was deferred to the February 23, 2024 Board of Directors' meeting.

Issues

The Foundation Board of Directors meets every other month in the Conservation Authority's Newmarket offices. The first meeting of 2024 took place on January 31st and remaining meetings are scheduled to take place from 8:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. on March 27th, May 29th, July 31st, September 25th and November 27th.

Chair Riepma and Vice Chair Greenlaw have advised that upon reviewing their 2024 calendars, they are both able to meet the obligations of an appointment to the Foundation Board of Directors, and both are willing to represent the Conservation Authority on the Foundation Board of Directors.

Relevance to Conservation Authority Policy:

In keeping with Conservation Authority policy, the Chair and Vice Chair may serve on the Foundation Board of Directors or elect to appoint designate members.

Impact on Conservation Authority Finances:

There are no impacts on Conservation Authority finances associated with this appointment.

Summary and Recommendations:

It is therefore **Recommended That** Staff Report No. 08-24-BOD regarding the appointment of two members to represent the Conservation Authority on the Lake Simcoe Conservation Foundation Board of Directors be received; and **Further that** the Conservation Authority's Chair, Councillor Clare Riepma, and Vice Chair, Mayor Randy Greenlaw, be appointed to the Lake Simcoe Conservation Foundation Board of Directors for 2024.

Staff Report prepared by Trish Barnett, Chief of Staff

Signed by:

Rob Baldwin
Chief Administrative Officer

Staff Report

To: Board of Directors

From: Rob Baldwin, Chief Administrative Officer

Date: February 1, 2024

Subject:

2024 Annual Priorities

Recommendation:

That Staff Report No. 09-24-BOD regarding the Conservation Authority's 2024 Annual Priorities be received for information.

Purpose of this Staff Report:

The purpose of this Staff Report No. 09-24-BOD is to provide the Board of Directors with the Conservation Authority's 2024 Annual Priorities.

Background:

Early each year, the Executive Leadership Team selects Annual Priority projects or initiatives for the ensuing year. These projects or initiatives are considered to be other than business-as-usual activities and can be single or multi-year priorities. These priorities all support implementation of the strategic plan. The following eight Annual Priorities have been set for 2024:

1. Construction of the Scanlon Creek Nature Centre

The future Scanlon Creek Nature Centre will provide opportunities for students and community members of all ages to learn about the environment in the natural setting of Scanlon Creek Conservation Area. The project objective is to develop an immersive, sustainable, accessible and flexible teaching facility to replace the existing Centre, which has reached the end of its lifecycle. Funding has been committed through the Lake Simcoe Conservation Foundation Connect Campaign and federal government support through the Green and Inclusive Community Buildings Program. This project has been a multi-year priority since 2018 with occupancy targeted for late 2025. Activities planned for 2024 include:

- Completing architectural and landscape designs,
- Securing municipal development approvals,
- General construction contractor procurement, and
- Site mobilization and construction start-up.

Success Indicators:

- Completion of the design phases,
- Securing of necessary permissions, and
- Groundbreaking and construction start-up.

2. Lake Simcoe Conservation Preserve

The Lake Simcoe Conservation Preserve is a large property with an even bigger future. Acquired in 2022, the long-term care and management of this property is a multi-year priority. The priorities for 2024 focus on four key areas:

- Engagement with First Nation communities to collect Traditional Ecological Knowledge about the lands. To be completed in early 2025, the details will be incorporated into the Baseline Documentation Report, informing opportunities and constraints for property development.
- Engagement with local First Nation communities to identify and develop partnerships for ongoing management and protection of the Preserve.
- Initiation of community stakeholder engagement to gather input on potential property uses, identify user interests, and inform long-term management planning and development activities.

Success Indicators:

- Collection of Traditional Knowledge to bolster our understanding of the Preserve property and enhance management objectives and strategies, and
- Initiation of broad community stakeholder engagement.

3. Implementation of Bills 229 and 23

The critical requirements of both Bills 229 and 23 have been completed to date. There are several key Bill 229 deliverables required by the end of 2024. They include a detailed land inventory, a Resource Based Watershed Management Plan, and an overarching Conservation Areas Management Strategy. All of these are currently underway with significant progress to date.

All Bill 23 requirements have been implemented to date. The focus regarding Bill 23 is twofold for 2024. The first is to continue to assess and address any impacts associated with Bill 23, and the second is to track and respond to any further regulations under Bill 23 implemented in 2024. It is difficult to predict what may be implemented, but diligence is required to respond in a timely manner.

Success Indicator:

- Board approval and submission of all Bill 229 requirements prior to the end of 2024.

4. Network Security

Network security is an ongoing multi-year priority. A thorough vulnerability assessment and security gap analysis was completed in 2023, which is now providing guidance on the most critical gaps to be closed in our cyber security efforts. These security improvements are aimed at lowering our cyber risk and being better prepared for disasters. To that end, the focus for 2024 is working to develop a better backup and disaster recovery plan. Another vulnerability scan will be run to test the layers of network protection put into place in the past year. Finally, an external management service provider partner will be engaged to assist in maintaining network infrastructure on the premises, as well as in the new cloud server room.

Success Indicator:

- Disaster Recovery plan has been developed and tested by the end of 2024 in preparation for a physical disaster at the office or a cyber attack such as ransomware.

5. New/revised strategic plan including reporting dashboard

The current strategic plan concludes at the end of 2024. This plan was only a three-year plan to allow for the Bill 229 transition to occur as well as shift to an “outcome” focus approach. The intent for 2024 is to develop a new strategic plan for a three-year period looking at some broader long-term horizons for key elements. A reporting dashboard will also be developed concurrently allowing for increased reporting, ease of data collection, while supporting better workplan and annual priority development and performance management.

Success Indicator:

- Board approval of a new strategic plan in the first quarter of 2025.

6. New Hazard Regulation

A new hazard regulation was expected to be promulgated in 2023. This regulation would replace O.Reg.179/06 and all other conservation authority specific hazard regulations with one “generic” regulation for use by all conservation authorities. This has not occurred to date and is now expected to occur in 2024. The impacts and workload of implementing the new regulation are difficult to assess without the regulation, but it is anticipated there will be a requirement for updated regulation mapping. Updates also may be required for the Regulation Implementation Guideline to ensure consistency. The anticipated effective date for the new regulation is now July 1, 2024. It is hoped that the province will issue the regulation well in advance of any effective date.

Success Indicator:

- Full implementation of the new hazard regulation within the timelines outlined in the regulation.

7. Freshwater Action Plan Projects

The Government of Canada, through Environment and Climate Change Canada, is implementing the new Freshwater Action Plan intended to protect and restore water quality for the Great Lakes and several other areas across Canada including Lake Simcoe. A call for funding proposals was just recently announced for Lake Simcoe funding with a focus on nutrient reduction and innovation that can be transferred nationally. Conservation Authority staff are currently developing project submissions, as well as having discussions with interested municipal partners. A suite of submissions will be made to meet the March 22nd submission deadline, which if approved will increase potential for restoration works across the watershed.

Success Indicator:

- Approval of proposed projects with a combined total greater than \$500,000 annually.

8. Digital Strategy

Technology and data support most activities of the Conservation Authority today, and some digitized business processes are in place. There remains, however, significant opportunity in the evolving digital world for the organization to better leverage data and technology and add business value. For 2024, a comprehensive and corporate-wide review of business needs and challenges will be completed, and a digital strategy will be created to help address those needs and challenges. This is a multi-year priority that will lead to a more efficient and effective workforce, improved management insights, and better-informed decisions.

Success Indicator:

- Prior to the end of 2024, multi-year Digital Strategy is endorsed by the Executive Leadership Team including prioritized list of digital projects and key projects initiated.

Issues

Every year begins with a set of Annual Priorities, implementing activities driving the strategic plan forward, and a focus on client service. Every year also brings surprises and new challenges that can both accelerate and improve or detract from programs and services. The priorities outlined in this report for 2024 are priorities that ensure the Conservation Authority continues moving forward in times of constant change while always focused on the core mission to protect and restore Lake Simcoe.

Relevance to Conservation Authority Policy:

All Conservation Authority Annual Priorities are undertaken and implemented in accordance with Conservation Authority Policy. There is potential that the conclusions and/or recommendations from many of the priorities may lead to creating new policies or policy amendments. These will be brought before the Board as required.

Impact on Conservation Authority Finances:

There is currently no direct impact on Conservation Authority finances as the Annual Priorities are funded within the 2024 budget. Any potential or future financial impacts will be identified as they arise. Some Annual Priorities may bring additional funding to the Conservation Authority allowing for increased implementation, increased overhead contribution, and opportunities for cost sharing allowing increased scale of project delivery.

Summary and Recommendations:

It is therefore **Recommended That** Staff Report No. No. 09-24-BOD regarding the Conservation Authority's 2024 Annual Priorities be received for information.

Signed by:

Rob Baldwin
Chief Administrative Officer

Staff Report

To: Board of Directors

From: Ashlea Brown, Director, Development Services and Dave Ruggle, Manager, Planning

Date: February 23, 2024

Subject:

Bill 23, More Homes Built Faster Act, 2022 – Impacts on Development Services Department

Recommendation:

That Staff Report No. 10-24-BOD regarding an end-of-year overview and update on the impacts of Bill 23 to the Development Services Department be received for information.

Purpose of this Staff Report:

The purpose of this Staff Report No. 10-24-BOD is to provide an end-of-year overview and update on the impacts that the mandatory changes associated with of Bill 23 have had on the Development Services Department.

Background:

Bill 23, *More Homes Built Faster Act, 2022* received Royal Assent on November 28, 2022. Bill 23 contained language that when enacted through a Minister's regulation impacted and changed the role of conservation authorities in the development review process. These changes also directly impacted and changed the role of municipalities.

On December 28, 2022, a Minister's Regulation (O. Reg 596/22) was filed under the *Conservation Authorities Act* and provided a list of prescribed acts under which a conservation authority is prohibited from providing review services in respect to development submissions. This changed the way conservation authorities were able to support municipalities through Memorandum of Understanding for Plan review. Attached is Appendix A, the Conservation Authority's Plan Review Roles and Responsibilities chart and associated Natural Heritage Review map.

The Lake Simcoe Protection Act and Plan remained as a mandatory program and service in the Lake Simcoe watershed, differing development review requirements from other conservation authorities, allowing for the continuation of natural heritage review in certain areas along with stormwater management water quality and quantity and sourcewater protection.

Staff Report No. 03-23-BOD in February 2023 advised the Board of the changes that occurred and outlined next steps. At that time, staff committed to providing an end-of-year assessment of the associated impacts.

Issues:

The Conservation Authority's Plan Review program is run on a cost recovery basis, where development pays for development with the majority of the program's revenue being generated through fees in accordance with the Conservation Authorities Act.

The legislative changes had the following impacts on the Conservation Authority's application review:

- eliminated natural heritage review in a significant part of the watershed.
- exempted development of 10 or fewer units from site plan approval in most circumstances.
- eliminated the Conservation Authority's ability to review Environmental Compliance Approvals; and
- eliminated site visits for staking non-hazard related features upon the planning approval process.

The role, responsibility and process changes resulting from the implementation of the Provincial legislation left many unanswered questions around the level of continued involvement the Conservation Authority would have in the municipal development processes and how that would impact revenue. While the Conservation Authority reacted quickly and met with Municipal partners and outlined the changes to responsibilities, there has been and continues to be confusion around the role of Conservation Authorities due to the complexity of the legislation. The confusion appears to have slowed development applications including those not related to legislative changes. Consequently, the Conservation Authority took a cautious approach to staffing requirements in the Development Services section with concerns of not having sufficient revenue.

As noted, the largest impact to the Conservation Authority's review services was related to natural heritage. File review for natural heritage decreased by 61%, to 139 reviews in 2023. Due to the changing roles, the need for 3 full time natural heritage ecologists for development review did not appear sustainable. Prior to determining the appropriate staffing levels, one ecologist resigned, and one secured a full-time position in the Conservation Authority's Integrated Watershed Management division, leaving a single ecologist in the Development Services division for plan and permit review. This ecologist position and workload continues to be monitored to determine appropriate staffing levels moving forward.

Overall, a 16% decrease in the number of *Planning Act* applications from 2022 was noted. In addition to the reduction in the number of natural heritage reviews, the number of engineering

plan reviews decreased by 23% from 2022, likely associated with the 43% decrease in site plan review. Hydrogeological reviews also decreased by 21% in 2023. Overall, the revenue invoiced and collected for plan review in 2023 (\$1,829,049) was a 21% decrease from 2022 (\$2,307,668). This does not take into consideration deferred revenue.

To compensate for the reduction in fees and review, as staff in the Development Services Department left the Conservation Authority either through retirement or resignation, positions remained vacant, resulting in 5 current vacancies. In addition to the two Natural Heritage positions, the following positions have remained vacant:

- Hydrogeologist,
- Engineering technologist,
- Planner 1

As the vacancies have been from different disciplines, existing staff have accommodated the workload to ensure work is completed in accordance with memorandums of understanding with municipal partners; however, the sustainability of this arrangement is uncertain moving forward. Based on the effort/time estimates completed during the Watson Fee review, staff must streamline and reduce the amount of time for application review in order to meet targets and deadlines. This has been achieved by keeping comments high level for low-risk files. The 2024 workplan includes an update of the Watson Fee report to re-assess the time required to review applications given legislative changes and a report back to the Board on any changes.

2024 will be monitored closely in terms of workload and budget considerations to ensure staffing requirements achieve the review and commenting responsibilities.

Relevance to Conservation Authority Policy:

Natural Hazard Review, *Lake Simcoe Protection Act* and Plan and *Sourcewater Protection Act* continue to be mandatory services and programs for the Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority. Staff continue to monitor application submissions and revenue to ensure service delivery standards and obligations to Municipal partners continue to be achieved.

Staff met with Municipal staff throughout 2023 and updated the Planning Memorandum of Understandings, which are intended to be executed by the end of the first quarter 2024. Additionally, the Phosphorus Offsetting Policy was updated in 2023 to reflect legislative changes.

Impact on Conservation Authority Finances:

Staff continue to assess the financial impact of Bill 23. Decrease in site plan approvals have decreased revenue, but the overall reduction in site plans of less than 10 units is minor. However, it appears that the general uncertainty of the industry and confusion in addition to rising costs, including interest rates, has resulted in an overall decline in *Planning Act*

applications. Based on current information, this general decline in applications is likely temporary and primarily a result of these other external factors, and not a permanent direct result of the legislative changes. Changing market conditions resulting from costs and interest rates will dictate staffing needs.

There has been some permanent loss in revenue due to the legislative changes, including an approximate \$30,000 loss of the stormwater Environmental Compliance Approval program. The Ecological Offsetting Program is no longer being implemented in most of the Lake Simcoe watershed, which will reduce future revenue for restoration programs.

Updating the Watson Fee report will provide more clarity around the financial impacts of Bill 23 and will allow for fees to be adjusted accordingly. However, currently, it appears that the uncertainty that the legislative changes have made are the largest impact on development applications.

Summary and Recommendations:

It is therefore **Recommended That** Staff Report No. 10-24-BOD regarding an end-of-year overview and update on the impacts of Bill 23 to the Development Services Department be received for information.

Pre-Submission Review:

This Staff Report has been reviewed by the General Manager, Development, Engineering and Restoration, and the Chief Administrative Officer.

Signed by:

Glenn MacMillan
General Manager, Development,
Engineering and Restoration

Signed by:

Rob Baldwin
Chief Administrative Officer

Attachments

- Conservation Authority Plan Review Roles and Responsibilities chart



DRAFT

Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority Plan Review Roles

Bill 23 & Ontario Regulation 596/22

January 10, 2023

Lead agency within each area is marked with “CA” for Conservation Authority or “M” where Municipality is the lead.

Areas of Interest/Features	Settlement Areas	Within ORM	Within Greenbelt	Outside of Settlement, ORM and Greenbelt	Policy Context
Natural Hazards					O. Reg 686/21 Sections 7 & 8
Watercourses (including channel realignments)	CA	CA	CA	CA	PPS Section 3 CA Act 21.1 & 28
Flooding (Riverine and Lake)	CA	CA	CA	CA	PPS Section 3 CA Act 21.1 & 28
Erosion	CA	CA	CA	CA	PPS Section 3 CA Act 21.1 & 28
Slope Stability (Valley Lands/shoreline slopes, etc.)	CA	CA	CA	CA	PPS Section 3 CA Act 21.1 & 28
Lake Simcoe Shoreline Hazards	CA	CA	CA	CA	PPS Section 3 CA Act 21.1 & 28
Wetlands	CA	CA	CA	CA	PPS Section 3 CA Act 21.1 & 28
Unstable Soils/Bedrock	CA	CA	CA	CA	PPS Section 3 CA Act 21.1 & 28
Natural Heritage	*Established prior to July* 2009				O. Reg 686/21 Section 15 (LSPP)
Significant Wildlife Habitat	* M CA in settlement areas established after 2009	M	M	M	*LSPP 6.42 aggregate operations would be applicable CA to comment
Threatened/Endangered Species	M	M	M	M	*LSPP 6.42 aggregate operations T.E.S would be applicable CA to comment

Areas of Interest/Features	Settlement Areas	Within ORM	Within Greenbelt	Outside of Settlement, ORM and Greenbelt	Policy Context
Significant Woodlands	* M CA in settlement areas established after 2009	M	M	CA	LSPP 6.20-6.29
Significant Valleylands	* M CA in settlement areas established after 2009	M	M	CA	6.20 DP -6.29 & Natural Hazards
Wetlands	* M CA in settlement areas established after 2009	CA *hazard only	C *hazard only	CA	6.20 DP -6.29 DP
Fish Habitat	M	M	M	* CA in relation to 6.11 DP	*6.11
MVPZ's	* M CA in settlement areas established after 2009	M CA *Along the shoreline CA 6.2 -6.7	M *Along the shoreline 6.2 – 6.7 CA	CA	6.1 DP- 6.7 DP; 6.8 DP-6.13 DP; 6.20 DP-6.29 DP
Feature Based Water Balance	* M CA in settlement areas established after 2009	M	M	CA	LSPP 6.11 DP a; 6.40 DP *in recharge or ESGRA
Stormwater Management					
Water Quality	CA	CA	CA	CA	4.8 DP *for major development
Water Quantity (flooding) and Erosion Control	CA	CA	CA	CA	PPS Section 3, CA Act and 4.8 LSPP *major development
Water Balance	CA	CA	CA	CA	4.8 LSPP *major development

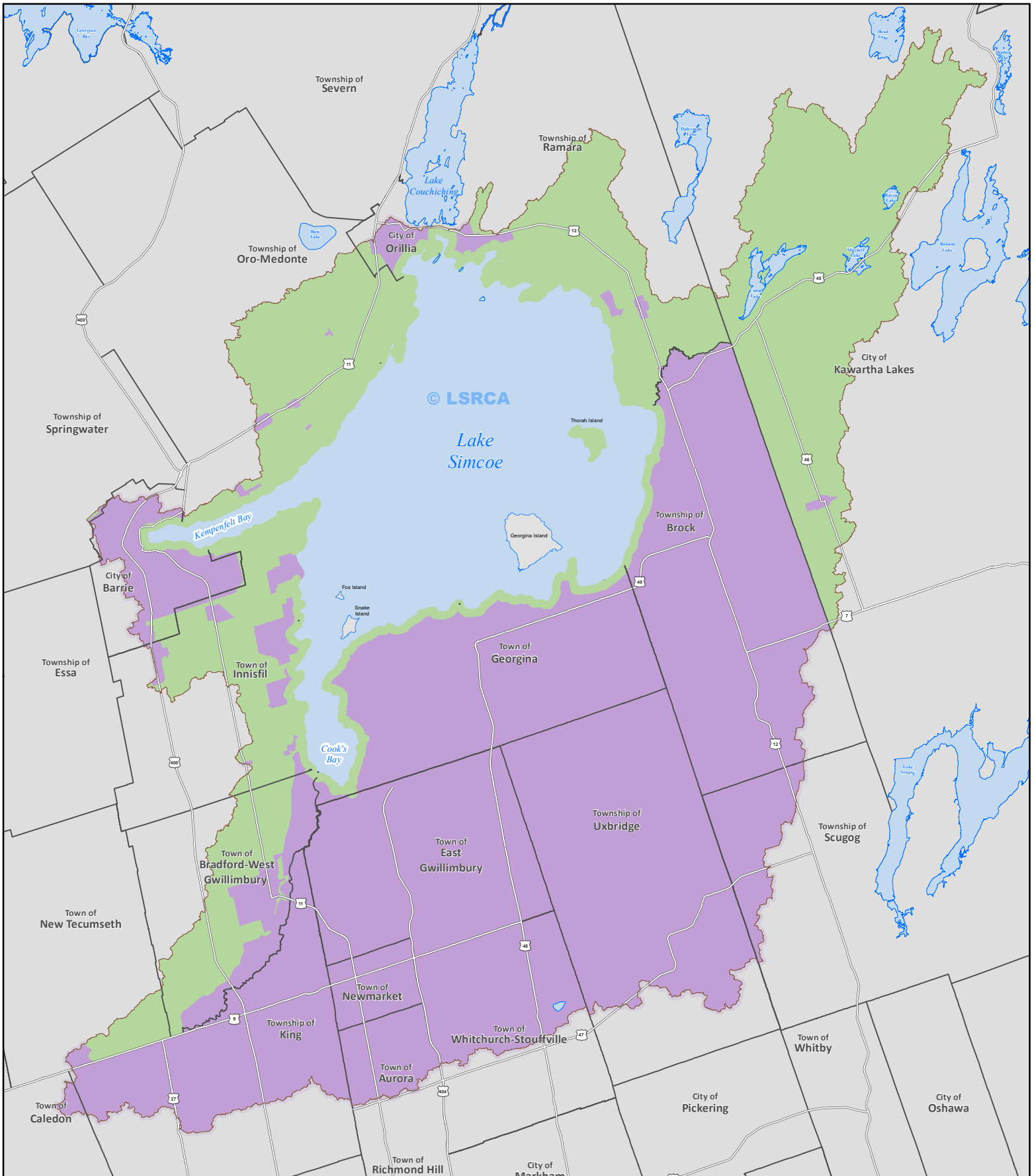
Areas of Interest/Features	Settlement Areas	Within ORM	Within Greenbelt	Outside of Settlement, ORM and Greenbelt	Policy Context
Other					
Erosion and Sediment Control (within regulated area)	CA	CA	CA	CA	Natural Hazards
Erosion and Sediment Control (outside regulated area)	M	M	M	M	
Sewage Treatment/Septic	CA *4.15 only	CA *4.15 only	CA * 4.15 only	CA	LSPP 4.15 DP; 6.40 DP
Hydro-G/Water Balance	CA	N/A in LSPP but covered off in WHPA Q-2	CA	CA	LSPP 6.40 DP *major development
Source Water Protection					
Hydro G/Water Balance	CA	CA	CA	CA	O. Reg 686/21 Mandatory Program and Service WHPA Q-2; LUP 12 Source Water Protection Plan
ECA's	M	M	M	M	CA no longer able to enter into agreement under The Ontario Water Resources Act

* Note proposals under the *Aggregate Resources Act*; *Drainage Act* and *Environmental Assessment Act* can be circulated for comments related to natural hazard and LSPP as per O. Reg 686/21 Sections 6 and 15.

Transition Plan

Any application in which the Conservation Authority received 1st submission and provided comments prior to January 1, 2023 will continue to be reviewed in the context of the Conservation Authority's current MOUs.

Any application received after January 1, 2023 or any application that did not get reviewed by the Conservation Authority prior to January 1, 2023 will be reviewed in the context of the current legislation.



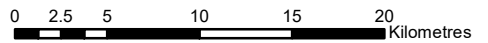
DRAFT - LSRCA Natural Heritage Review Areas

Legend

-  Lower Tier Municipality
-  Municipal lead for review
-  LSRCA lead for review
-  Major Highway



Lake Simcoe Region
conservation authority



Staff Report

To: Board of Directors

From: Glenn MacMillan, General Manager, Development, Engineering and Restoration and
Ashlea Brown, Director, Development Services

Date: February 23, 2024

Subject:

Georgina Island Fixed Link Project Update

Recommendation:

That Staff Report No. 11-24-BOD regarding an update on staff's review and involvement with the Georgina Island Fixed Link project be received for information.

Purpose of this Staff Report:

The purpose of this Staff Report No. 11-24-BOD is to provide the Board of Directors with an update on staff's review of the Georgina Island Fixed Link Project and the recent technical study submissions.

Background:

In December 2023, Indigenous Aware provided an overview of the status of the Fixed Link project to the Conservation Authority's Board of Directors. At that time, it was advised that initial studies were being completed and public meetings would ensue in January 2024.

At the end of December 2023, the Conservation Authority received the initial draft Coastal Engineering report prepared by WSP. Also received were the draft Terrestrial and Aquatic monitoring report and the Geotechnical and Civil Engineering Summaries for review. Conservation Authority staff reviewed the draft technical reports and provided technical comments back to the project team as of January 24, 2023.

Issues:

The draft technical studies are available for public review on the [Georgina Island Fixed Link](#) webpage. Conservation Authority staff reviewed and commented on the project in the same manner as a development proposal and provided additional comments from a Lake Science perspective. The focus of review included:

- Impacts on Natural Hazard features (Coastal processes such as flooding due to wave up-rush and wind set up, ice piling and erosion);

- Impacts of Natural Heritage features such as wetlands, as well as providing comments on potential impacts to woodlands and aquatic and terrestrial species such as birds, bats, fish, amphibians, benthics etc.
- Impacts to Water quality.
- Invasive species and invasive species management

Approvals are not required from the Conservation Authority for the proposed fixed link as it falls under Federal jurisdiction.

The Conservation Authority provided detailed technical comments on the draft reports and supporting material. Primary comments included the recommendation for the completion of a sensitivity analysis, specifically showing post development impacts from engineering and ecology in consideration to pre-development. Also recommended is specifically assessing changes to sediment transport, deposition and erosion, ice piling, thermal impacts, water depths, habitat and spawning impacts for species, invasive species, and water quality. Additionally, a Monitoring and Adaptive Management Plan was recommended to identify issues, concerns, as well how they will be addressed. This needs to be long term, possibly in perpetuity, as potential impacts may occur over longer time periods.

Additional detailed comments and questions about specifics of the report were provided and discussed in a meeting with the consultants on January 15, 2024.

Georgina Island Fixed Link held a public Technical Town Hall in Sutton on January 24, 2024. Additionally, it is understood that there was to be a Georgina Island First Nation presentation and Open House on January 31, 2024, as well as an elder engagement meeting and a youth engagement meeting on February 6, 2024.

Currently, staff have reviewed all draft reports and documents provided and have provided recommendation and technical comments for consideration. Next steps will be determined by Georgina Island First Nations and communicated through the project team either through additional consultation or the Impact Assessment Agency of Canada process. At the time of writing of this report the Impact Assessment Agency of Canada process has been paused but is expected to recommence in later winter / early spring.

Relevance to Conservation Authority Policy:

The Conservation Authority has no legislative or regulatory authority over this project. The project is governed by the Federal Government. The *Conservation Authorities Act* and the *Lake Simcoe Protection Act* and Plan are provincial legislation and as such are not applicable to the proposed undertaking.

The Conservation Authority is undertaking the review at the request of the Fixed Link project team (representing the Georgina Island First Nation), as well as providing input to the Impact

Assessment Agency of Canada. This review is referred to as a “voluntary review process” and is similar to input provided on provincial infrastructure projects such as the Bradford Bypass.

Impact on Conservation Authority Finances:

There are no significant financial implications directly associated with this project. While Conservation Authority staff time is being utilized, partial funding through the Planning Phase of the Impact Assessment was received for staff time spent in the initial review, and additional funding may be available if the project is subject to a full Environmental Impact Assessment. If this proposed project requires a full federal Environmental Impact Assessment, there could be potential for additional work and therefore required dialogue regarding cost recovery.

Summary and Recommendations:

The Georgina Island Fixed Link proposal is clearly a substantial infrastructure in the heart of Lake Simcoe and as such requires significant technical and environmental assessment, clear understanding of any impacts and how they may be addressed, as well as appropriate monitoring and adaptive management should it proceed.

The Conservation Authority, through the review of the proposed undertaking, is providing objective technical comments, opinions, and identification of issues for consideration. The ultimate decision rests with the federal government represented by the Impact Assessment Agency of Canada.

It is therefore **Recommended that** Staff Report No. 11-24-BOD regarding an update on staff review and involvement with the Georgina Island Fixed Link project be received for information.

Pre-Submission Review:

This Staff Report has been reviewed by the General Manager, Development, Engineering and Restoration, and the Chief Administrative Officer.

Signed by:

Glenn MacMillan
General Manager, Development,
Engineering and Restoration

Signed by:

Rob Baldwin
Chief Administrative Office

Attachments:

1 – Technical Comments Letter



January 24, 2024

Michael Jacobs, Chief Executive Officer
CIPS, Cambium Indigenous Professional Services
1109 Mississauga Street
Curve Lake First Nation, Ontario K0L 1R0

RE: Technical Comments – Georgina Island Fixed Link

Mr. Jacobs,

Thank you for meeting with staff of the LSRCA to discuss the technical reports submitted in support of the fixed link, a bridge and causeway proposed to connect Georgina Island to the mainland in Georgina. Staff reviewed the draft reports including the draft coastal engineering report, draft ecological reports (terrestrial and aquatic) as well as the supporting Geotechnical and Civil Engineering summaries. Based on our review we provide the following comments which were discussed during our January 15th, 2024, meeting.

Comments:

1. We recommend that a sensitivity analysis be completed for this project. Post development impacts from engineering and ecology should be considered to pre-development and these differences should be clearly shown. We recommend including changes to sediment transport, deposition and erosion, ice piling, thermal impacts, water depths, habitat and spawning impacts for species, invasive species, and water quality. The most sensitive areas should be highlighted in this report and bridge design should occur mitigating any impacts. Justification for the input factors should be provided.

2. We recommend that the Coastal Engineering Study and Report completed by WSP be peer reviewed by another Coastal Engineering Firm. This review should include considerations of impacts to the LSRCA's Regulatory limits on shore and any differences in the shoreline hazards should be identified. Please note, the LSRCA's shoreline study is currently being updated by BAIRD. You may wish to discuss this process with them directly. It is recommended that the Coastal Engineering study be peer reviewed for items such as, but not limited to the following:
 - Confirm assumptions
 - Climate change impacts
 - Data (sources, time periods, accuracy, etc.)

- Modelling (setup, methodology, resolution, calibration, scenarios, results etc.)
 - Conclusions (basis, general vs specific, numerical, scientific, observation based, traditional knowledge, etc.)
3. A project of the scale of the Fixed Link requires a detailed and expansive Monitoring and Adaptive Management Plan to identify issues, concerns, and how will they be addressed. This needs to be long term, possibly in perpetuity, as potential impacts may occur over longer time periods. The plan should address:
- a. Shore and lake ecology
 - b. Hydrodynamic processes and coastal processes, erosion, littoral zone change, sediment movement, and more. The area of influence should be a minimum of 1km in any direction. The use of multiple ADCP's is recommended.
 - c. Water quality parameters collected across a distributed network in the same area of influence of coastal processes. The use of multiple deployable sonde units is recommended. Detailed focus on chlorides should be required.
 - d. Monitoring of local climate conditions should be included with a focus on wind and impacts / changes associated with the presence of the Fixed Link.
 - e. Ice monitoring and safety monitoring is required. A safe alternate route may be required to be established to allow for winter on-ice traffic.
 - f. The adaptive management plan should outline the process on how issues may be addressed and reported.
 - g. An annual reporting summary should be required, and a "real time" monitoring dashboard should be implemented.
4. The Sand Islands area adjacent to the Fixed Link is an area of dynamic sand sediment movement linked to hydrodynamic, coastal, and climatic processes. The fixed link becoming a large permanent structure (causeway) directly on the eastern edge of this dynamic area may result in significant changes to the Sand Islands. We have concerns that the causeway will influence the ability for a dynamic area such as the Sand Islands to function. The limited modeling and collected data should clearly address potential short- or long-term impacts or changes in this area.
5. The area to the east of the causeway section may have limited mixing during prevailing winds, typically out of a westerly direction. This may lead to impaired local ecology,

increased macrophyte and algal growth and organic sediment deposition. This condition has been observed in other locations in the lake where hydrodynamic and coastal processes have been altered anthropogenically. The limited modeling and collected data was included, this information should clearly address potential short- or long-term impacts or changes in this area.

6. An assessment of the impacts of “lighting” the Fixed Link for safety appears not to have been conducted. This should consider not just local ecological impacts but social impacts as well.
7. It appears that flow will be completely blocked from just south of the sand island to Georgina Island due to the construction of the causeway. We would recommend looking at options to maintain flows throughout the entire span of the structure. Specifically, blocking flows in this area has the potential to create a lagoon and breeding ground for invasive species. If utilizing culverts to maintain flow, justification for the number of culverts to be used and sizing should be provided.
8. Potential impacts of the development should be clearly defined, and mitigation measures should be determined. Detailed Ecological comments are attached.
9. When completing detailed design, Storm Water Management should be included. Concerns with run-off and source water protection were discussed and we understand further detailed information will be provided around drainage and water quality.
10. It is recommended that the report and detailed design of the causeway and bridge assess the potential impacts of the structure to the following, including mitigation measures.
 - Ice formation, movement and breakup
 - Shoreline ice piling/buildup
 - Wind impacts
 - Snow accumulation
11. It is recommended that additional clarification should be included in the report to confirm the suitability for the use of 2017 Water Level data for model calibration. Please consider requesting the full 2022 data from Parks Canada.

12. Additional clarification should be included in the report related to flow velocity changes/impacts along the mainland shoreline, adjacent to the proposed causeway/bridge.

13. Further to the above, it is recommended that an additional observation location be included, east of Location 7 and the proposed bridge, to clarify impacts to the shoreline, point and sand spit areas.

14. The report states the proposed causeway significantly alters the wave behavior in the project area, specifically in the vicinity of the sand islands.

Additional clarification should be provided in the report for the future wave height changes in the vicinity of mainland shoreline (e.g. east of the proposed causeway/bridge and spit area) and applicable impacts to the LSRCAs regulated shoreline Hazard and shoreline study (wave uprush, wind setup, erosion hazard, and overall hazard limit- see comment 4 as well).

15. Additional clarification should be included in the report to confirm the suitability of modelling one (1) year of erosion/sedimentation after the causeway/bridge construction. It is recommended that a longer modelling duration, such as 20-30 years, be considered.

16. The report states that shoreline accretion/erosion patterns near the proposed land connection causeway are likely to be similar to existing Sub-reach III-B to III-D.

Additional clarification and detail should be provided in the report related to estimated future potential shoreline accretion/erosion changes (e.g., 20-30 years in the vicinity of the proposed causeway, including Sub-reach areas III-E, III-F & III-G).

17. It is recommended that alternate bridge/causeway configuration options (e.g., causeway shortening, bridge lengthening, additional bridge sections and/or openings along the causeway) be explored in the report with associated sensitivity analysis and modelling to demonstrate that impacts from the proposed structure are minimized.

Further to above, the report and future detailed design should consider removing the mainland causeway portion, extending the bridge south to the mainland and north, close to southern tip of Sand Islands, to minimize impacts to currents, waves, sedimentation, erosion, ice, and navigation.

18. The mitigation hierarchy of avoid, minimize, mitigate, compensate should be followed when assessing impacts and finalizing the alignment and location of infrastructure, with rationale given for moving from one stage of the hierarchy to the next. For example, all opportunities to avoid direct impacts to the Provincially Significant Wetlands should be explored, followed by minimizing (such as spanning) impacts to the wetland, and mitigating and compensating for any residual impacts.

As impacts to the woodland on the West Property are likely to be unavoidable, all opportunities to minimize the footprint of infrastructure should be explored and the alignment should avoid sensitive habitats to the extent possible. For unavoidable losses, compensation plantings to achieve a net gain of woodland habitat should be undertaken such that it expands existing forest and increases interior forest habitat. Other habitat enhancements to provide for lost functions may be warranted as well.

19. Provincially Significant Wetlands (PSW) should be considered high concern areas due to their significance at a broad landscape scale. The Provincial Policy Statement Provincially Significant Wetlands (PSW) should be considered high concern areas due to their significance at a broad landscape scale. The Provincial Policy Statement prohibits development and site alteration within PSWs.

High concern should also extend to features that are rare in the landscape and high quality, intact habitats with a high proportion of native species. Other woodlands and wetlands should be increased from low to moderate concern. Low concern should be applied only to low quality habitats, such as cultural ELC communities and those with a high existing level of disturbance and invasive species.

Tree/shrub and ground colonially nesting birds are described as intolerant of human disturbance in the Significant Wildlife Habitat Decision Support Tool. The Tool also asserts that due to the limited number of bat maternity colony sites, the loss of any such site has significant impacts on bat populations. These SWH types should be included under high concern areas.

20. Results for BBS-I3, BBS-I9, BBS-B1, BBS-B4, BBS-B5, BBS-B6, BBS-W5, BBS-W9, BBS-W10 all contain SWH listed species, but are described as not containing SWH listed species under Notable Observations in Table 8. Clarification is warranted because while they may not be SWH listed species for the habitat type in which the point is located, they are listed SWH species for adjacent habitat. For example, where forest birds were recorded at meadow point counts (forest adjacent), they should be identified as SWH listed species in Notable Observations, linked to the appropriate SWH type.

21. Please note that when confirmed significant wildlife habitat (SWH) criteria are met (i.e. the presence of the listed indicator species in the defining quantities), significant wildlife habitat is considered confirmed despite not satisfying the more general candidate SWH criteria (i.e. minimum size).

Five-minute point counts with incidental observations between points are not designed to obtain the highest level of breeding evidence of a species or confirm number of nesting pairs. Therefore, nesting by defining quantities of SWH listed species cannot be ruled out based on absence of breeding evidence obtained during the point counts. Where there is potential or confirmed breeding by a sufficient number of SWH listed species, the habitat should be considered candidate Woodland Area-Sensitive Bird Breeding Habitat.

The forest communities within the study area on the island are separated by less than 30m of road from the larger contiguous forest to the east, increasing the amount of interior forest available. Where overall forest cover is very high, patch size matters less for area-sensitive species.

Woodland Area-Sensitive Bird Breeding Habitat should be considered Candidate on Bayvista and the Island.

22. Detections of Barred Owl and Broad-winged Hawk on the West Property are still a form of breeding evidence – species present in suitable habitat in breeding season (possible). Woodland Raptor Nesting SWH cannot therefore be ruled out. Surveys earlier in the season may garner higher breeding evidence.
23. Section 4.8.1.11, page 97 states Woodland Area-sensitive Bird Breeding SWH is absent from Island and Bayvista but it is mapped as candidate on these properties on Figure 39. Please clarify.
24. The plant list includes a number of species that are considered rare in the Lake Simcoe watershed and/or in York Region. Please refer to *Vascular Plants of the Lake Simcoe Watershed* (MNRF 2015) and *Distribution and Status of the Vascular Plants of the Greater Toronto Area* (Varga *et al.* 2000) and include watershed/regional status in Appendix I. Should rare species be located in an area that will be impacted, a plan to transplant/relocate these plants to a suitable habitat should be prepared at detailed design.

25. The likely Northern Goshawk pair observation (noted as being likely the same pair observed a week prior which suggests they are on territory and described as possibly nesting in communities I1 or I2) should be included and discussed in Section 4.8.1.5.2 and 4.8.1.11.
26. While Schedule 6E indicates an area of 30-100 m from the nesting area of turtles be included in the Turtle Nesting Area SWH, the area recommended in the report is 30 m within forested areas, and 50 m for open areas where there is a greater exposure to disturbance. Rationale for applying 50 m in these instances out of a potential area up to 100 m should be given.
27. According to Schedule 6E, for bat maternity colonies, “The area of the habitat includes the entire woodland or a forest stand ELC Ecosite or an Eco-element containing the maternity colonies”. As locations of maternity colonies (if present) are not known, candidate SWH should include the entire wooded area as all surveyed areas met the density threshold for snags and bat passes were detected in ELC units not currently mapped as candidate SWH on the figures (e.g. W2).
28. As the Sand Islands were not sampled due to access restrictions, an assessment of bat habitat should be undertaken when access is possible if impacts to sand islands are anticipated.
29. Feature-based water balances should be undertaken at detailed design to ensure potential hydrologic impacts to sensitive features (wetlands, watercourses, woodlands) and the species they support are addressed.
30. LSRCA understands from the meeting on January 15th, 2024 that an impact assessment is forthcoming and will provide comments on that assessment and mitigation measures following that submission.
31. At a minimum, spawning surveys should be completed at these sites (B, C, & E-G) targeted to species that may use the area for spawning based on the habitat present to establish baseline data. If unable to complete spawning surveys, presence should be assumed based on background data of species known to spawn in these areas.

32. At a minimum, 1 year of benthic sampling following OBBN protocols should be completed for the shoreline sites to establish baseline data of existing habitat quality and functioning.
33. While the preferred alignment does not cross any tributaries, there is a creek on Georgina Island west of the preferred alignment. Spring spawning surveys are recommended to be completed for this area, specifically as it has been identified as potential pike spawning habitat. Electrofishing and benthic sampling should also be done, if possible, to establish baseline data of the ecological functioning of the watercourse and to anticipate any potential impacts to these functions from the development.
34. Given the sensitivity of site A for the preferred alignment, presence of potential pike spawning habitat and PSW with high vegetation diversity, it is recommended that the works be shifted to the east in order to avoid the PSW and better spawning habitat. Considering the shoreline wetland habitat within Site A would be hard to recreate, consideration should be given for classifying this area as a high sensitivity fish habitat.
35. Comment on potential impacts to fish habitat based on the preferred alignment and the anticipated changes to flow, ice coverage, sediment input, water chemistry, temperature, etc. Associated with potential impacts should be mitigation measures proposed to address any potential negative impacts to fish habitat. Comparisons should be made specifically for anticipated impacts to fish habitat from a causeway versus a bridge. In particular, a bridge should be considered at shoreline areas and where quality fish habitat exists and where spawning has been recorded/observed.
36. The detailed traffic study appears to be deficient regarding construction traffic and the significant volume of truck traffic that will occur to provide the required fill material for the causeway section of the project.

We would be happy to further consult or discuss any of the above comments on the draft reports provided or on the design as that phase of the project begins.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ashlea Brown". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Ashlea Brown

Director, Development Services

Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority

Copy: Corey Kinsella, Indigenous aware

Brianna Barnhart, Indigenous aware

Glenn MacMillian, Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority