



# Budget Book

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2023







## INTRODUCTION

Ontario's conservation authorities are governed by the Conservation Authorities Act, which is administered by the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Forestry (MNR). The *Conservation Authorities Act (CA Act)* was originally enacted in 1946 as conservation authorities began to be established and has undergone amendments since that time.

The Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority (NPCA) was formed in 1959 under the *Conservation Authorities Act* and is responsible for undertaking a variety of programs and services under the Act. As one of 36 conservation authorities across the Province, the NPCA's mandate is to establish and undertake programs designed to further the conservation, restoration, development, and management of natural resources across the watershed.

NPCA has three participating municipalities: Niagara Region, City of Hamilton, and Haldimand County. Funding is calculated from current value assessment (CVA) data provided by Municipal Property Assessment Corporation (MPAC) and modified by MNR based on *CA Act* Budget and Apportionment Regulation (Reg 402/22). The lower-tier municipalities in Niagara Region work with NPCA through various collaboration initiatives, as appropriate.



# About the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority



Map of NPCA watershed

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

The NPCA's watershed area encompasses 2,424 km<sup>2</sup>, including the entire regional municipality of Niagara and portions of the City of Hamilton (21%) and Haldimand County (25%). Since time immemorial, this area has been the home to Indigenous peoples – a place for sharing, trading, hunting, gathering, stewardship, and friendship. Currently, the watershed supports a population of approximately 475,187 people.

The Niagara Peninsula watershed is a natural treasure of distinct cultural, geological, hydrological, and biological aspects not found elsewhere in North America. It is part of the Carolinian life zone – the most bio-diverse and threatened eco-region in Canada. The Niagara Peninsula watershed boasts approximately 30% natural cover

that provides critical habitat such as forested woodlots, slough forests, alvars, and coastal wetlands that support rich biodiversity, including rare plants and animals. The watershed is uniquely situated between two Great Lakes, with the Niagara River as a boundary shared with the United States of America. As a result, the watershed area includes several notable natural features such as the Niagara Escarpment Biosphere Reserve, the Niagara Falls, Wainfleet Bog, Ball's Falls, Willoughby Marsh, and other significant landforms such as the Fonthill Kame ice contact-delta complex.

The unique micro-climate created by the Niagara Escarpment and rich soils supports one of Ontario's most productive agriculture systems, including vineyards, tender fruit orchards, livestock, and various specialty crops (greenhouses for flowers, vegetables, sod farms, and mushroom farms). These important watershed features provide life-sustaining benefits for all and many opportunities to discover nature and culture.



## NPCA by the Numbers

<b>475,187</b>	Residents
<b>242,980</b>	Hectares Watershed Jurisdiction
<b>41</b>	Conservation Areas
<b>2,982</b>	Hectares NPCA Land Holdings
<b>202</b>	Local Waterways
<b>2</b>	Great Lakes
<b>15</b>	Municipalities (Upper and Lower Tier)
<b>4</b>	Flagship Properties
<b>80</b>	Surface Water Monitoring Stations
<b>46</b>	Groundwater Wells



## Watershed Management by the Numbers (Annual Average)

<b>474</b>	Permits Issued
<b>1,150</b>	Planning Applications Reviewed
<b>330</b>	Complaints / Potential Violations Received
<b>80</b>	Surface Water Quality Samples Collected
<b>46</b>	Groundwater Samples Collected



## Conservation Areas by the Numbers (Annual Average)

<b>110,400</b>	Paid Day-Use Visitors At All Parks
<b>1,496</b>	Natureplus Memberships Sold
<b>40,000</b>	People Attended NPCA's Signature Events
<b>12</b>	Research Permits For Sustainable, Safe, And Ecological Studies Within Conservation Areas



## Restoration by the Numbers (Annual Average)

<b>61</b>	Restoration Projects Completed
<b>63,000</b>	Trees Planted
<b>7,000</b>	Shrubs Planted
<b>26.77</b>	Hectares Of Reforestation
<b>1.12</b>	Hectares Of Hedgerow Establishment
<b>2.26</b>	Hectares Of Riparian Area/Shoreline Enhancement
<b>1.21</b>	Hectares Of Wetland Constructed
<b>4,000</b>	Wetland Plants
<b>2.39</b>	Hectares Of Enhanced Wetland Area
<b>3</b>	Agricultural Best Management Practises Projects Completed





<p><b>1</b> <b>Healthy and Climate Resilient Watersheds</b></p> <p><i>Improving nature for the betterment of all life across the watershed.</i></p> 	<p><b>2</b> <b>Supporting Sustainable Growth</b></p> <p><i>Helping to create resilient communities through land-use planning and the use of sustainable technologies to prepare for a changing climate and related environmental challenges.</i></p> 	<p><b>3</b> <b>Connecting People to Nature</b></p> <p><i>Creating equitable access to greenspace for the health and well-being of people.</i></p> 	<p><b>4</b> <b>Partner of Choice</b></p> <p><i>Strengthening our relationships with stakeholders, partners, the watershed community, and Indigenous peoples.</i></p> 	<p><b>5</b> <b>Organizational Excellence</b></p> <p><i>Striving for excellence through high service delivery standards and accountability to the environment and its people.</i></p> 	<p><b>6</b> <b>Financial Sustainability</b></p> <p><i>Ensuring a financially stable and sustainable organization and continued service-delivery through innovative business models, diverse funding sources, and best practices.</i></p> 
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## STRATEGIC PLAN

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

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

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

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

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





## NPCA PROGRAMS & SERVICES

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

### Category 1:

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

### Category 2:

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

### Category 3:

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

## Key NPCA Services Areas

### Natural Hazard Management

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

### Watershed Resource Management and Climate Change

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

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

### Conservation Authority Lands and Conservation Areas

Management of 2,982 hectares of land, including 41 conservation areas essential to watershed management, environmental protection, cultural heritage, and recreation.

### Enabling Services

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





Long Beach Conservation Area

## NPCA BUDGET & FUNDING AT A GLANCE

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

### The NPCA has three main sources of revenue:

1. **MUNICIPAL LEVY**  
Municipal levy constitutes approximately 54 percent of the total conservation authority budget.
2. **SELF-GENERATED FUNDS**  
Approximately 40 percent of NPCA's funding comes from fees for services and other sources, such as user fees, educational programs, and planning fees.
3. **OTHER REVENUES AND GOVERNMENT GRANTS**  
Make up the balance, roughly 6 percent of total NPCA revenues.

To deliver on our mandate and commitment, the NPCA employs staff across numerous professional fields who provide programs in the following areas:

- Flood & Erosion Management (including Flood Forecasting)
- Shoreline Hazard Management
- Environmental Planning Review
- Development Permitting
- Compliance and Enforcement
- Watershed and Sub-Watershed Resource Planning and Technical Studies
- Monitoring (Ground Water/Surface Water/ Ecological)
- Climate Change Resilience
- Drinking Water Source Protection
- Niagara River Remedial Action Plan
- Conservation Areas Programs and Services
- Land Care for Conservation Areas
- Land Management Planning
- Ecological Restoration
- Community Engagement and Stewardship
- Outdoor Education
- Corporate Services (including IT /GIS/Finance/Fleet/ Facilities etc.)
- Governance and Corporate Administration (HR/ Communications/ Public Relations/Board)
- Asset Management





## NPCA 2023 BUDGET

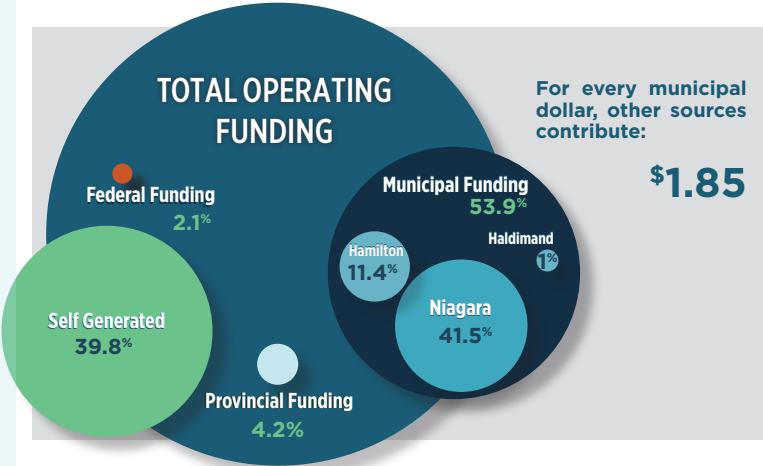
In the development of the 2023 budgets, the following issues were considered:

- Cost of living adjustments (COLA) and grid step increases
- Inflation (Consumer price index – CPI)
- Multi-year contractual obligations, including OPSEU collective agreement provisions
- Operating and Capital unfunded pressures
- Operational impact of the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic
- Focus on internal efficiencies
- Strong focus on external grants and full cost accounting for fee-for service programs to offset pressures on municipal levy
- Budget strategies from municipal partners
- General economic outlook and political climate
- Impacts on service delivery
- Asset management, state of good repair for asset base, capital funding gaps, deferred capital projects and building a sustainable capital plan
- Current program gaps and pressures
- Impacts of Conservation Act transition requirements related to the Conservation Authority Act update.
- Updated levy regulations, more specifically Ontario Regulation 402/22: Budget and Apportionment
- Approved Programs and Services Inventory

## 2023 Draft Operating Budgets

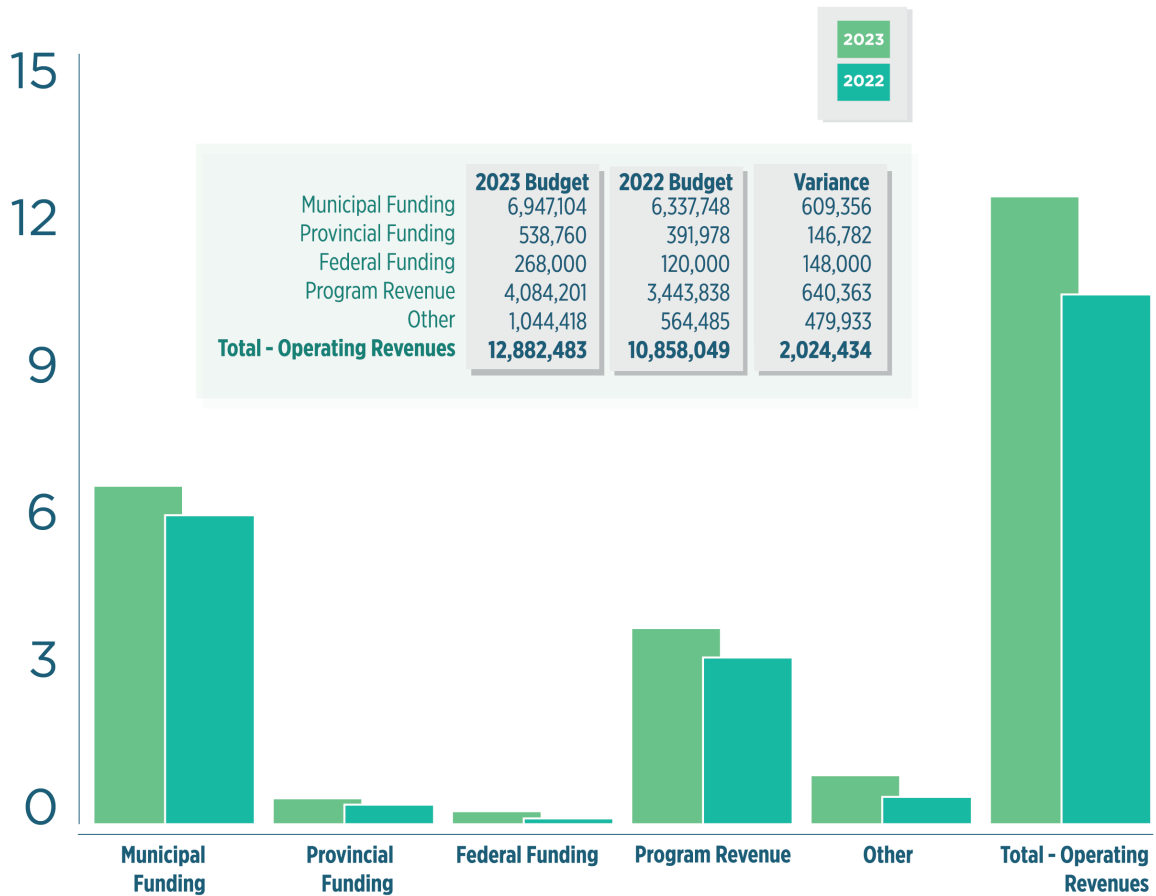
NPCA’s overall 2023 operating budget of \$12,883 million is supported by 53.9% (\$6.947M) municipal levy, 39.8% (\$5.129M) self-generated revenue, and 6.3% (807K) other revenues in addition to grants including provincial and federal funding.

Overall, the operating volume in this zero-based budget is projected to increase by 18.64% (\$2.02M), reflecting an increase of 27.95% from 2022 in authority generated funds along with significant externally funded activity. While the operating volume has increased to address gaps and achieve required service levels, overall municipal levy contributions to the overall budget envelope have decreased in 2023 (53.92%) from 2022 (58.37%).

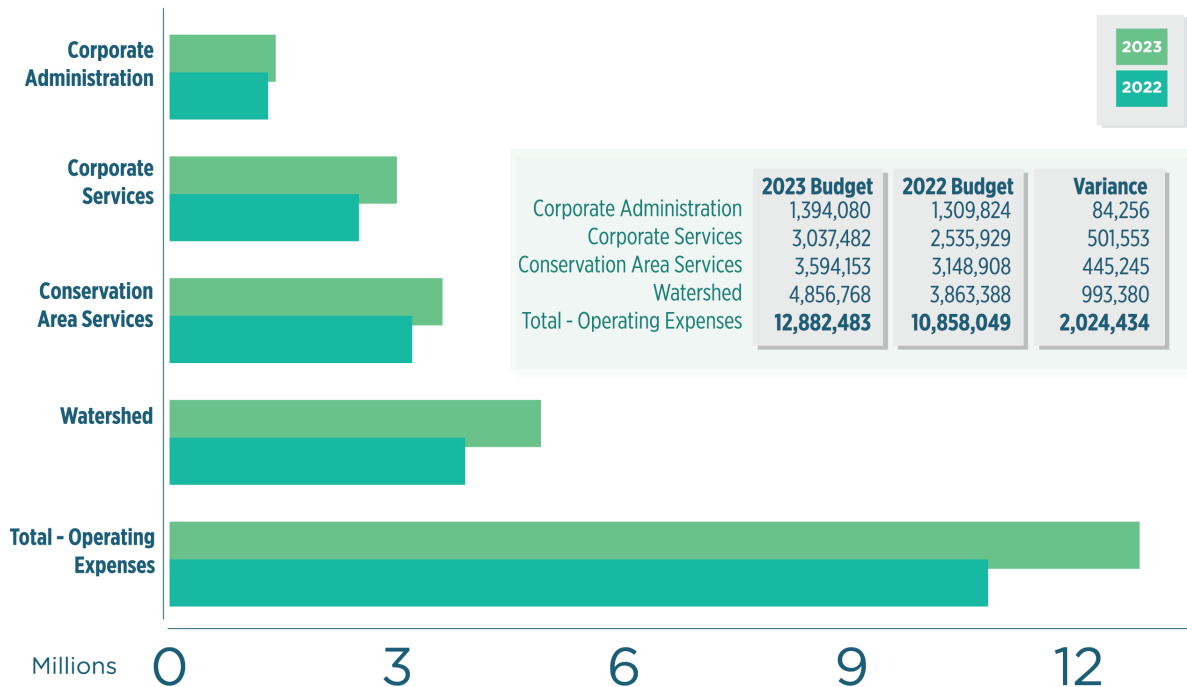




# Sources of Operating Revenue 2023



# 2023 Operating Expenses







## 2023 Draft Capital and Special Projects Budget

The 2023 Draft Capital and Special Projects budget represents past backlog and current critical priorities. Staff is recommending a very conservative Special Levy Budget increase over 2022 for Capital and Special

Projects of \$69,894. Other sources of funding represents an additional \$193,635, for a total proposed capital envelope for 2023 of \$2,018,159.

Capital and Special Projects	2023 Budget	2022 Budget
Corporate Administration	54,026	-
Corporate Services	124,259	218,469
Land Operations - Balls Falls	189,089	174,564
Land Operations - Binbrook	64,831	52,898
Land Operations - Chippawa Creek	108,050	195,723
Land Operations - Long Beach	135,064	105,796
Land Operations - Passive Parks	875,442	457,040
Watershed	467,398	550,140
<b>Total - Capital &amp; Special Projects</b>	<b>2,018,159</b>	<b>1,754,630</b>



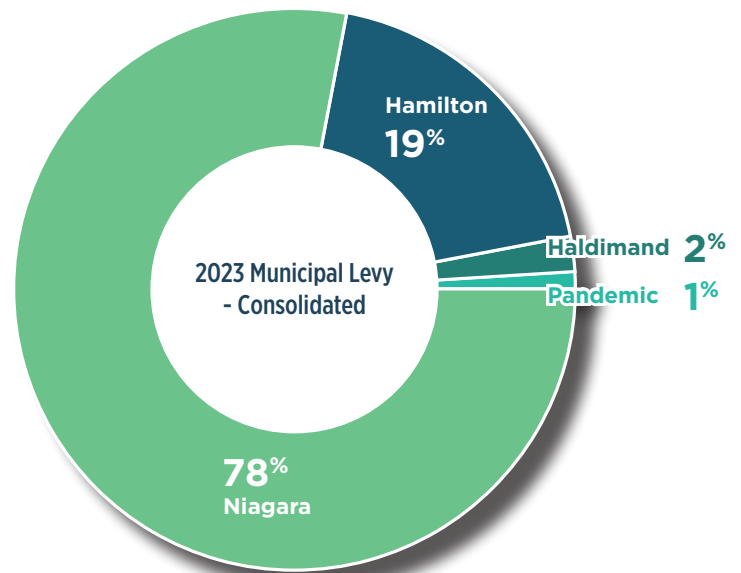


## Municipal Funding - 2023

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

Consolidated municipal funding for 2023 is \$8,771,628. Levy apportionment based on Current Value Assessment is:

- Niagara (including Pandemic funding) \$ 6,923,090
- Hamilton \$ 1,701,988
- Haldimand \$ 146,550



## Land Securement Contribution Request 2023

Land securement funding request is currently not included in the proposed 2023 municipal budget. Based on targets established in the Board approved Land Securement Strategy 2022, a minimum amount (based on CVA apportionment) has been presented to partner municipalities for their consideration with details in the description below:

- Niagara \$ 538,710
- Hamilton \$ 148,039
- Haldimand \$ 13,252

The draft Land Securement Strategy 2022-2032 provides the framework for the NPCA to secure public greenspace effectively using established best practices, sound decision-making, sustainable and innovative financial models, and collaboration. The NPCA currently owns or manages 41 conservation areas which account for approximately 2,982 hectares (or 1.2%) of lands within its watershed jurisdiction. The Strategy guides the application of primary criteria focused on watershed features and functions while considering secondary criteria such as parcel size, securement method, and cost.

By collaborating with other land securement organizations and partners, applying for funding where possible, and launching a targeted landowner outreach program, the NPCA can expect to secure a minimum of 180 hectares (i.e., average 20 ha annually, 1 property per year secured) by 2032. As landowner outreach and land securement projects occur, momentum of the land securement program will increase and give rise to more landowner and funder/partner interest. If executed consistently, the more aggressive/optimal land securement target of 360 hectares secured by 2032 (i.e., average of 40 ha annually, two properties per year) may become attainable.

### Annual Land Securement Investment Required:

**Minimum: \$ 700,000**

**Optimal: \$1,400,000**



# Levy Summary 2023

			Variance	
NIAGARA	2023	2022	Amount	%
General Levy	5,235,095	4,767,623	467,472	
Special Levy	1,576,703	1,505,490	71,213	
<b>SUB TOTAL</b>	<b>6,811,798</b>	<b>6,273,113</b>	<b>538,685</b>	<b>8.59%</b>
Pandemic Funding	111,292	110,422	870	
<b>SUB TOTAL</b>	<b>6,923,090</b>	<b>6,383,535</b>	<b>539,555</b>	
Land Securement	538,710	-	538,710	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>7,461,800</b>	<b>6,383,535</b>	<b>1,078,265</b>	

			Variance	
HAMILTON	2023	2022	Amount	%
General Levy	1,469,201	1,341,283	127,918	
Special Levy	232,786	232,986	200	
<b>SUB TOTAL</b>	<b>1,701,988</b>	<b>1,574,269</b>	<b>127,719</b>	<b>8.11%</b>
Land Securement	148,039	-	148,039	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,850,026</b>	<b>1,574,269</b>	<b>275,757</b>	

			Variance	
HALDIMAND	2023	2022	Amount	%
General Levy	131,516	118,420	13,096	
Special Levy	15,035	12,697	2,338	
<b>SUB TOTAL</b>	<b>146,550</b>	<b>131,117</b>	<b>15,433</b>	<b>11.77%</b>
Land Securement	13,252	-	13,252	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>159,802</b>	<b>131,117</b>	<b>28,685</b>	

			Variance	
CONSOLIDATED	2023	2022	Amount	%
General Levy	6,835,812	6,227,326	608,486	
Special Levy	1,824,524	1,751,173	73,351	
<b>SUB TOTAL</b>	<b>8,660,336</b>	<b>7,978,499</b>	<b>681,837</b>	<b>8.55%</b>
Pandemic Funding	111,292	110,422	870	
<b>SUB TOTAL</b>	<b>8,771,628</b>	<b>8,088,921</b>	<b>681,707</b>	
Land Securement	700,000	-	700,000	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>9,471,628</b>	<b>8,088,921</b>	<b>1,382,707</b>	



American Bladdernut

## 2023 Unfunded Priorities (Outside 2023 Proposed Municipal Levy)

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

The COVID 19 Pandemic continues to exert a great deal of pressure on NPCA’s Greenspace and Parks. NPCA needs to make significant investments in infrastructure upgrades and staffing resources to safely serve our communities. An Asset Management Plan and Financing Strategy is currently being completed and provide further refinement to the Asset State-of Good Repair Gap and funding requirements

Staff anticipates significant planning and growth pressures in the coming years in the NPCA’s jurisdiction requiring NPCA to proactively invest in science and information to support decision making.

Completion of NPCA 10 Year Strategic Plan has identified several gaps and priorities such as climate vulnerability and risk mitigation that NPCA must address in the coming years.

Conservation Authority Act update and associated regulations requires several transition priorities to be completed in 2023 and beyond this includes substantial number of investments in updating conservation areas management plans.

An assessment of current unfunded pressures was prioritized by staff; these initiatives totaling \$8.420M, classified in six categories are summarized below.

Classification	Niagara	Hamilton	Haldimand	External	TOTAL
Integrated Watershed Strategies	242,419	66,617	5,963	-	315,000
Natural Hazard Management	266,175	12,689	1,136	-	280,000
Planning and Growth Pressures	315,438	31,723	2,840	-	350,000
Conservation Authority Act Transition	115,438	31,723	2,840	-	150,000
Corporate Services and Asset Management	138,525	38,067	3,408	-	180,000
State of Good Repair (SOGR) / Health and Safety	5,677,810	1,319,767	47,422	100,000	7,145,000
	<b>6,755,806</b>	<b>1,500,586</b>	<b>63,608</b>	<b>100,000</b>	<b>8,420,000</b>

Unfunded pressures are currently not included in the 2023 Budget. A diverse range of strategies will be deployed to address these gaps. Staff will investigate external funding sources and liaise with external stakeholders and all levels of governments to look for collaborative opportunities outside the existing budget processes.