



Hamilton Conservation Authority

2026 City of Hamilton Budget Presentation – January 27, 2026



Conservation Authorities

- Unique to Ontario
- Based on a watershed approach
- Local watershed management agencies, governed by the Conservation Authorities Act
- Four Conservation Authorities within the City of Hamilton: Hamilton, Grand River, Halton, Niagara Peninsula



Legislative Changes

MECP announces intent to consolidate CAs

31 Oct. 2025

7 Nov. 2025

ERO released for proposed regional Conservation Authorities. Commenting period closed December 22, 2025

Bill 68 receives royal assent and creates Ontario Provincial Conservation Agency

27 Nov. 2025

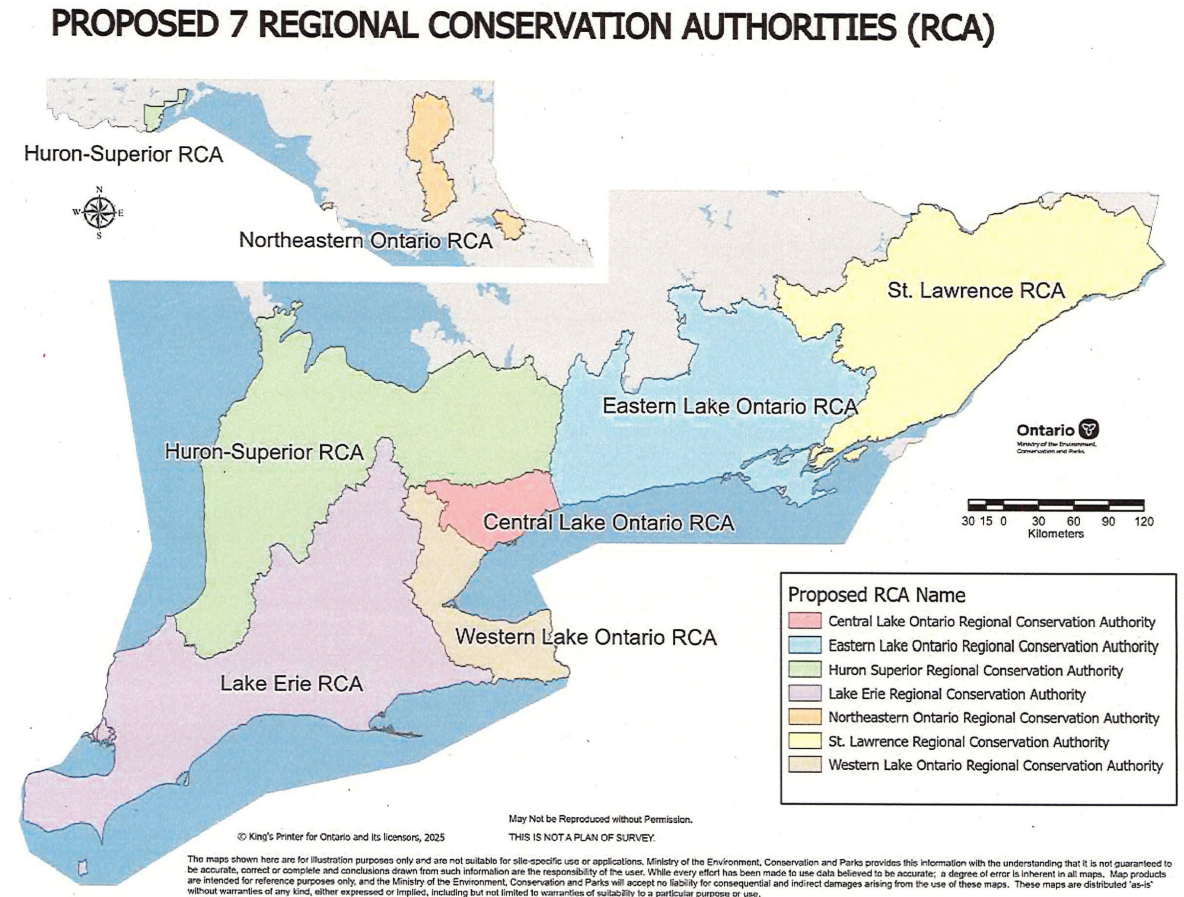
Proposed Regional CAs

Proposed Conservation Authority Changes:

- The City of Hamilton would move from 4 conservation authorities to 2 regional conservation authorities
- **Western Lake Ontario (proposed)**
 - 4 conservation authorities combined
 - 28 municipalities
- **Lake Erie (proposed)**
 - 8 conservation authorities combined
 - 81 municipalities

Maps

Map of Proposed Regional Conservation Authorities



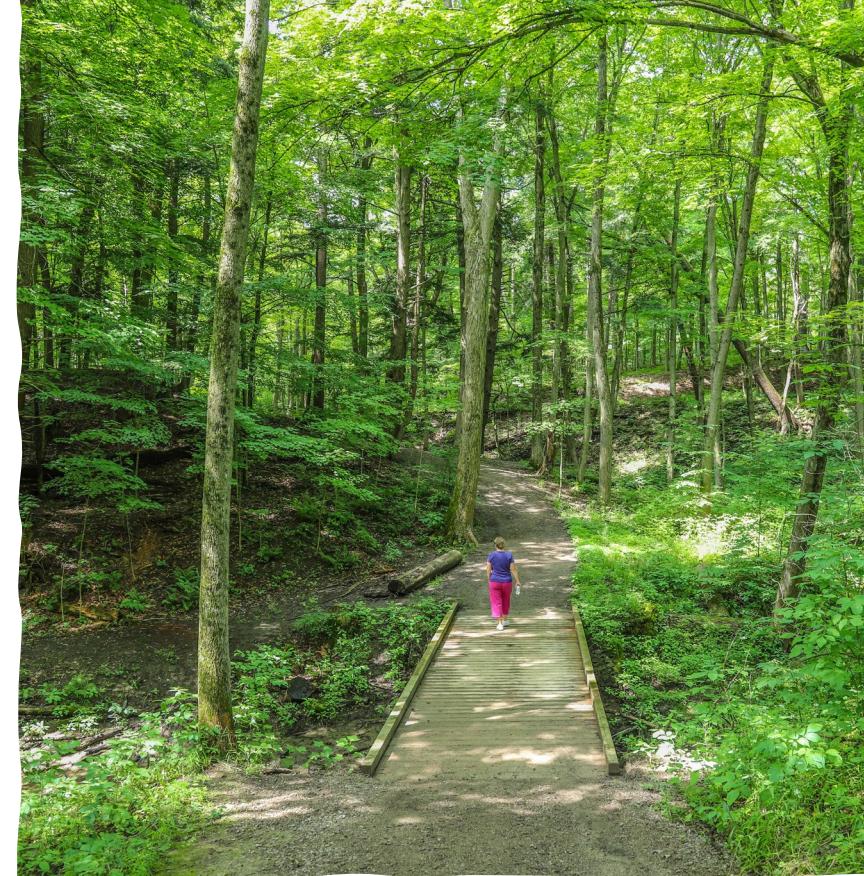
HCA Watershed

- HCA watershed has two member municipalities:
 - City of Hamilton and Township of Puslinch



HCA Landholdings

- Own and manage **11,744 acres** (10% of the watershed) providing 15+ HCA conservation areas. These lands include significant natural areas such as the Niagara Escarpment, Dundas Valley, Spencer Creek, and the Beverly and Fletcher Creek Swamps
- We continue to provide safe, sustainable public access to nature Activities and recreation:
 - 180+ km of trails
 - Two campgrounds
 - Two recreational lakes with dams
 - Four beaches
 - Marina
 - Disc Golf, Boat rentals, plus fishing, cycling, picnicking, events, etc





Value of our Conservation Lands

- 1M+ visitors annually to our owned and managed areas
- HCA's lands are critical components of the City's natural heritage system that helps conserve the watershed and connect people to nature
- Provide passive recreation, support ecological health, climate adaptation, and vibrant communities

HCA Strategic Plan 2025-2029



WATER RESOURCES MANAGEMENT

Focused on safeguarding the health of the watershed and protecting people and property from natural hazards.



ORGANIZATIONAL EXCELLENCE

Focused on our organizational resources to ensure efficient and responsive operations are available to meet the needs of the future.



NATURAL HERITAGE CONSERVATION

Focused on the management and conservation of natural areas, which include the forests, wetlands, meadows, and watercourses within the watershed.



CONNECTING PEOPLE TO NATURE

Focused on the conservation of HCA lands and connecting communities to natural areas.



LEGEND

The Saltfleet Conservation Area



Saltfleet Conservation Area

- First wetland completed fall 2022
- Second wetland completed in fall 2025



First Wetland Ecological Monitoring



- Increase in frog species, including green, pickerel, and grey tree frogs; full chorus of American toads heard in 2023
- Mallard duck numbers up 41% since 2023; new bird species observed in 2024
- Invasive Phragmites cleared; native plants reintroduced to support biodiversity
- Over 600 native plants added to support wildlife, pollinators, and ecosystem growth

Watershed Management

- Continued update to floodplain mapping to strengthen flood risk identification and land use planning
- Enhance watershed monitoring systems to improve data reliability and connectivity
- Prioritize riparian restoration projects in partnership with private landowners
- Advance natural area protection and restoration through multi-agency collaboration



Budget Summary

2026 Budget Overview – \$20.7M Total

Operating Budget: \$18.2M

- Continues all programs and services
- Includes Year 2 Strategic Plan priorities
- Balanced with \$1.8M in self-generated revenues

Capital Budget: \$2.5M

- Conservation area improvements
- Main office renovations
- Floodplain mapping updates
- Third Saltfleet wetland design
- Funded through capital block program + \$500K reserves

Revenues & Expenses



New revenues through:

- Expanded campground at Valens Lake
- Modest fee increases at our conservation areas
- Levy increase
- Ongoing support from the Hamilton Conservation Foundation and various grants

Staffing is our largest expense as HCA provides programs and services. Costs to be factored in:

- COLA
- Increases to minimum wage
- Implementing job evaluation steps



Levy Increase

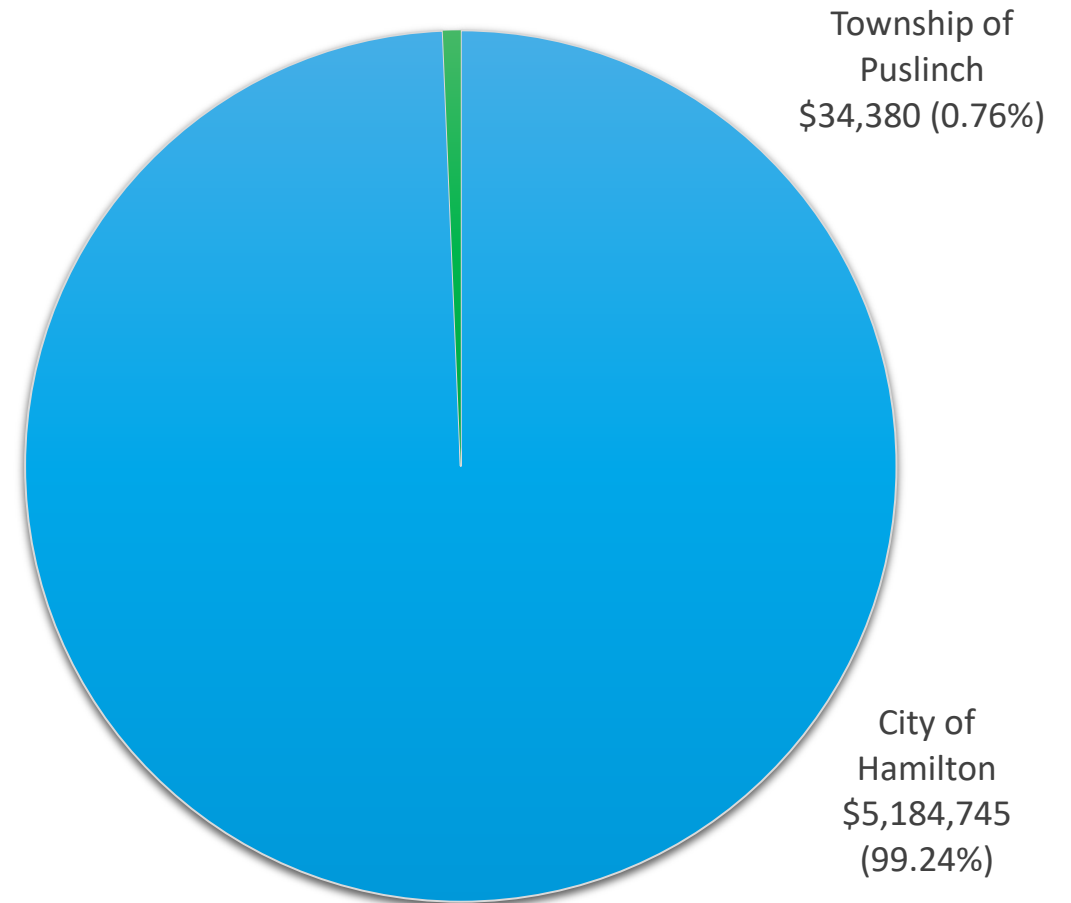
- 2026 Operating Budget Levy increase request is: **3.3%**

Total Levy for 2026: \$5,219,125

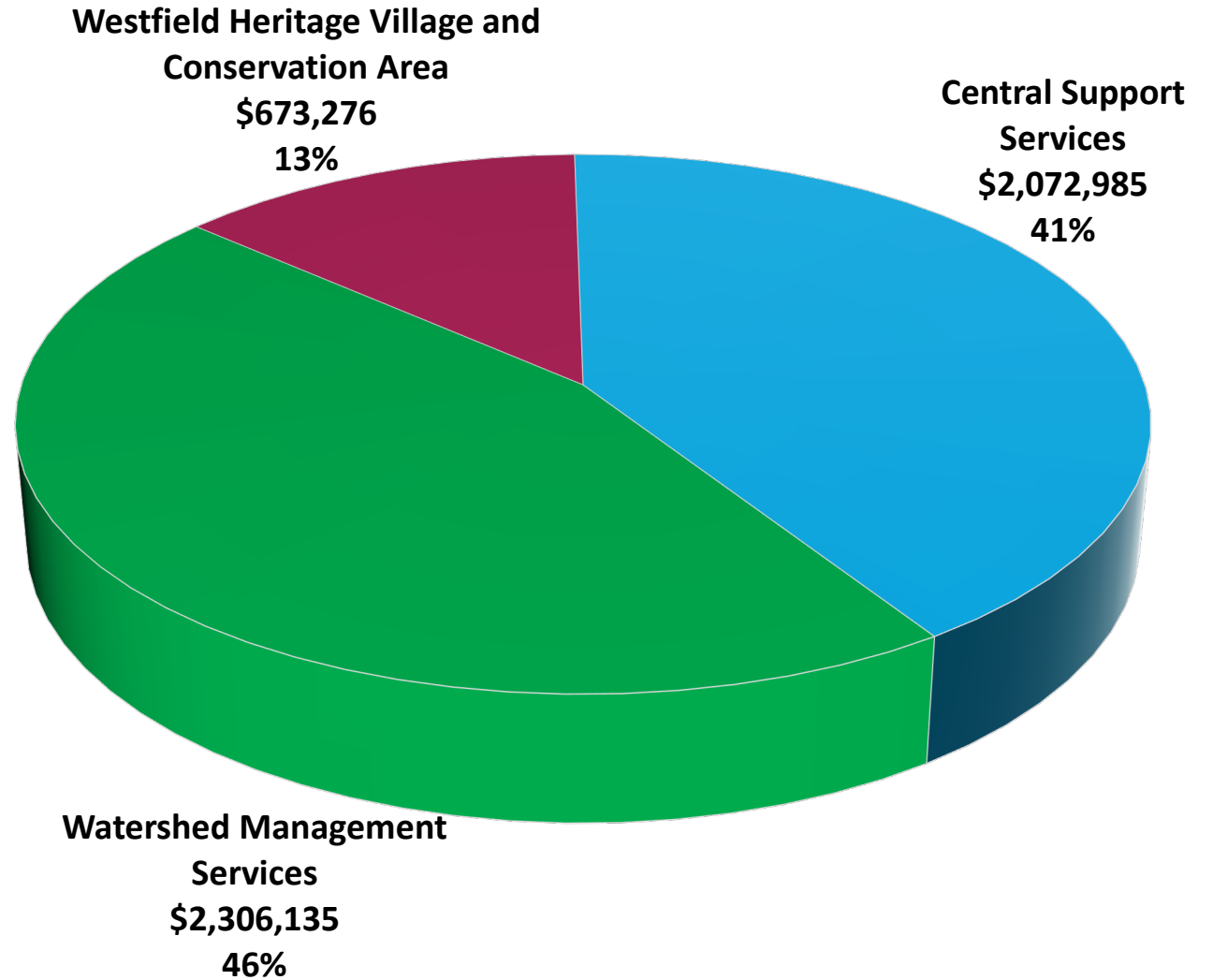
- Operating Levy increase over 2025: **\$166,729**

Total Levy for 2026: \$5,219,125

■ City of Hamilton ■ Township of Puslinch



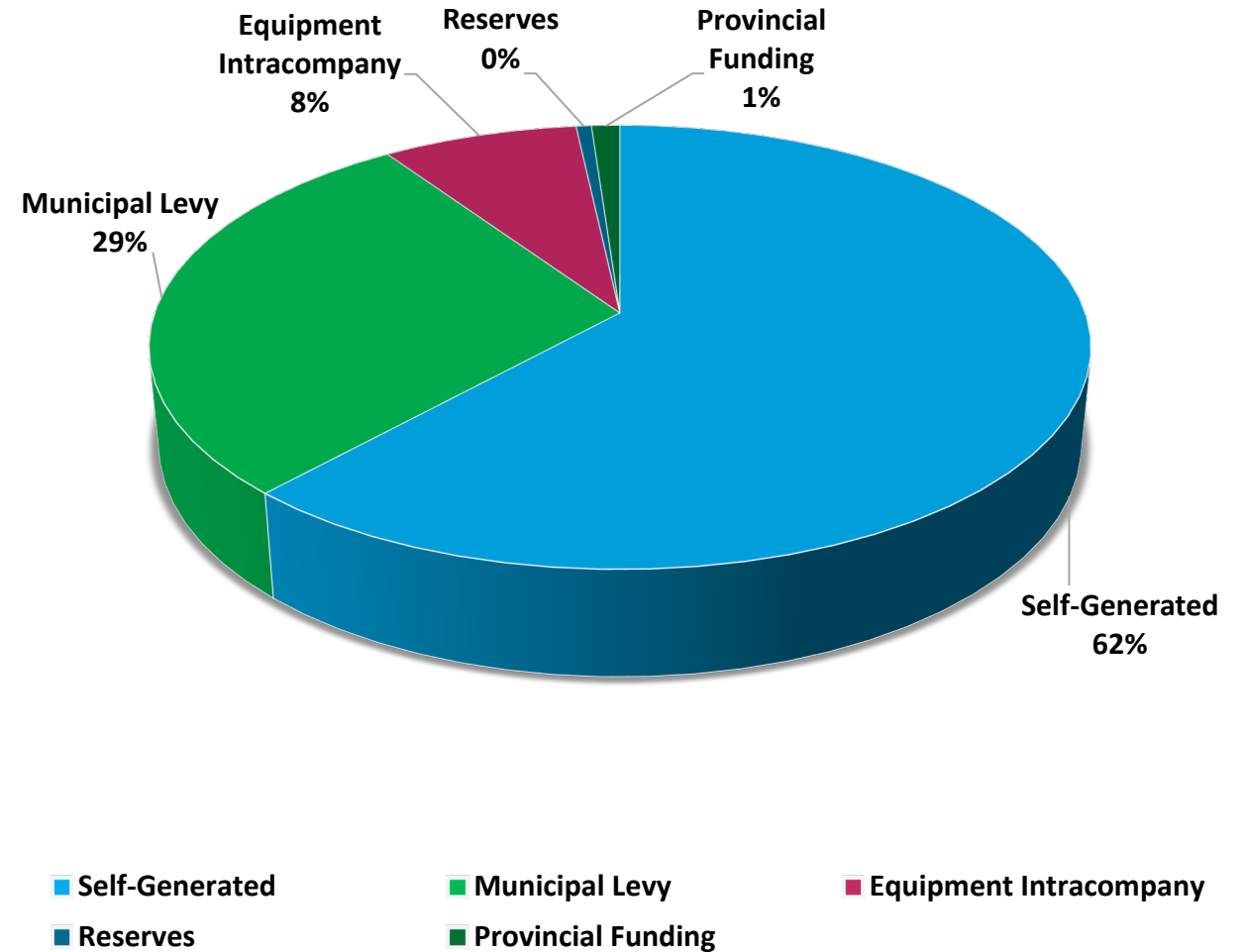
Municipal Levy Distribution



2026 Operating Revenues

\$18.2M Operating budget revenue breakdown

Operating Revenue	Amount
Self-Generated	11,249,749
Municipal Levy	5,219,125
Equipment Intracompany	1,419,160
Provincial Funding	204,996
Reserves	110,700
Total	18,203,730



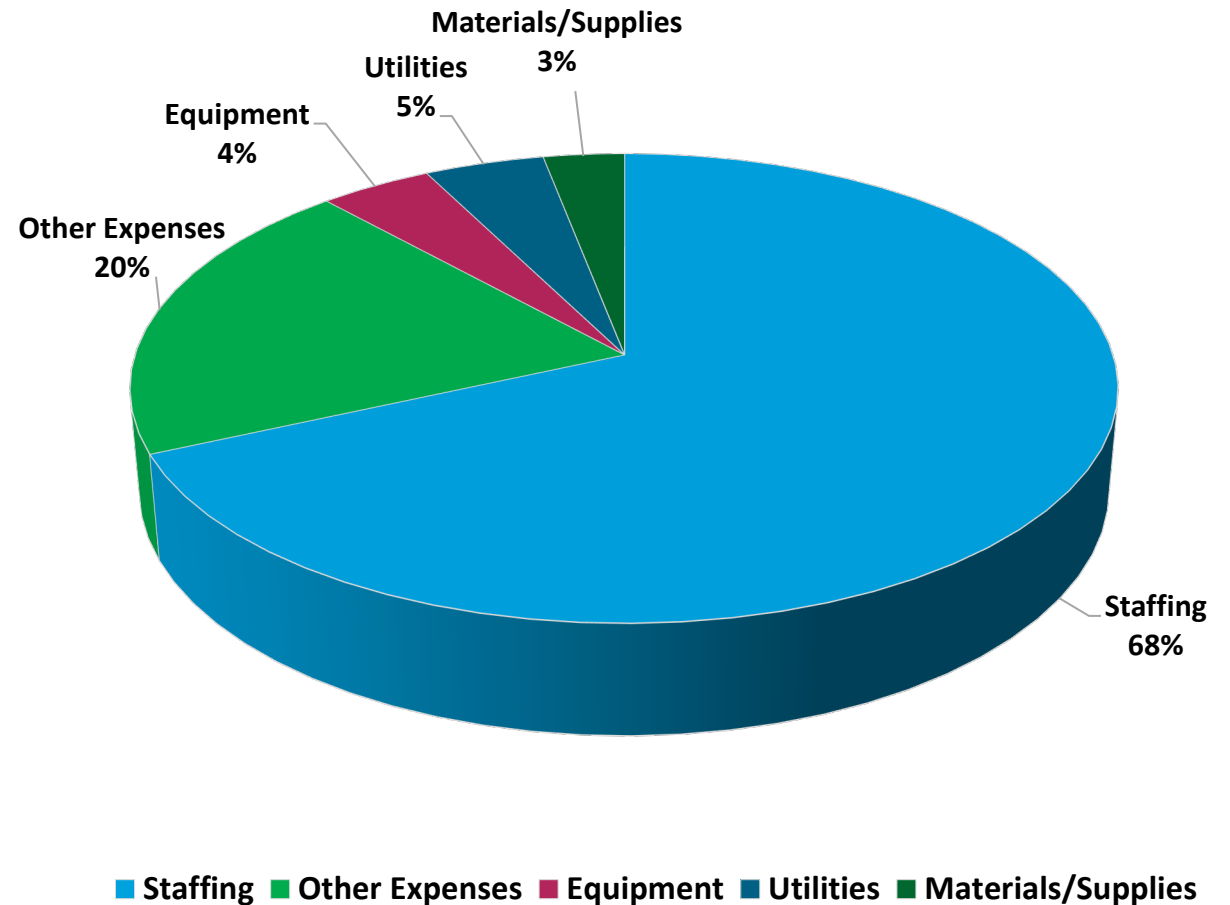
2026 Operating Expenses

\$18.2M Operating expenses breakdown

Operating Expenses	Amount
Staffing	12,496,000
Other Expenses	3,644,548
Utilities	821,000
Equipment	773,000
Materials/Supplies	556,000

Total 18,290,548

*Other Expenses (Insurance, Fleet, IT, Contractors, Legal, Audit, etc.)

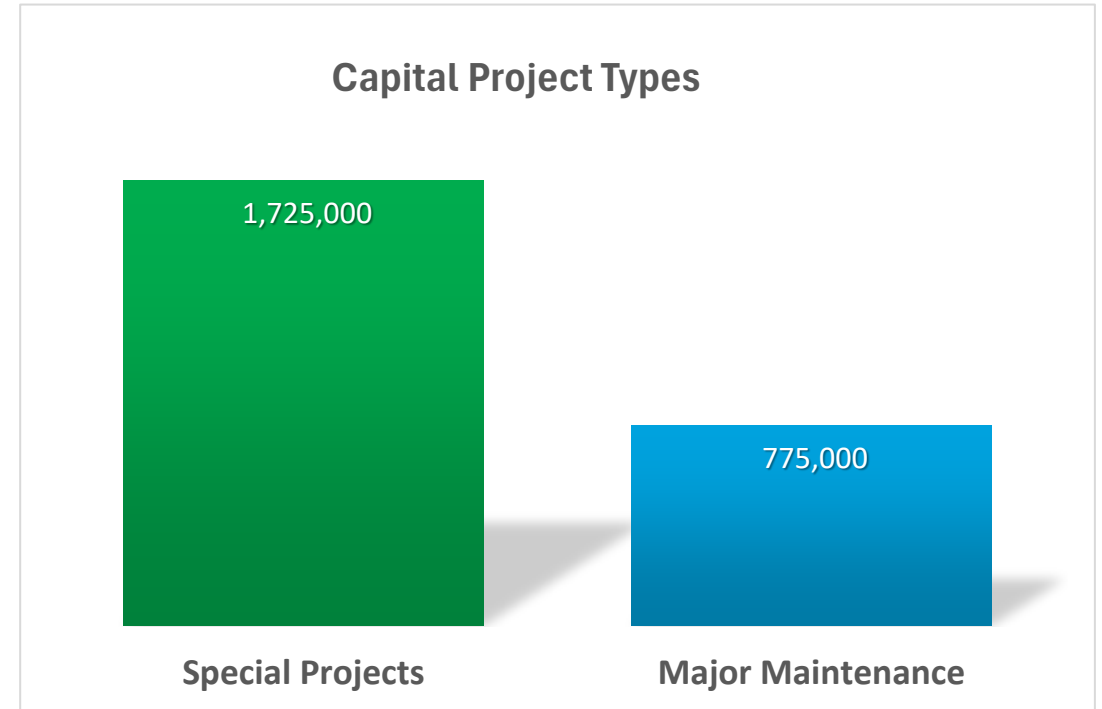
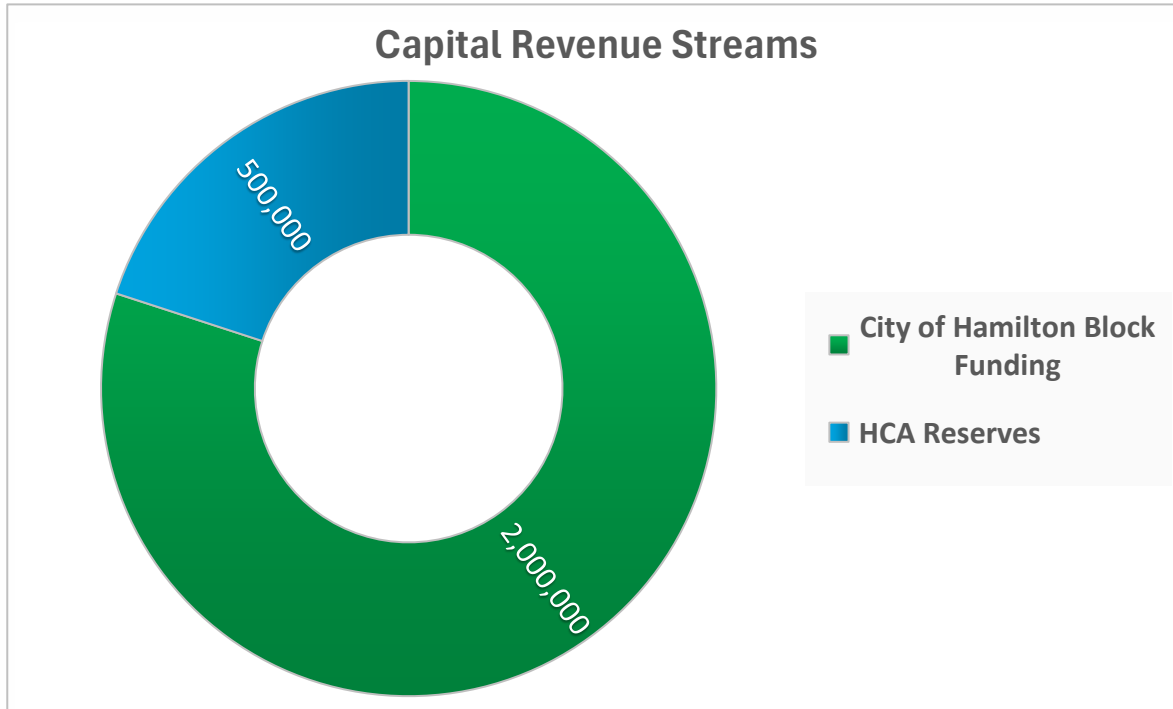


Confederation Beach Park

- Owned by the City of Hamilton, managed by the HCA; only monetary benefit to HCA is the revenue received from the management fee
- For the purpose of preparing the 2026 HCA Operating Budget, seasonal reopening of the Wild Waterworks waterpark and Lakeland pool planned



2026 Capital Budget \$2.5M

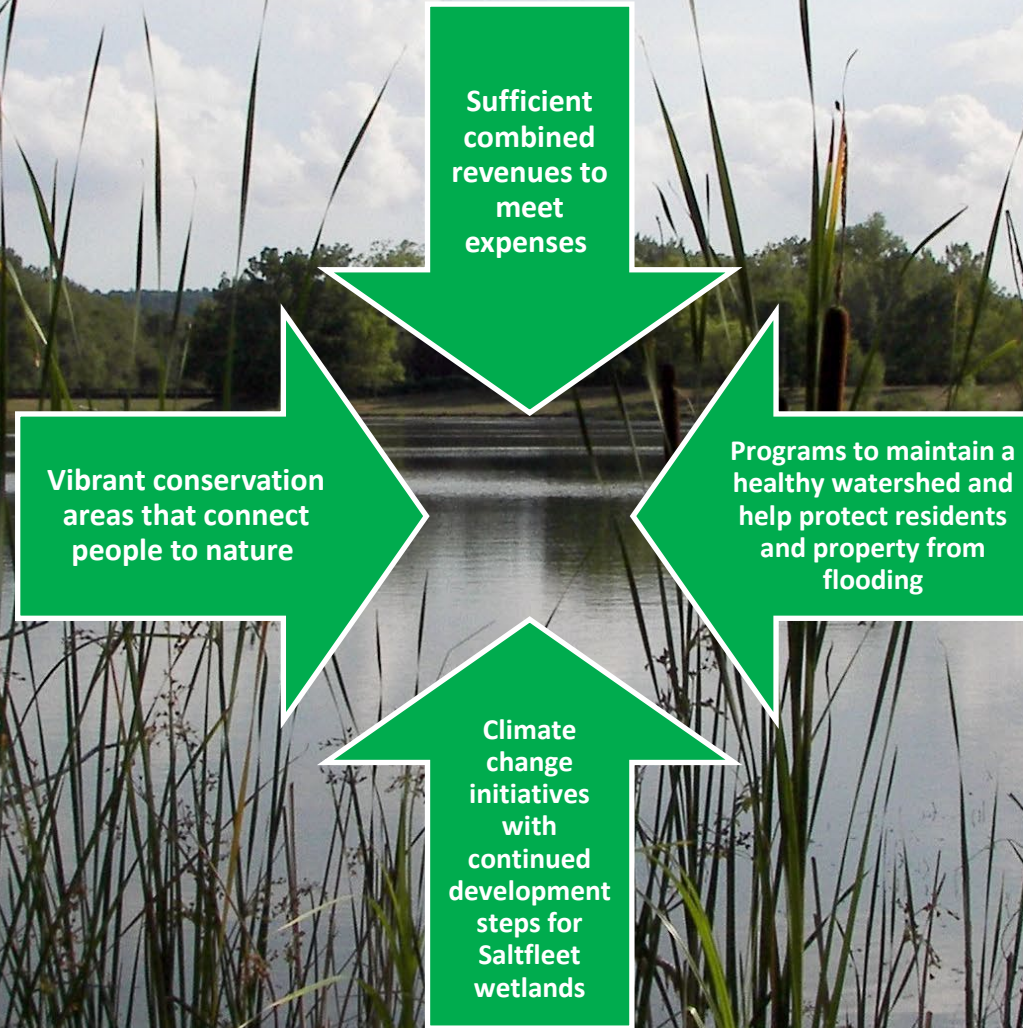


2026 Capital Budget includes use of \$500,000 in reserves to finalize the design on the third wetland for the Saltfleet Conservation Area restoration project, which is targeted for construction in 2027.

2026 Programs & Services

Category	Inventory Key Program Areas	Total Expenses	Self-Generated, & All Other Revenue	City of Hamilton Capital Block Funding	Municipal Levy	Balance	City of Hamilton Municipal Levy	%	Township of Puslinch Municipal Levy	%	Total
1	Natural Hazards Management	2,696,904	431,020		2,265,884	-	2,248,664	99.24%	17,221	0.76%	2,265,884
	Conservation Lands and Conservation Areas	4,946,581	2,380,711	1,300,000	1,265,870	-	1,256,249	99.24%	9,621	0.76%	1,265,870
	Water Quality & Quantity Monitoring	537,238	115,000		422,238	-	419,029	99.24%	3,209	0.76%	422,238
	Core Watershed-based Resource Management Strategy	94,175			94,175	-	93,460	99.24%	716	0.76%	94,175
	Drinking Water Source Protection	1,470	1,470			-					-
	Total Category 1	8,276,368	2,928,201	1,300,000	4,048,168	-	4,017,401	99%	30,766	1%	4,048,168
2	Conservation Lands and Conservation Areas	1,355,494	660,000		695,494	-	695,494	100.00%		0.00%	695,494
	Water Quality & Quantity Monitoring	165,645	56,000		109,645	-	108,812	99.24%	833	0.76%	109,645
	Core Watershed-based Resource Management Strategy	573,818	208,000		365,818	-	363,038	99.24%	2,780	0.76%	365,818
	Drinking Water Source Protection	3,300	3,300			-					-
	Total Category 2	2,098,258	927,300	-	1,170,957	-	1,167,344	100%	3,614	0%	1,170,958
3	Conservation Lands and Conservation Areas	10,329,104	9,629,104	700,000	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Total Category 3	10,329,104	9,629,104	700,000	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Total Programs and Services	20,703,730	13,484,605	2,000,000	5,219,125	-	5,184,745	99%	34,380	1%	5,219,125

Budget Summary Provisions



Thank you for your continued support!

