

**STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETING
ON-LINE TELECONFERENCE**

**Friday, September 17, 2021
Following the Full Authority Meeting (~12:30 pm)**

A G E N D A

1. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

2. DECLARATIONS OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST

3. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

- a) Minutes of the NPCA Strategic Planning Committee meeting dated July 16, 2021

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4. CORRESPONDENCE

5. DELEGATIONS

6. PRESENTATIONS

7. CONSENT ITEMS

8. DISCUSSION ITEMS

- a) Report No. SPC-03-21 RE: Public Engagement #2 Results & Draft Strategic Plan (For Receipt and Review)

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9. NEW BUSINESS

10. ADJOURNMENT

**STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETING
ON-LINE VIDEO CONFERENCE
MEETING MINUTES
Friday July 16, 2021
12:30 p.m.**

MEMBERS PRESENT:	K. Kawall (Chair) S. Beattie R. Brady J. Hellinga B. Johnson W. Rapley M. Woodhouse B. Wright
MEMBERS ABSENT:	D. Huson E. Smith
STAFF PRESENT:	C. Sharma, C.A.O. / Secretary – Treasurer G. Bivol, Clerk A. Christie, Director, Operations M. Ferrusi, Manager, Human Resources L. Gagnon, Director, Corporate Services N. Green, Project Manager L. Lee-Yates, Director, Watershed Management
OTHERS PRESENT:	K. Baker, StrategyCorp. Inc. D. Cridland, NPCA Board Member L. Feor, NPCA Board Member J. Ingrao, NPCA Board Member J. Matheson, StrategyCorp Inc.

Chair Kawall called the meeting to order at 12:35 p.m..

1. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Recommendation No. SPC-12-2021

Moved by Member Hellinga

Seconded by Member Brady

THAT the Strategic Planning Committee Meeting revised agenda dated Friday, July 16 2021 **BE APPROVED** as amended.

CARRIED

2. DECLARATIONS OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST

None declared.

3. APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR / VICE CHAIR

Chair Kawall vacated his position with C.A.O. Sharma calling for and presiding over the vote on the following motion.

Recommendation No. SPC-13-2021

Moved by Member Hellinga

Seconded by Member Wright

THAT Member Kawall **BE APPOINTED** Chair of the Strategic Planning Committee and Member Huson **BE APPOINTED** Vice Chair for 2021.

CARRIED

Chair Kawall presided over the remainder of the meeting.

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- a) Minutes of the NPCA Strategic Planning Committee meeting dated May 21, 2021

Recommendation No. SPC-13-2021

Moved by Member Brady

Seconded by Member Rapley

THAT the minutes of the NPCA Strategic Planning Committee meeting dated May 21, 2021 **BE APPROVED**.

CARRIED

5. CORRESPONDENCE

None

6. DELEGATIONS

None

7. PRESENTATIONS

None

8. CONSENT ITEMS

None

9. DISCUSSION ITEMS

- a) Verbal update on Strategic Planning Progress - Natalie Green, Project Manager, provided her update to the Committee. Members posed questions and discussion ensued.
- b) Input on virtual public meeting to gather feedback on draft Strategic Plan - Members provided comment with discussion ensuing on various aspects of public engagement.
- c) Gathering input on NPCA Strategic Plan Key Performance Indicators – Presentation by StrategyCorp Inc. - J. Matheson, StrategyCorp. led the presentation and a facilitated discussion on key components of the draft Strategic Plan including key performance indicators. Members posed questions and offered input. C.A.O. Sharma provided closing comments.

10. NEW BUSINESS

None

11. ADJOURNMENT

By consensus of the membership, the Strategic Planning Committee meeting of July 16, 2021 adjourned at 2:37 p.m..

CARRIED

K. Kwall
Committee Chair

C. Sharma, MCIP, RPP
Chief Administrative Officer / Secretary
- Treasurer

Report To: Strategic Planning Committee

Subject: Public Engagement #2 Results and Draft Strategic Plan

Report No: SPC-03-21

Date: September 17, 2021

Recommendations:

1. **THAT** Report No. SPC-03-21 Public Engagement #2 Results and Draft Strategic Plan **BE RECEIVED**.
2. **AND THAT** staff **BE DIRECTED** to finalize the layout and graphic design of the draft Strategic Plan.
3. **AND FURTHER THAT** the Draft Strategic Plan 2021-2031 **BE BROUGHT** forward for approval by the Full Authority at their next meeting.

Purpose:

To provide an update on recent public engagement activities and to obtain approval on the draft Strategic Plan before it is presented to the Full Authority.

Background:

The development of new NPCA Strategic Plan was identified as a Board priority for 2020. An *Ad Hoc* Strategic Planning Committee was formed in July 2020 to support the staff-led process of creating a new 10-year Strategic Plan to guide future organizational priorities with feasible, measurable performance targets to evaluate NPCA's collective outcomes and impact. All deliverables noted in the Committee's Terms of Reference have been completed, including a draft Strategic Plan.

From January to August 2021, the NPCA consulted broadly with its Board of Directors, Public Advisory Committee, staff, Indigenous groups, partners, members of the public, and other local stakeholders to guide the NPCA's strategic direction for the next 10 years. Public outreach efforts were successful and showed overall support of the NPCA's Strategic Plan. In the spring 2021, a public survey was administered to obtain feedback on draft strategic priorities proposed by staff toward a shared vision. The input received was essential in shaping and facilitating the development of our 10-year Strategic Plan.

On August 19, 2021, the NPCA hosted a virtual public information session to engage the public and stakeholders in providing their feedback on key components of the draft Strategic Plan through a moderated Q&A session and via the NPCA's Get Involved online engagement platform (until Sept. 3, 2021). The NPCA also accommodated non-virtual methods of engagement (e.g., paper survey, hardcopy meeting materials mailed, and phone calls) upon request.

Discussion:

Public Engagement – Virtual Public Information Session

The Virtual Public Information Session continued to build on extensive outreach and engagement efforts with both internal and external stakeholders from March – July 2021. The session was to provide interested participants with a first look at key components of the NPCA's new 10-year Strategic Plan, developed through the recent involvement of the community and stakeholders. The August 19th session was attended by 71 unique viewers (with 141 people registered). Ample opportunity was given to ask (and answer) questions during the session. Overall, the questions were related to the NPCA's operations rather than the Strategic Plan with topics including water quality monitoring, improving relations with agricultural community, protection of wetlands and buffers, funding sources, development pressures, municipal involvement, and opportunities for youth involvement. Most questions were answered live during the session and two were brought back to staff for follow-up by email. An evaluation of the session was completed by 30% of attendees and feedback on the session was positive, receiving an average rating of 3.8 of 5.

After the session, the NPCA welcomed additional feedback, questions, and comments from the community until Sept. 3, 2021 through the NPCA's Get Involved online engagement space. A recording of the session and supporting documents were posted to the webpage for those unable to attend. The recording was viewed 67 times during that period and there were 6 questions/comments submitted after the public information session with only 2 relating to the Strategic Plan (one was also asked/addressed in the live session). The other questions were related to NPCA operations (dogs allowed at parks, storm water responsibilities, Great Lakes water levels, and an enforcement issue). In addition, the NPCA offered non-virtual methods of engagement to accommodate those without internet access or with a preference for traditional methods. One person requested a paper copy of the session materials.

An Outreach and Engagement Report to compile and synthesize the results of all engagement efforts toward the development of a new Strategic Plan is being prepared to be shared publicly at the Full Authority's October 2021 meeting.

Draft Strategic Plan

The draft Strategic Plan (Appendix 1) was developed from January to August 2021 with extensive input from NPCA staff, the Board of Directors, Public Advisory Committee, partners, the watershed community, and other stakeholders at key stages of development.

The new 10-year Strategic Plan reaffirms the NPCA's commitment to the mandate/purpose of Conservation Authorities in Ontario. Through 6 overarching strategic priorities, the plan provides strategic direction for the NPCA and is vital for charting the course of conservation in our watershed toward achieving vibrant and healthy nature for all.

For the first time, the NPCA's Strategic Plan has a strong focus on outcomes and performance measures. Notably, this new Strategic Plan reflects the importance of collaboration between people, communities, and organizations on a collective response to a changing landscape through specific priorities and goals. It builds on the principles of conservation leadership, customer service, collaboration, and accountability to nature.

With this major milestone completed, the next step is to begin implementing the Strategic Plan by developing an operational plan that sets out specific actions to enable the NPCA to meet its goals, in collaboration with our communities and partners from 2021-2031. Progress on Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) will be monitored and shared publicly through the NPCA's Annual Report.

The NPCA continues to navigate and respond to the recent legislative changes to the *Conservation Authorities Act* through the development of this Strategic Plan. Regulations related to the *Conservation Authorities Act* changes have not yet been released. Staff remain mindful of the updated regulations and the need to prioritize our actions as we align this transition creatively with the revitalization of our organization.

Financial Implications:

There are no financial implications.

Links to Policy/Strategic Plan

Completion of the draft Strategic Plan will guide the future of the organization and fulfill the NPCA's responsibilities as part of the *Conservation Authorities Act* (2020).

Related Reports and Appendices:

Appendix 1: NPCA Draft Strategic Plan: 2021-2031

Authored by:

Original Signed by:

Natalie Green, M.Sc., PMP
Project Manager

Reviewed & Submitted by:

Original Signed by:

Chandra Sharma
Chief Administrative Officer/Secretary-Treasurer



Appendix 1 to Report No. SPC-03-21

DRAFT STRATEGIC PLAN

2021-2031

Land Acknowledgement

The Niagara Peninsula watershed is situated within the traditional territory of the Haudenosaunee, Anishinaabeg, and Attiwoonderonk, many of whom continue to live and work here today. This territory is covered by the Upper Canada Treaties (No. 3, 4, and 381) and is within the land protected by the Dish with One Spoon Wampum agreement. Today, the watershed is home to many First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples. Through this Strategic Plan, we re-confirm our commitment to shared stewardship of natural resources and deep appreciation of Indigenous culture and history in the watershed.

About Us

The Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority (NPCA) is a community-based natural resource management agency that works to protect, enhance, and sustain 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, species protection, ecosystem restoration, community stewardship, and land management. The NPCA is one of 36 Conservation Authorities in the Province of Ontario and manages 41 Conservation Areas within the Niagara Peninsula watershed held in public trust for recreation, heritage preservation, conservation, and education.

Purpose

The purpose of the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority is to further the conservation, restoration, development, and management of natural resources in the Niagara Peninsula watersheds, as per the *Conservation Authorities Act* (2020).

Introduction

In 2020, the NPCA Board of Directors approved launching a staff-led process to create a new Strategic Plan that would guide the NPCA for the next 10 years while reflecting its mandate as per the *Conservation Authorities Act* and fulfill its important role within the community. The NPCA Strategic Plan (2021-2031) is a critical milestone in our organization's transformation. The Plan reaffirms our commitment to the mandate of conservation authorities and charts the course for the next generation of work to address the evolving issues of climate change, growth, and need for green infrastructure.

This Plan is directed by guiding principles based on a conservation-first and ecosystem philosophy, collaboration ethics, and an importance of innovation rooted in science. The Plan further solidifies our commitment to environmental protection and community connections building on the principles of conservation leadership, customer service, and accountability to nature. Through 6 overarching strategic priorities, 21 SMART goals and measurable actions, the Plan charts the course for future actions and collective outcomes. For the first time, our Strategic Plan has a strong focus on outcomes and performance measures. Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) established for each our strategic priorities will enable us to make well-informed decisions for the future and measure our actions against established targets.

The NPCA recognizes that it is important that our organization remain flexible and adaptable to change over the next 10 years. We continue to navigate and respond to the recent legislative changes to the

Conservation Authorities Act through the development of this Strategic Plan. We remain mindful of the updated regulations and the need to prioritize our actions as we align this transition carefully with the revitalization of our organization. Furthermore, we understand that the Niagara Peninsula watersheds will experience growth, intensification of extreme weather impacts, and a tremendous need for greenspace. These pressures will demand that our priorities continue to evolve to adjust to these challenges.

Collectively, the strategic priorities affirm our actions 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. Through this Plan we will be able to improve ecosystems and natural cover, continue to protect drinking water sources, showcase on-the-ground climate adaptation and mitigation for resilient communities and shorelines that can withstand the impacts of climate extremes, support creating connected active transportation routes linked to greenspace destinations (conservation areas), engage our communities about the culture and heritage importance of the watershed, and contribute to the thriving and vibrant economy of Niagara as a Gateway to Canada.

The NPCA thanks every person who contributed their perspective to our organization's first 10-year Strategic Plan. From January to August 2021, the NPCA consulted broadly with its Board of Directors, Public Advisory Committee, staff, Indigenous groups, partners, members of the public, and other local stakeholders. Overall, our outreach and engagement efforts were a success with over 5,700 visitors to our website, more than 500 surveys on draft strategic priorities, and participation of 71 people in our Virtual Public Information Session in August 2021. The input received was essential in shaping our 10-year Strategic Plan. A separate Outreach and Engagement Report compiles and synthesizes the results of all engagement activities.

We look forward to working together with our communities and partners as we operationalize and implement this new Strategic Plan to 2031 toward a shared vision of *Nature for All!*

The Niagara Peninsula Watershed: A Natural Treasure

A watershed is the land that drains into a particular watercourse such as a stream, river, lake. Gravity and the topography of the land (the high and low areas) moves water, rain, and snowmelt from one area to another across the landscape.

The Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority's watershed area encompasses 2,424 km² including the entire regional municipality of Niagara, portions of the City of Hamilton (21%) and Haldimand County (25%). This area has been the home to Indigenous peoples since time immemorial—a place for sharing, trading, hunting, gathering, stewardship and friendship. Currently, the watershed supports a population of approximately 520,000 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 biodiverse and threatened ecoregion 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 a 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. The watershed area includes several well-known unique 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 microclimate created by the Niagara Escarpment and rich soils supports one of Ontario's most productive agriculture system including vineyards, tender fruit orchards, livestock, and a variety of 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.

[Placeholder for watershed map]

Vision

Nature for all.

The conservation of nature is critical for people, plants, and wildlife. We envision a healthy and vibrant environment with shared greenspace and clean water that sustains life for future generations.

Mission

To create a common ground for conservation-inspired action and accountability to nature.

Guiding Principles

Watersheds transcend municipal boundaries. We are committed to working with the watershed community to support and create climate resilient and connected natural systems.

Natural green infrastructure is critical to life. Our day-to day work conserves and restores integral ecological, socio-economic, public safety, and health services for our communities.

Diverse experiences and ideas lead to better and stronger collective impact and outcomes. We seek to exemplify inclusion and equity through meaningful engagement and collaboration.

Innovation requires learning from each other and from the past. We are progressive, resilient, adaptable and strive for continuous improvement to remain a trusted and valued partner.

Core Values

Integrity

We are responsible, honest, trustworthy, and fair in our decisions and actions.

Respect

We are inclusive and value the diverse range of perspectives and interconnectivity of the watershed community. We foster an environment where we recognize and appreciate each other as well as the communities we serve.

Customer Service

We conduct our business with professionalism, transparency, and equity to achieve high standards of quality and service delivery.

Conservation Leadership

We are conservation leaders in the watershed and aim to inspire and empower others through exemplary actions and outcomes.

Strategic Direction

The strategic priorities will guide the NPCA's actions over the next 10 years to meet its vision, mission, and mandate. The following six strategic priorities were developed through extensive engagement activities with internal and external stakeholders to guide the NPCA's work over the coming years:

- Healthy and Climate Resilient Watersheds
- Supporting Sustainable Growth
- Connecting People to Nature
- Partner of Choice
- Organizational Excellence
- Financial Sustainability

Each strategic priority includes specific goals and example actions for the NPCA to undertake together with its partners and communities to achieve a thriving environment that sustains life for future generations.

Measuring Performance and Collective Impact

For each of the Strategic Priorities, the NPCA established Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to track performance against the goals set out in the Strategic Plan and guide our organization's decision-making and implementation process into the future. In addition, the NPCA developed a list of specific metrics to help measure the success of our organization's day-to-day activities and support achievement of the KPIs. The specific KPIs and metrics are noted within each of their relevant Strategic Priorities. Progress and achievement toward each of the KPIs will be tracked and shared publicly through the NPCA's Annual Report each year.

Implementation

The next major step in the NPCA's strategic planning process is to implement the Strategic Plan by developing an operational plan that sets out specific actions to enable the NPCA to meet its goals, in collaboration with our communities and partners from 2021 to 2031.

The operational plans will be updated annually to reflect organizational and environmental changes, ensure we continue to meet the *Conservation Authorities Act* and its regulations, and to make sure the NPCA remains responsive to the constantly evolving needs of the watershed and the communities we serve.

Given this Strategic Plan spans 10 years and we recognize that there may be change in that time, we plan to review the Strategic Plan after 5 years of implementation to ensure it remains relevant and achievable.

Healthy and Climate Resilient Watersheds

Improving nature for the betterment of all life across the watershed. Natural heritage features like forests, wetlands, and ravine systems provide critical life-sustaining services to people and wildlife. They can help mitigate the effects of climate change, reduce the risk of flooding to people and properties, and provide important habitat for wildlife.

Goal 1: Support evidence-based decision making for climate resilient watersheds and shorelines.

Example actions:

- Implement robust data collection, analysis, monitoring, and modeling program.
- Establish a timeline for prioritizing gaps identified through gap analysis.
- Support municipal partners with watershed data collection and analysis to understand cumulative impacts.
- Expand and enhance monitoring and associated tools to fill information gaps and research needs.
- Lead water quality (i.e., surface and groundwater) and quantity monitoring throughout the NPCA jurisdiction.
- Develop predictive tools for data management.
- Develop a solid understanding of climate impacts on NPCA watersheds to facilitate awareness and on-the-ground action in collaboration with stakeholders.
- Regularly share scientific data and information through watershed report cards, annual reports, publications, and other digital tools to communicate results to a variety of audiences.
- Update NPCA mapping to keep it relevant and current.
- Implement the Source Protection Program as mandated by the Conservation Authorities Act and Clean Water Act.

KPI: Robust data collection program established by 2026 and data gaps filled by 2031.

Metrics:

and types data gaps identified (gap analysis)
% priority data collection gaps filled
% watershed GIS data up-to-date
surface water samples
groundwater samples
monitoring stations in watershed jurisdiction (surface & groundwater)
Analytics from Open Data Hub (downloads, visits)

Goal 2: Protect people and properties from natural hazards and climate impacts.

Example actions:

- Develop a Watershed-based Resource Management Strategy as mandated by the *Conservation Authorities Act*.
- Implement permitting and regulations under section 28 of the *Conservation Authorities Act*.
- Develop a solid understanding of climate risks on natural hazards.
- Update Shoreline Management Plans with a climate resilience lens.
- Complete and maintain updated floodplain mapping within the watershed.
- Update and maintain up-to-date regulation mapping.
- Provide resources for stakeholders to understand risk and vulnerabilities to flood susceptible infrastructure and collaborate to implement risk mitigation strategies.
- Deliver accurate, real-time information for flood forecasting, messaging, and warning using state-of-the-art technology and communication tools.

KPI: Climate Risk and Vulnerability Strategy developed by 2023.

Metrics:

Water resource management actions identified
Impact of climate change on natural hazards known.
% of strategy mitigation and adaption actions implemented
relevant policies reviewed/updated
% floodplain mapped
flood forecasts/warnings delivered
flood messages delivered
permits reviewed
permits approved vs. not approved

Healthy and Climate Resilient Watersheds

Goal 3: Restore and enhance natural habitat, water resources, and forest cover.

Example actions:

- Develop programs aimed at urban and rural landowners (e.g., urban stewardship program, agricultural best management practices).
- Understand the carbon potential of NPCA natural systems to examine feasibility of voluntary carbon offsetting.
- Integrate watershed planning information (i.e., GIS, water quality, biological data) to proactively target restoration efforts.
- Expand restoration program services.
- Lead special projects that improve water quality and ecosystem health (e.g., Niagara River Remedial Action Plan)

KPI: Increased area (ha) of protected and restored habitat by 2032.

Metrics:

restoration projects
trees planted
% forest cover
Area (ha) habitat created/added
km of grassed waterways
km riparian buffers
% of watershed with natural cover
Net amount natural cover across watershed
Water quality metrics

Goal 4: Manage NPCA lands to increase biodiversity, habitat connectivity, and natural cover.

Example actions:

- Develop Management Plans for each NPCA property as mandated by the *Conservation Authorities Act*.
- Complete and implement the NPCA Land Acquisition Strategy.
- Implement regulations under section 29 of the *Conservation Authorities Act*.
- Develop plans to manage invasive species and enhance biodiversity at NPCA properties (e.g., Forest Management Plan)

KPI: Management Plans completed for 100% of NPCA properties by 2031.

Metrics:

% lands acquired for protection/restoration
Ha land acquired
% Management Plans completed
Management Plans completed
% management actions completed
Forest Management Plan completed
or % actions of Forest Management Plan implemented

Supporting Sustainable Growth

Helping to create resilient communities through our role in land use planning and leading the use of sustainable technologies. With our support, communities can adequately prepare for a changing climate and related environmental challenges accomplished through the implementation of relevant policies, principles, and sustainable best practices.

Goal 1: Maintain a high standard of client services, tools and procedures for planning review and permits.

Example actions:

- Continuous improvement in the implementation of NPCA Client Services Standard for Plan and Permit Review protocol to support streamlining, efficiency, and transparency.
- Refine decision-support tools for efficient application management and review.
- Improve customer service feedback mechanisms to support performance evaluation and reporting.
- Communicate the role and responsibilities of NPCA in plan review and permitting.

KPI: Year over year improvement in client service metrics.

Metrics:

% files where performance metrics achieved or exceeded
% planning & permit reviews meeting deadlines
Amount of time for planning and permit reviews/approvals
Customer experience
of collaborative permit reviews with other agencies

Goal 2: Lead an Integrated Watershed Management approach to support planning and policy for the protection and enhancement of watersheds.

Example actions:

- Implement a proactive sub-watershed work program to complement and inform the quaternary and sub-watershed planning for growth areas within Niagara Region
- Update NPCA policies and develop a planning and procedural manual
- Develop proactive research agenda to determine cumulative watershed impacts and applied solutions from extreme weather and land use changes
- Support municipalities and development sector to implement smart growth principles (e.g., preserve open space, farmland, natural areas, reduce urban sprawl).
- Update and maintain regulations mapping through open data system for best standard of client services.

KPI: 100% sub-watershed plans for future growth areas updated by 2031.

Metrics:

% sub-watershed plans completed
% regulations mapping information up
maps updated
Relevant policies updated
and types of outreach tactics to inform stakeholders
Municipal & stakeholder engagement
Data gaps identified and filled
% land usage over time (e.g., open space, urban, farmland)

Supporting Sustainable Growth

Goal 3: Lead implementation of sustainable technologies and green infrastructure best practices for climate resilience and sustainability.		KPI: Green infrastructure and sustainable technologies program established at NPCA by 2026.
<u>Example actions:</u>		<u>Metrics:</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Establish a green infrastructure program at NPCA to engage municipalities, the development community, and other private landowners in implementing best practices and actions.• Identify opportunities for brownfields to enhance green infrastructure or innovative planning for in-fill development.• Advance the implementation of green infrastructure best practices in future development proposals and through NPCA's demonstration projects to minimize impacts to the watershed.• Develop education materials/program to inform the public about sustainable best practices.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"># and types of green infrastructure practices implemented% improvement of water quality metrics (e.g., bacteria, nutrient, sediment) pre- and post-installationProgram uptake by development sector, private landowners, municipalities

Connecting People to Nature

Improving access to and connections with nature for the health and well-being of all people. The recent COVID-19 pandemic has shown the world the importance of greenspace. Creating opportunities to connect with nature and educating people about its benefits will lead to increased stewardship and conservation across the watershed.

Goal 1: Create equitable access to greenspace for the health and well-being of people.

Example actions:

- Identify and remove socio-economic barriers to accessing NPCA properties and programs.
- Highlight and promote recreation (i.e., cycling, hiking, walking, birdwatching, etc.) opportunities at NPCA properties.
- Proactively seek opportunities to enhance trail connections with active transportation routes.
- Acquire urban (or near-urban) lands to increase equitable public access to nature.
- Improve services and visitor experiences at NPCA properties (e.g., buildings, trail maps, wayfinding, and accessibility, where possible).
- Land dedication through planning process.

KPI: Increased public greenspace within urban or near-urban areas by 2031.

Metrics:

visitors at NPCA properties
% optimal capacity reached at flagship properties
% greenspace in urban or near urban areas
Length (km) trail connections to other non-NPCA trails and greenspace
Conservation Area passes used (checked out) from libraries or used by other community partners/agencies
programs targeted for marginalized groups
new NPCA assets (trails, platforms, etc.) feasible for accessibility
outreach materials provided in different languages

Goal 2: Lead nature education, environmental stewardship, and volunteerism.

Example actions:

- Develop and implement an Outreach, Stewardship, and Education Strategy for nature education and engagement opportunities.
- Strengthen and continue to deliver education programs for various socio-economic and multi-lingual groups.
- Enhance volunteer opportunities for all age groups.
- Expand opportunities for citizen-science monitoring.

KPI: Outreach, Stewardship and Education Strategy in 2024.

KPI: 100% actions from Outreach, Stewardship and Education Strategy implemented by 2031.

Metrics:

& types of education programs
requests for community engagement
of volunteers
volunteer hours for NPCA-led project/events
Impact of volunteer hours (treed planted, litter collected, etc)
Demographics of volunteer base
partnership agreements with school board, colleges and universities
students participating in education programs
participants in summer or march break camps
youth trained as camp leaders
% participation in education programs from various groups
Customer feedback

Connecting People to Nature

Goal 3: Improve cultural connections and heritage appreciation.

Example actions:

- Maintain and honour heritage buildings at NPCA properties including St. John's, Cave Springs, Ball's Falls, and Rockway Conservation Areas
- Examine opportunities to expand cultural connections and heritage programming at all Conservation Areas.
- Work with municipalities on heritage listing and designation of NPCA buildings and properties.

KPI: Cultural Heritage Strategy by 2025

KPI: 100% actions of Cultural Heritage Strategy implemented by 2031.

Metrics:

visitors to NPCA properties
attendees at special events (e.g., Ball's Falls Festival)
participating vendors at events
trails with cultural interpretation
participants in guided heritage tours
of heritage events offered
heritage programs offered

Goal 4: Promote the watershed as a destination of choice for adventure, culture, and ecological tourism.

Example actions:

- Develop a Marketing and Ecotourism Strategy to support safe and sustainable visits to NPCA properties.
- Optimize visitor experience at NPCA properties.
- Determine optimal level of visitation at NPCA properties.
- Enhance and promote ecotourism opportunities at NPCA properties
- Provide sustainable tourism opportunities across the watershed by working with partners (e.g., DMOs, municipalities, Indigenous groups, etc.).

KPI: Marketing and Ecotourism Strategy by 2025

Metrics:

tourism partners
Partnerships with municipal economic development
Partnerships with DMOs
Increased program engagement
visitors to NPCA properties
% optimal capacity reached at flagship properties
% visitors from different areas
Land acquisition to accommodate increase in visitors

Partner of Choice

Strengthening our relationships with stakeholders, partners, the watershed community, and Indigenous peoples toward shared stewardship, knowledge exchange, and collective impact. Together, more can be accomplished to achieve mutual goals and improve the overall health of the watershed that sustains us. We strive to become a strong partner of choice within the community to provide expertise to the watershed, build the capacity to deliver on mutual outcomes, and share knowledge.

Goal 1: Strengthen government relations toward collective outcomes and impact.

Example actions:

- Develop a Government Relations Strategy
- Execute Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) and Service-Level Agreements (SLAs) with Niagara's Lower Tier Municipalities.
- Establish NPCA as an environmental service provider to municipals partners with co-management and delivery of programs and projects of mutual interest
- Partner with government agencies to advance mutual goals.

KPI: Agreements with all 3 upper tier municipalities in 2022 and 100% of lower tier municipalities by 2026.

Metrics:

executed agreements (MOUs) with government agencies
municipalities engaged in projects
Letters of support from partners
requests from partners
projects completed
data requests from government agencies
Stakeholder satisfaction survey results
impact of the outcomes of collaboration

Goal 2: Foster relationships with the community, ENGOS, businesses, agriculture, industry, and academic institutions for collective outcomes and impact.

Example actions:

- Develop a Stakeholder & Community Engagement Strategy.
- Collaborate with local educational institutions (e.g., school boards, college, university) on mutual research interests that enhance knowledge sharing.
- Provide technical expertise to support our partners and their work through agreements.
- Collaborate with ENGOS, businesses, agriculture, and industry on projects/initiatives that enhance stewardship and advance mutual goals.
- Support Conservation Ontario to achieve collective mandate of Conservation Authorities.

KPI: Stakeholder & Community Engagement Strategy by 2025

KPI: 100% actions of Stakeholder & Community Engagement Strategy implemented by 2031.

Metrics:

Stakeholder feedback
& types partnerships (formal/informal)
partnerships or collaborative projects with external groups
MOUs with post-secondary institutions
external committees with NPCA representation
requests to join new partnership tables
data requests from external groups
Value of co-investment of partnerships (cash, in-kind and volunteer hours)
Value of partnership vs costs analysis

Partner of Choice

Goal 3: Improve engagement with local First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples that supports shared stewardship.

Example actions:

- Develop engagement guidelines with Indigenous peoples for shared stewardship.
- Provide mentorship and employment opportunities that supports the cross-cultural exchange of knowledge.
- Implement actions that support Truth and Reconciliation with Indigenous peoples.
- Proactively engage with Indigenous peoples and seek diverse perspectives on land management.
- Ensure there is First Nation and Métis representation on the Public Advisory Committee (PAC).
- Expand Indigenous cultural programming at NPCA properties.
- Ensure recognition and acknowledgement of Indigenous heritage on future signage at NPCA properties.
- Provide Indigenous awareness training for NPCA staff.

KPI: Indigenous Engagement Guidelines in 2022.

KPI: 100% of staff provided with Indigenous awareness training.

Metrics:

First Nation representative position on PAC
Métis representative position on PAC
or % engagement guidelines implemented
% staff trained
collaborative projects
engagement opportunities
employment and mentorship opportunities provided
actions that support Truth & Reconciliation identified
% actions for Truth & Reconciliation completed

Organizational Excellence

Striving for excellence through high standards of service delivery and accountability to the environment and its people. Delivering on exemplary outcomes and high standards of service delivery requires high caliber talent, improvements to internal processes, appropriate tools and technology, and innovation to keep up with a changing landscape.

Goal 1: Attract, retain, and invest in high caliber, diverse talent to deliver on exemplary outcomes.

Example actions:

- Develop a Talent Management Strategy.
- Ensure adequate staff capacity and resources required to deliver on exemplary outcomes.
- Provide relevant training and advancement opportunities to support staff learning and professional growth.
- Encourage a culture of innovation to find new ways of doing NPCA work.
- Modernize human resource policies to encourage a healthy work environment.
- Provide work experiences that support the future conservation workforce.
- Implement health & safety and corporate wellness programs for staff well-being.

KPI: Talent Management Strategy developed in 2022.

KPI: 100% actions from Talent Management Strategy implemented by 2031.

Metrics:

staff (full time, seasonal/casual)
staffing gaps identified and filled
% staff retention
& types training opportunities offered (full time, seasonal/casual)
staff participated in professional development
\$ invested in staff training or professional development
jobs or opportunities for youth
applicants per job opportunity
Employee feedback
Performance reporting feedback

Goal 2: Improve internal operations and processes.

Example actions:

- Develop a Digital Transformation Strategy.
- Enhance tools and procedures for program and project management, planning, reporting.
- Modernize and invest in digital technology to enhance internal processes (e.g., administrative record management, customer relationship management system).
- Deploy tools for efficient internal and external information sharing (e.g., online open data hub).
- Provide staff training on new technologies as they are deployed.
- Implement a record management program and policy

KPI: Digital Transformation Strategy in 2023.

KPI: 100% actions from Digital Transformation Strategy implemented by 2031.

Metrics:

& types existing and new digital tools
\$ technology investments
new technologies adopted
% usage of each type of digital tool
Staff training of new policies and technology
Analytics from Open Data Hub (downloads, visits)
% staff time on providing data to external users

Organizational Excellence

Goal 3: Provide high standards of customer service.

Example actions:

- Develop Customer Service Guidelines and improve customer service feedback mechanisms.
- Implement a client management system that facilitates overall governance and relevant information sharing.
- Provide equitable access to information (e.g., AODA standards).
- Utilize varied communication tools & tactics to facilitate engagement.
- Provide staff with customer service training.

KPI: Customer Service Guidelines developed in 2022.

KPI: 100% staff provided with customer service training.

Metrics:

Customer service response time
Customer feedback
% staff provided with customer service training
Analytics from website and social media
& types of public engagement opportunities

Goal 4: Demonstrate leadership in addressing climate change and sustainable practices through NPCA lands and operations.

Example actions:

- Develop a Corporate Climate Change Strategy to implement actions that reduce the NPCA's climate impacts and carbon footprint.
- Employ low-impact development techniques at key NPCA properties as demonstration sites.
- Develop a program to support other local organizations to become "green leaders".
- Complete a feasibility study to build a carbon-neutral NPCA headquarters.

KPI: Corporate Climate Change Strategy by 2026

KPI: % actions from Corporate Climate Change Strategy implemented by 2031.

Metrics:

and types of LID demonstration projects completed at NPCA properties
or % waste diversion actions completed at NPCA
\$ saved in waste reduction
organizations engaged to become green leaders
% progress on feasibility study completed

Financial Sustainability

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

Goal 1: Ensure responsible, sustainable, and stable fiscal practices.

Example actions:

- Develop a business plan based on *Conservation Authority Act* direction on programs and services.
- Consistently review and update fee schedules to retain current increases.
- Demonstrate value of NPCA programs and services to stakeholders and municipal partners.
- Deploy a full cost recovery model for fee-for-service programs and services.

KPI: Maintenance of variance against budget no greater than 20%

Metrics:

Variance analytics
% revenue by funding source
Year over year funding increase
Success rate of grants (% submitted vs awarded)
Total value of grants awarded

Goal 2: Optimize self-generating revenue using innovative approaches.

Example actions:

- Broaden opportunities for potential revenue streams at passive conservation areas (e.g., donation boxes).
- Explore fee-for-service opportunities through partnership agreements for various expert services.
- Explore varied funding sources and innovative partnerships to diversify funding.
- Leverage the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Foundation to help raise funds towards conservation programs and projects.

KPI: Increased self-generated revenue.

Metrics:

% revenue by funding source
programs that self-generate revenue or surplus
Fee-for-service opportunities
Fee review information
Salaries data

Goal 3: Improve asset management and close the state of good repair gap.

Example actions:

- Establish an asset management plan with a proactive asset management program.
- Complete and deploy a natural asset management accounting initiative and support municipalities, as appropriate.
- Implement best practice standards for closing the state of good repair gap.
- Invest in NPCA assets (e.g., trails, buildings, etc.) and ensure they are assessed over their lifecycle.

KPI: Maintenance of good Facility Condition Index.

Metrics:

Comprehensive asset inventory
Maintenance costs
Replacement costs
Annual facility condition assessment results (state of good repair)
Amount of money invested in the state of good repair.
& condition of vulnerable infrastructure (i.e., dams)
% or # best practices standards implemented

Glossary of Terms

Access/Accessibility	the ability for a person to utilize a resource, program, or service.
Active transportation	getting from one place to another using a recreational mode of transportation (e.g., cycling, walking)
Asset(s)	the organization's property including trails, buildings, and equipment.
Climate resilient	ability to withstand the changes and impacts due to changing climatic conditions.
Greenspace	natural area that provides benefits to the ecosystem, community, human health (mental/physical) and well-being. Examples: conservation areas, provincial or municipal parks, woodlots, rivers, beaches.
Green infrastructure	natural vegetation (e.g., forests, farmland, wetlands, waterways, etc.) and green technologies (e.g., engineered stormwater ponds, bioswales, green roofs) that provide environmental, economic, health, and social benefits.
Natural hazards	physical environmental processes (i.e., flooding, erosion) or natural features (i.e., dynamic beaches, karst, unstable slopes) that can cause unsafe land use conditions and injury or loss of life.
State of Good Repair	the condition of the organization's property, buildings, equipment so that it can operate at a full level of performance.
Sustainability	the process of living within the limits of available physical, natural, economic, and social resources in ways that do not impact future needs.
Watershed	the land that drains into a particular watercourse such as a stream, river, lake.