

NPCA 2014-17 Strategic Plan

An Evidence-Based Progress Evaluation

Briefing for NPCA Board

November 15th 2017

Evidence-Based Evaluation of the 2014-17 NPCA Strategic Plan – Introduction & Background

Performance Concepts Consulting Inc. was retained during Q2 2017 by the NPCA Board to execute an independent 3rd party evaluation of the progress achieved to date across the NPCA's 2014-17 Strategic Planning cycle.

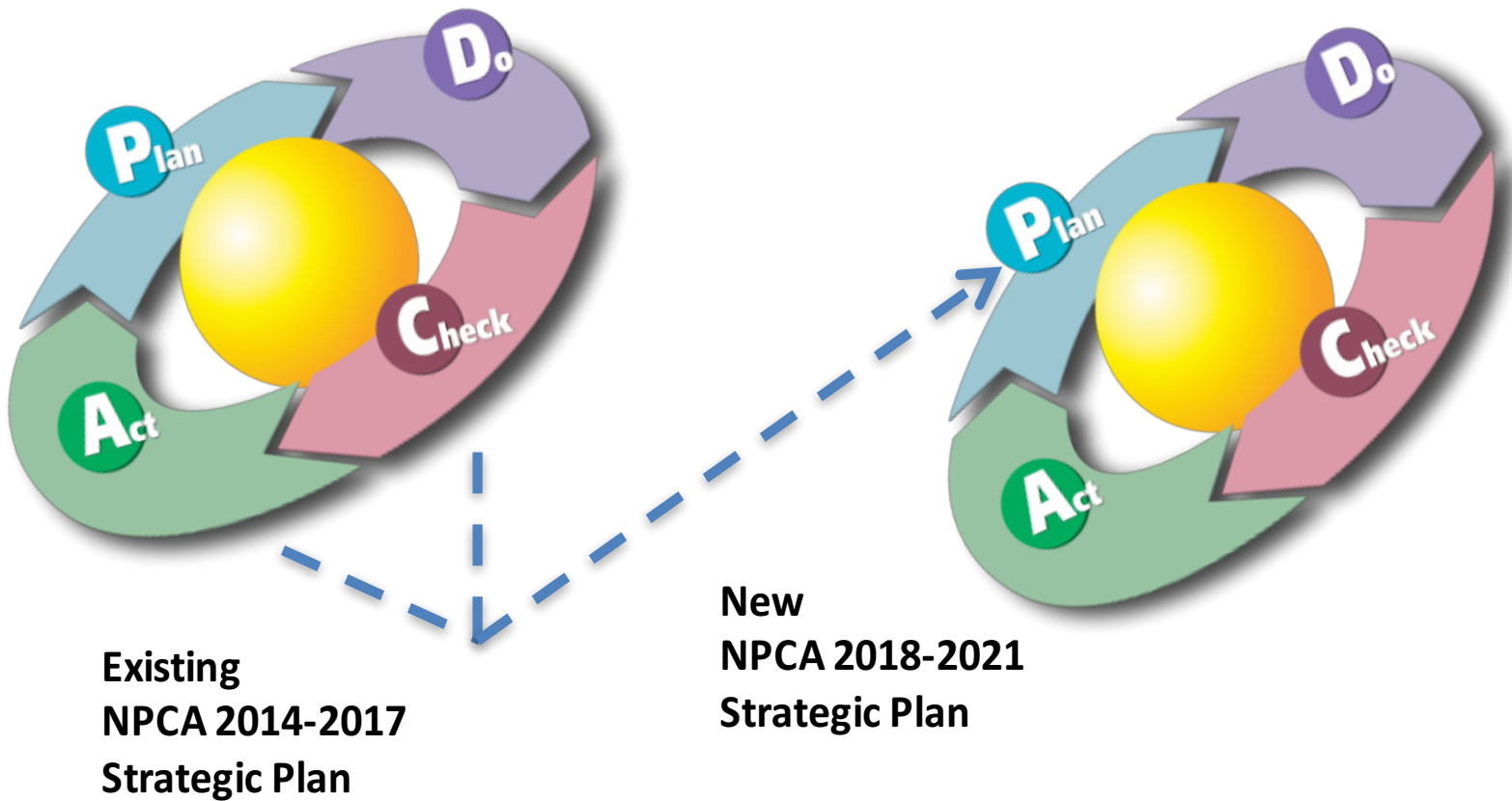
The 2014-17 NPCA Strategic Plan has served as the defining “change management” blueprint for the NPCA Board, its senior management team, and frontline employees. A range of external stakeholders also have a significant stake in the 2014-17 Strategic Plan's “change” agenda.

The Performance Concepts 3rd party strategic plan *progress assessment* will provide the NPCA Board, staff and community stakeholders with evidence-based confirmation of progress made to date, highlight areas where progress remains uneven or unrealized, and position the NPCA Board to maintain its “change management” momentum during the 2018-21 planning cycle.

NPCA “Situation Analysis” Prior to 2014-17 Strategic Plan

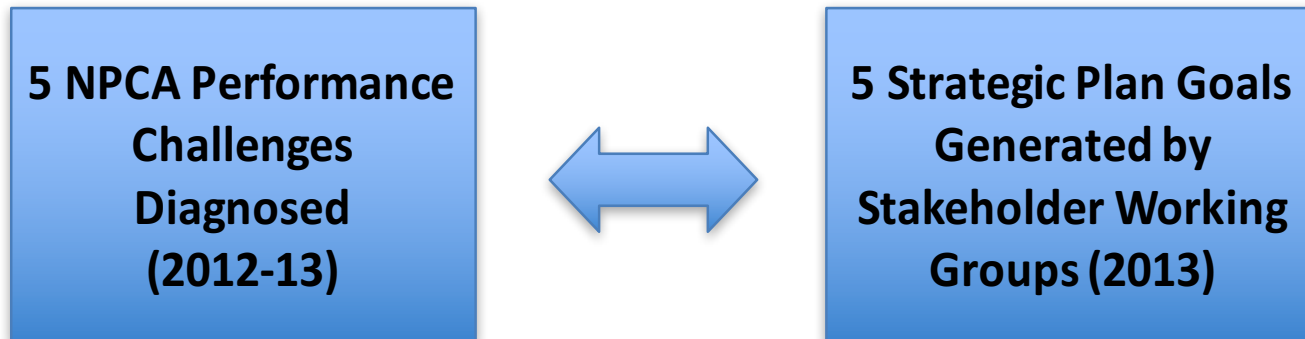
- ***Absence of appropriate management tools/systems (Budget/Asset Management/HR)...competence gap in clear sight***
- ***Absence of appropriate staff capacity to deal with Permit/Development Application workload...a choke point***
- ***No established set of policies re. governance/management/conservation “blue print” to support CA regulatory decisions...ad hoc decision-making by staff without Board leadership***
- ***A “regulatory hammer” culture where problem-solving not the focus...not a listening organization...no sustainable capacity for two-way communication with stakeholders***
- ***Multiple mandates/regulatory hats...unclear which “hat” is being worn for a given decision...scope creep & lack of focus in mandate***
- ***No alignment between Board/Senior Management/Front-line staff***

NPCA Strategic Planning Cycles Connect

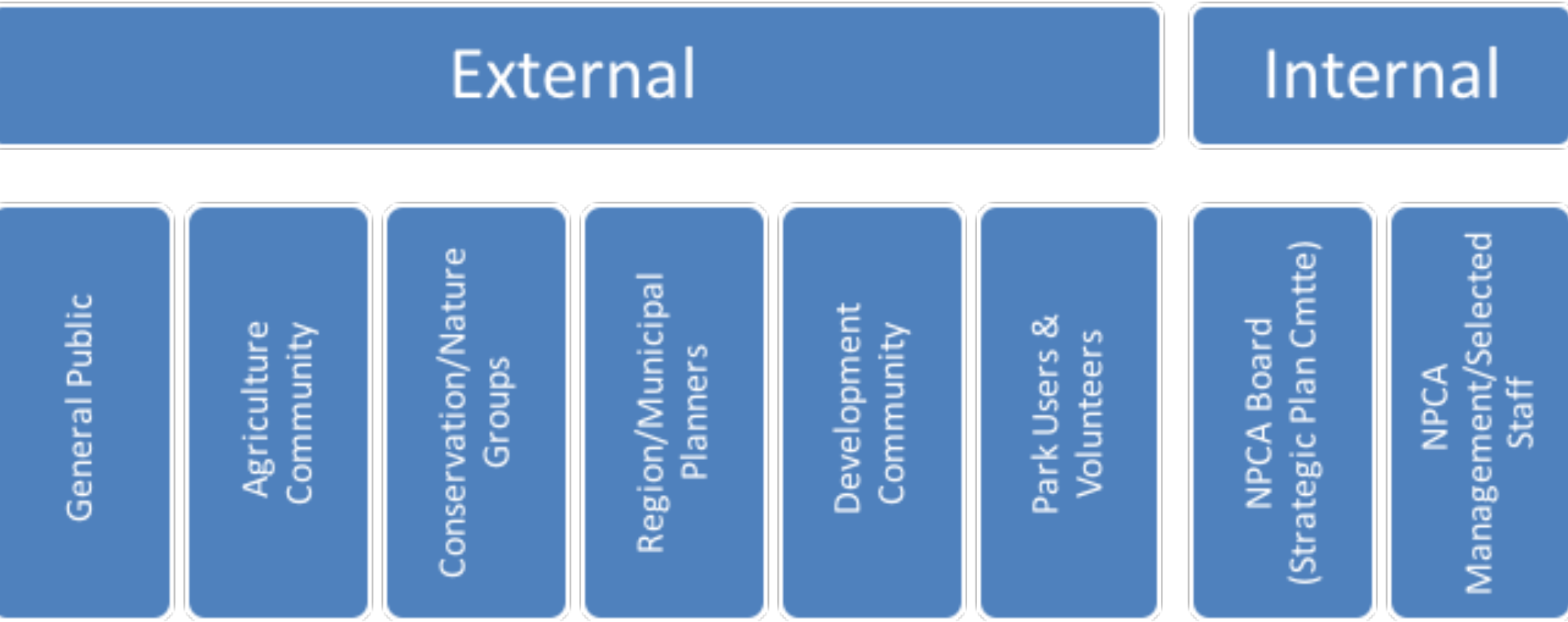


Key Question: Did NPCA 2014-17 Strategic “Change Plan” Actually Work?

- As first step in 2018-2021 strategic planning cycle, NPCA must measure actual progress against the “change” storyline set out by the Board in the 2014-17 Strategic Plan



Stakeholder Feedback Critical – It Balances the Quantitative Data-Driven Evaluation of Services/Systems



Structure of the 2014-17 Strategic Plan Progress Evaluation

The following evaluation components (with supporting progress maps and highlighted measurable achievements where appropriate) are documented in this report:

- NPCA Governance & Accountability
- Asset Management & Financial/Human Resource Management
- Development Permitting & MOU Development Application Advisory Services
- Policy Driven Decision-Making Framework
- Stakeholder & Public Communication/Consultation
- Opportunities for Improvement Moving Forward
- Overall Findings & Recommendations

NPCA Governance & Accountability Progress Map

2014	2015	2016	2017
<p>Restructured format for Board Reports to enhance accountability (Issue, Background, Options, Recommendations)</p>	<p>Board Member profile pages posted on-line to improve transparency/ accountability</p>	<p>Live TV streaming of NPCA Board meetings</p>	<p>CLAC Terms of Reference review completed & members supported to promote 2-way sustained communication</p>
<p>Established CLAC terms of reference...members selected by Q4</p>	<p>Staff Quarterly Update Reports to Board/municipalities/ online posting</p>	<p>CLAC terms of reference update considered internally via an assessment of CLAC effectiveness</p>	<p>Updated Board Code of Conduct proposed/in process of refinement</p>
<p>Implemented Reg. 2 Code of Conduct</p>	<p>Regular Board Progress Reporting Re. Strategic Plan Execution</p>	<p>NPCA Chairman “Outreach Roadshow” across Niagara to explain re-focused/simplified NPCA mandate as Conservation Act regulator</p>	<p>Board member activity reporting to Watershed Municipalities...i.e. meeting attendance, mileage expenses</p>

NPCA Progress Map – Financial/HR Control Systems

2014	2015	2016	2017
Stand-alone Capital Budget created...eliminating confusing accountability mix with operating budget	Decentralized staff budgeting model; establishing new NPCA Manager level cost-centre management accountabilities	HR staff specialist, HRIS software Payroll transfer to Finance to meet audit requirements HR processes review	On-line automated payroll system Purchasing model re-design initiated by CAO...commitment to new centralized controls/monitoring
	Initiated significant user-pay revenue expansion & cost control efficiencies across portfolio of Parks – achieving full-cost recovery by 2016	PSAB compliant financial statements...also Quarterly capital/operating budget versus actual reporting	Implemented 20-year Capital Project/Budgeting Planning Cycle
		Finance/accounting specialist...Budget accounts restructured to reflect NPCA business lines & org structure ...eliminates previous fog around service costs	Value-for-Money Program Evaluation (i.e. Land Restoration)– identified operational problems & yielded opportunity for new delivery model with lower overheads

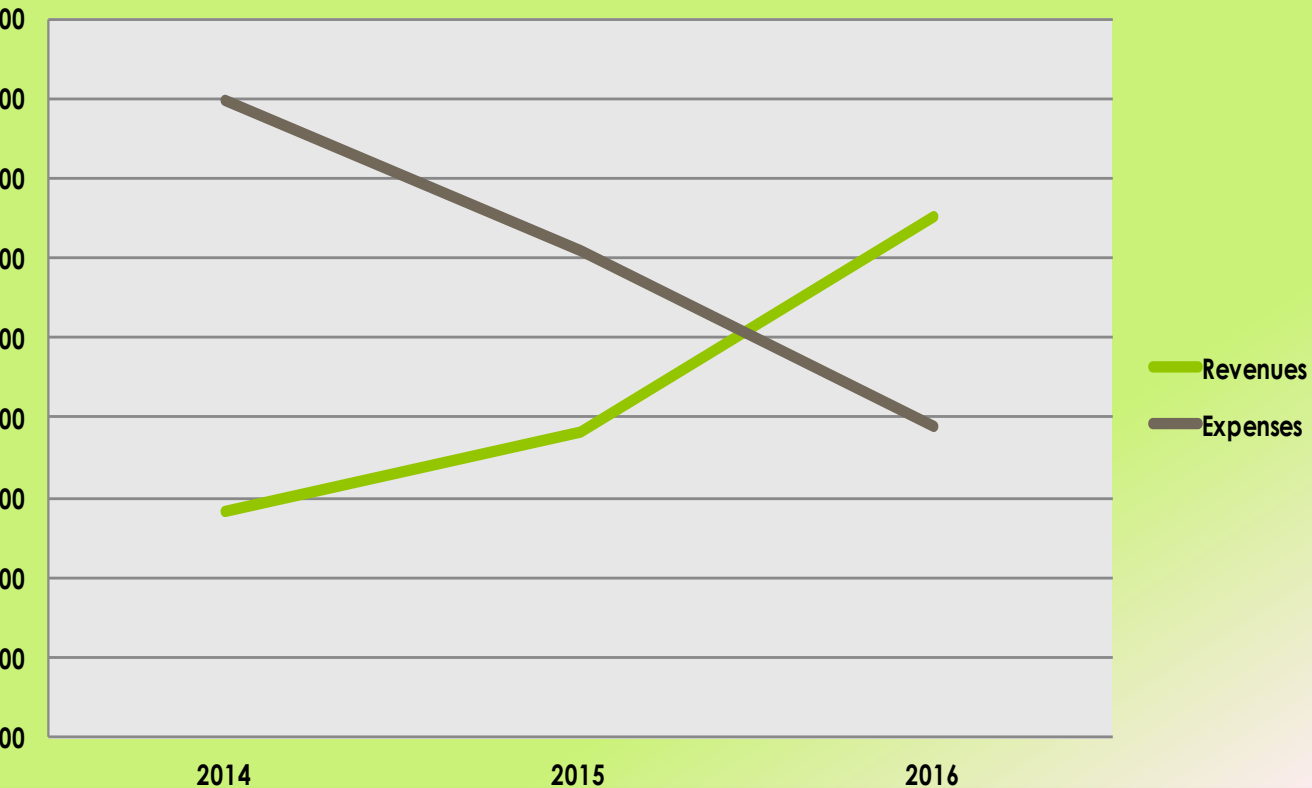
“The 2014-17 progress maps (see below) document the exceptional progress made by NPCA management/professional staff to implement competent, industry standard financial and asset management planning and control systems.”

PCA Progress Map – Asset & Land Management

2014	2015	2016	2017
Developed 6+1 Criteria for Evaluating Holdings	Board-approved Land Management Plan	Implementation of asset management software/reporting	
Review of NPCA Owned Holdings for possible investment – eliminated maintenance contracts & consolidated to core holdings (reduced risk)	Completed comprehensive NPCA assets inventory/valuations, condition ratings & lifecycles		Capital Project Management “Critical Path” Tracking Tool linked to 2-year “use it or lose it” budgeting model
Review of 2007 map of desirable land packages for NPCA acquisition	Evidence-Based Land Acquisition Decisions: 3 Case Studies - avoided \$millions in clean-up risks & liability transfers	Facility-by-Facility capital budgets...new 2 yr. “use it or lose it” capital budgeting/project model	
St Johns acquisition & Catholic Board/Brock partnership (indigenous programming)		Fleet restructuring review resulting in shedding owned fleet & leasing...\$100k capital + \$30k operating savings	
6+1 Acquisitions: i) Balls Falls farmland + ii) Lakeshore/Wainfleet	A series of Park-specific master plans establishing operational & asset management priorities		

“The NPCA approach to sustainable asset management meets “best practices” in the municipal sector... Municipal governments in Niagara and beyond would be well advised to make use of a similar “use it or lose it” business rule for capital planning.”

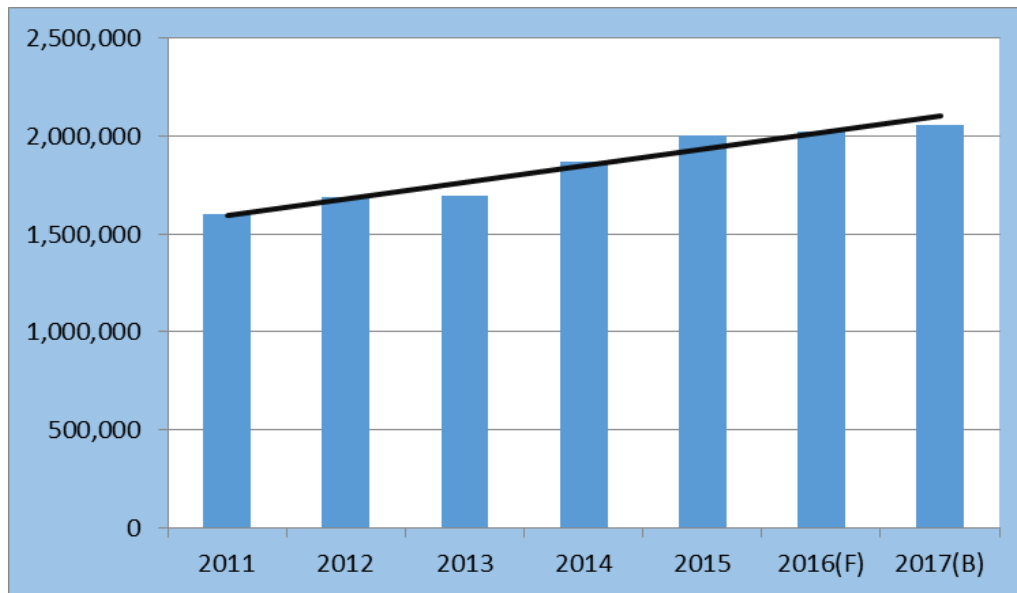
Park Revenues & Expenses (Ball's Falls, Binbrook, Chippawa Creek, Long Beach and St. John's)



“Augmenting the sustainable NPCA capital planning model, notable progress has been made in developing a full cost operating model for the NPCA “big five” locations (see figure below). The NPCA facilities rental/marketing group has been successful in generating new revenue streams, and operating costs have been effectively controlled. This turnaround over three fiscal years represents a significant operational accomplishment for the



NPCA Self-Generated Funds



“The steady improvement in NPCA self-generated revenues (especially 2014 onward) represents substantial progress by the NPCA towards financial sustainability and a net reduction in financial risk moving forward.”

* NPCA Self-Generated Funds include User Fees, sales, admissions, administration fees & interest

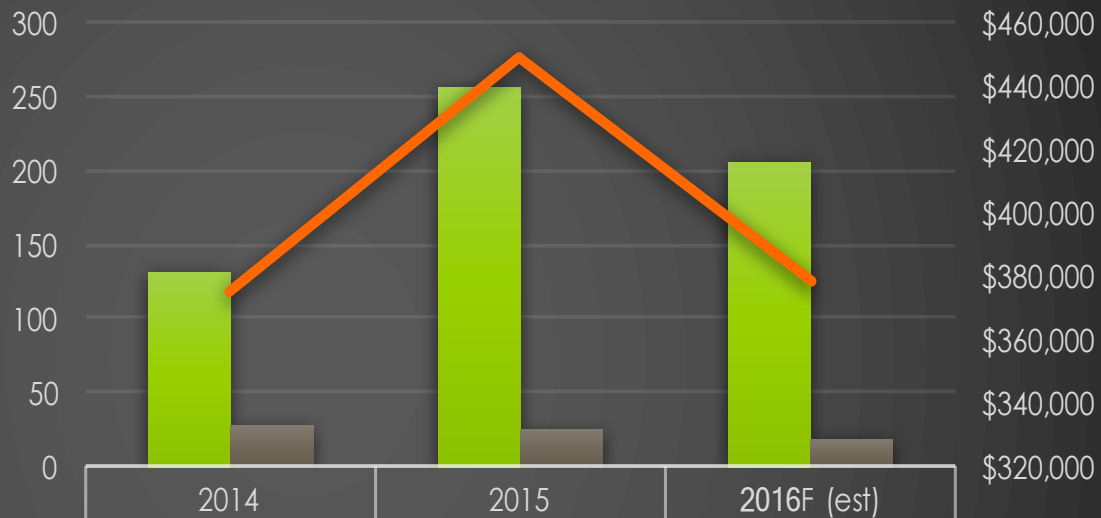
NPCA Progress Map - Permitting & Development Advisory Services

Streamlined/Efficient Delivery of Permitting & Development Advisory Services (MOU)

2014	2015	2016	2017
Two new Development Planner positions (3,000 file processing hours) added to improve processing timeframes	CityView work-flow software tool selected, purchased & implemented...only Ontario CA to adopt this efficiency-driven development approvals workflow tool		Full year of performance reporting capacity tracked in CityView for municipal development applications & NPCA permits
Board adoption of streamlined Development Permit process (mapped)	Development fees policy/structure review executed	Development Review Process timelines adopted...quarterly reporting instituted	P. Concepts executes test of CityView software reporting accuracy/capability
Board adoption of Dispute Resolution model for applicants		100% attendance at municipal pre-con meetings...expedites review timeliness	MOU rationalization process initiated to ensure Region/NPCA roles are disentangled/streamlined

“Workflow software is employed by numerous Ontario growth municipalities to ensure timely coordinated development application processing – justifying the competing file workload and deadlines in a rational fashion. The NPCA is the only Ontario conservation authority to implement use workflow software in order to rationalize its development approvals service delivery. The sector “best practice” has been attracting attention/interest from conservation authorities across the province.”

NPCA Permitting (2014 - 2016F)



No. of Permits Issued	131	255	205
Avg Days to Process NPCA Permit	29	26	19
Total Fees (excl. wind project permits)	\$375,325	\$448,632	\$378,000

■ No. of Permits Issued
 ■ Avg Days to Process NPCA Permit
 — Total Fees (excl. wind project permits)

“As part of this review, Performance Concepts requested customized development application processing timeframe reports from NPCA staff (a mini test audit). The reports were configured promptly by NPCA IT staff and they confirmed the ability of CityView to report actual processing timeframe versus targets.”

NPCA Progress Map – Policy Framework Development

Effective NPCA Model to Set Policies & Priorities

2014	2015	2016	2017
Mission/Vision/Values produced & approved by Board...overarching platform for Policy development			
Policy Screening tool developed/approved for subsequent use reviewing multiple policies			
List of Policies for Review confirmed by Board			25+ governance, administrative, development approval, financial control policies reviewed/refined
NPCA Development Policies review	Places to Grow review executed Greenbelt Act review executed Niagara Escarpment Plan review executed	•Reg. 155/06 •Living landscape Discussion paper & public consultation	Living Landscape Policy Production

NPCA Policy Framework Producing...	Year
Planning MOU Improvement Policy	2014
Consultant Selection Policy	2014
Binbrook Master Plan Policies	2014
CLAC Terms of Reference	2014
Unsolicited Proposals Policy	2014
Vehicle & Equipment Policy	2014
Accessibility Standard Compliance Policy	2014
O Reg. 155/06 Policy Revisions	2014
Policy Re. Dispute Resolution Process	2014
Regulation #1 Governance/Admin Policies	2014
Regulation #2 Meeting Procedures	2014
Regulation #3 Hearing Procedures	2014
Permits Approvals Process Policy	2014
Health & Safety Statement	2015

Policy Framework Producing...	Year
Workplace Violence & Harassment Prevention	2015
Tangible Capital Asset Accounting	2015
Greenbelt Act Phase 1 Provincial Review	2015
Places to Grow & Niagara Escarpment Act	2015
Land Management Plan	2015
Moveable Assets Policy	2015
Naming of Assets/Facilities Policy	2015
Geocaching Guidelines	2015
Planning & Regulation Fees Policy	2015
Purchasing/Procurement Policy	2015
Cash Deposit Policy	2016
Capital Assets Management/Planning	2016

Progress Map – Effective Communication with Stakeholders & Public

Effective Communications with Stakeholders & Public

2014	2015	2016	2017
	Marketing & Communications Division created		Community Outreach/Communication capacity improved to achieve sustained 2-way dialogue with stakeholders/public
	Expanded use of social media toolkit to engage public & stakeholders (e.g. Thanksgiving Festival, Cave Springs Master Plan)		
Successful expansion/growth of volunteer capacity coordinated by community outreach staff	Tracking # volunteers, volunteer hours but not impacts		<p>Quarterly impact Reporting of Volunteers: A Q2 2017 Sample</p> <p>Removed 62 garbage bags of garlic mustard from our Conservation Areas Planted 357 native trees Planted 2200 native wildflowers Monitored 26 Eastern Bluebird boxes at Ball's Falls - 11 boxes hosting bluebirds and a total of 40 bluebird eggs Helped educate 6036 children</p> <p>Total volunteers (January to June): 75 individuals + 268 from 25 community groups/partners = 343 volunteers Total hours: 2886 hours</p>

Letter from Niagara South Federation of Agriculture

“Our Federation was an active participant in the Strategic process. Meetings were attended and comments were made. It would seem that stakeholders were listened to and their concerns were made.

On balance some things seem have improved some and the heat seems to have been turned down a little. NPCA is a regulatory agency and it still regulates as it always has. Being regulated is never an enjoyable experience. Cooperation in the construction and maintenance of Main Drains, an important issue in the agricultural community to be improved. The opportunity to attend Public meetings for the Welland River Flood Plain Mapping Project and the Landscape Project was much appreciated. It is hoped that the contributions of Stakeholders will be carefully considered.

The NPCA was ahead of the curve in the creation of a Community Liaison Advisory Committee on which a very good group of Stakeholders advises the Board on a variety of important issues.

Transparency of the Board is greatly improved with live streaming and video recording of Board meetings while the day operation of the organization appears to be somewhat less so. The last two Chairs seem to keep a much higher profile than those who came before them.”

Service Delivery/Management	Overall Assessment Grade in 2017 (Summarizing Evidence Based Evaluations)
Governance & Accountability	B+
Budget/Financial Controls/Asset Management	A
Planning & Development Approvals Services to Region via MOU	B+
Policy Development Framework	B
Public/Stakeholder Relations	C+ to B-

“The NPCA is not a perfect organization. There are no perfect organizations. However, the NPCA has utilized its “challenge-driven 2014-2017 Strategic Plan to transform itself into a progress-driven organization.”

“Performance Concepts can state with confidence, that the evidence-based evaluation of the NPCA reveals a competently managed organization – poised to tackle significant policy issues (e.g. climate change), refine its mandate, and improve its two-way stakeholder communications.”

demonstrates evidence based progress from “D” level performance in all categories achieved 2012-13

Improvement Opportunities

- Key Performance Indicators imbedded in a Conservation Scorecard
- Centralized Purchasing model
- CLAC + 21st century technology tools for improved/sustained 2-way communication with stakeholders/public
- Stakeholder conversation expansion (e.g. indigenous communities)
- Continue with targeted Program Reviews to drive value-for-money

Opportunity to Rebalance Towards NPCA Program & Mandate Driven Priorities Moving Forward

“The 2014-2018 Strategic Plan moved the NPCA into the category of a competently managed organization. The 2018-2021 strategic planning cycle can build on that hard-earned foundation of financial/asset management and operational planning competence.”

“The NPCA’s 2018-2021 strategic planning cycle can consider ambitious planning and delivery of forward-facing programs and community initiatives. This is consistent with recent public announcements made by the CAO around strategic initiatives such as a 100-year Water Quality Plan and Climate Change Mitigation. ***This type of pivot towards ambitious conservation objectives, now that previous NPCA management deficiencies have been dealt with during 2014-2017, was strongly supported during stakeholder listening sessions that occurred as part of this review exercise.”***