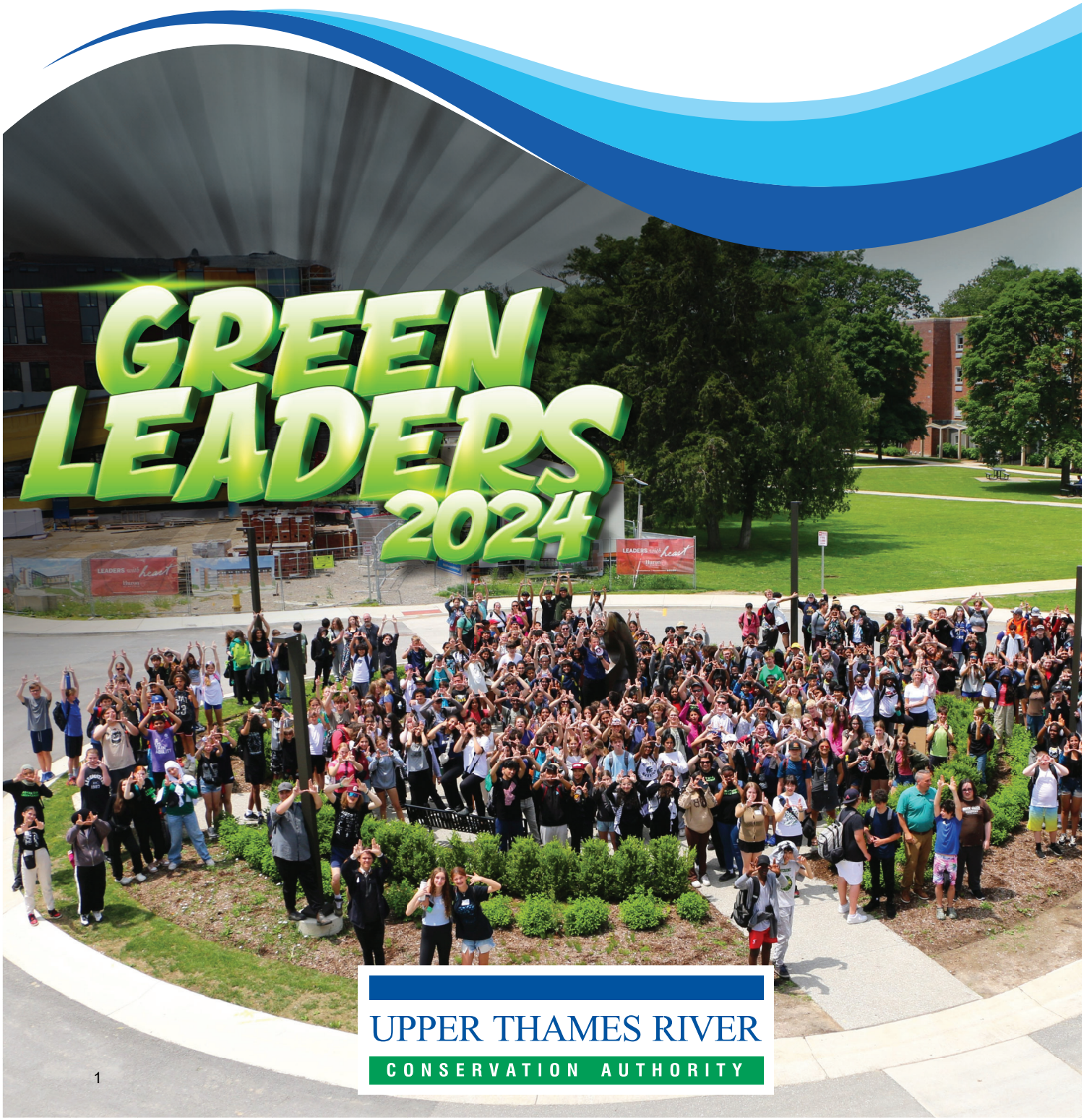
MEETING PACKAGE
JUNE 2024

Board of Directors

Upper Thames River Conservation Authority



UPPER THAMES RIVER
CONSERVATION AUTHORITY

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Upper Thames River Conservation Authority Board of Directors' Meeting Agenda

Date: June 25, 2024
Time: 9:30am
Place: Watershed Conservation Centre Board Room, Fanshawe Conservation Area – 1424 Clarke Road, London, ON
Livestream: https://youtube.com/live/BPdOcYU1L2c?feature=share

1. Territorial Acknowledgement

2. Modifications to the Agenda

3. Declarations of Pecuniary Interest

4. Presentations/Delegations

5. Administrative Business

5.1. Approval of Minutes of Previous Meeting: May 28, 2024

5.2. Business Arising from Minutes

5.3. Correspondence

6. Reports – For Consideration

6.1. 2025 Budget Concepts and Communications Overview – BoD-06-24-49

6.2. 2024/ 2025 and 2025/2026 Water and Erosion Control Infrastructure (WECI) Projects Update – BoD-06-24-50

6.3. Watershed Strategy and Strategic Plan Consultation – BoD-06-24-51

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7. Reports – In Camera

7.1. Personal Matters about an Identifiable Individual – General Manager Compensation Recommendation – BoD-06-24-52

8. Reports – For Information

8.1. Administration and Enforcement – Section 28 Status Report – BoD-06-24-53

8.2. Project Status Update – BoD-06-24-54

8.3. GREEN Summit Presentation

8.4. Thames River Current June Edition

9. Reports – Committee Updates

9.1. Finance and Audit Committee – May 24th Meeting Decisions – BoD-06-24-55

9.2. Hearing Committee – May 28th Hearing Decisions – BoD-06-24-56

10. Notices of Motion

11. Chair's Comments

12. Member's Comments

13. General Manager's Comments

14. Adjournment

Tracy Annett, General Manager

UPPER THAMES RIVER
CONSERVATION AUTHORITY

MEMO

To: UTRCA Board of Directors
From: Tracy Annett
Date: June 17, 2024
File Number: BoD-06-24-49
Agenda #: 6.1
Subject: 2025 Budget Concepts and Communications Overview

Recommendation

1. THAT the 2025 Budget Concepts report be received.
2. THAT the 2025 Draft Budget be developed in conformity to the Conservation Authorities Act (CAA) and Ontario Regulation 402/22: Budget and Apportionment.
3. THAT staff BE DIRECTED to include a provision for an economic increase (COLA) of 3% and address inflationary pressures.
4. That staff BE DIRECTED to prepare a budget communications overview to circulate to the Finance and Audit Committee for feedback before being finalized.

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to seek direction from the Board of Directors on the 2025 Draft Budget assumptions and process.

Background

Traditionally, the Board of Directors has provided feedback to staff in August each year on their desired approach to preparing the following year's budget. In the absence of a budgetary policy to guide this work, revisions to our 2024 budget and preparation of a 2025 budget are well underway. The goal will be to present a revised 2024 budget to the Board in August along with a preliminary draft budget for 2025.

In discussing the budgetary framework with the Finance and Audit Committee, staff were directed to prepare a communications overview to provide municipalities with the draft budget for 2025. The communications materials will be circulated to the Finance and Audit Committee members for feedback and brought to the Board in August.

UTRCA Annual Budget Timeline

- March and April – Staff communicate capital project plans with municipal partners
- April - May – Staff develop preliminary Draft Budget
- June – Budget concepts / assumptions to the Board
- August – Preliminary budget estimates to municipal partners
- September – Staff finalize Draft Budget

- October – Circulate Draft Budget to municipal partners
- November to January – Municipal budget presentations
- February – Board considers Draft Budget
- Communication of Final Budget to municipal partners

Budget Assumptions

While staff now expect some 2024 funding to be carried into 2025, it is still useful to discuss the assumptions and pressures the next budget will experience. Describing the budget assumptions helps to:

1. Set clear organizational direction for budget targets,
2. Enable staff to work with municipal funding partners to provide preliminary budget estimates,
3. Internally, allow staff to build the 2025 budget and reduce re-work,
4. Provide the Board of Directors the opportunity to influence the general direction of the budget,
5. Strengthen the advocacy role of Conservation Authority Board members at municipal budget presentations.

Through September, the 2025 budget will be refined and 2026 drafted. To that end, we now present some information that we feel will impact those budgets and the assumptions we prepare them under.

1. Staffing and Wages

2024 and 2025 will continue to see additional retirements, though fewer than recent years. Many staff are currently in step 1 or 2 of their wage bands; annual merit increases are anticipated in addition to cost-of-living increases. Staffing and wage expenditures are approximately 80% of the UTRCA's budget. No additional new FTEs are currently proposed in 2025, unless they are fully funded from grants and/or fees.

Wages at times can still be a barrier to hiring and retention as well a compensation review is anticipated in 2025 to be implemented in 2026. In addition, inflation seems to be coming back under control but is still elevated, and the first, long-anticipated, interest rate cut only just occurred. Finally, Ontario minimum wage is set for a significant increase in 2024, and this may affect the grid's structure in some grades.

For these reasons, for planning purposes, we are preparing the 2025 budget with an estimated grid increase of 3%. We have also now used a 3% increase for 2026. The year over year April CPI rests at 2.7%. We reserve the possibility to more firmly set the grid later in the year after considering the minimum wage, a more current CPI measure, and continuing hiring results over 2024.

For reference, a tenth of a percent increase on the grid represents approximately $15,000 cost to the organization, $10,000 of that in Category 1 (mandatory) programs.

2. Environment and Climate Change Canada Grant

Staff have been working with Environment and Climate Change Canada for some months now awaiting confirmation of a significant funding grant for 2024 and four additional years. Staff are now at an approximate 95% confidence level that this funding will transpire. The 2024 revised

budget will include revenue of $2.5M, along with associated costs, and $5M for future years. This single grant represents a 10% increase in the size of the budget for 2024 and will be a 20% increase to our 2025 budget and beyond. As a result, it consequentially impacts the overhead costs in Category 1 and costs allocated between programs. In addition, it necessitates detailed planning for the future when the grant will come to an end.

3. Cost Increases

UTRCA continues to experience significant cost increases, particularly in construction costs. The Water and Erosion Control Infrastructure (WECI) program project list for 2024 and 2025 will be driven by the selection of projects approved for the WECI grant. The scope of the projects may be driven by the bids received through the tender process. Staff will continue making cost estimates as accurate as possible and updating them as they become firmer. There are currently many changes to the project capital project lists for 2024 and 2025 including many deferrals of initiatives. It may not be possible to seek 2025-2026 WECI grants in a second-year intake of the program.

Much of the inflation from the last few years is also making itself felt in municipal budgets and resulting in significant property tax increases. Staff currently estimate an overall 7% increase in property taxes on UTRCA lands for 2025, without reference to individual municipalities at present.

While insurance premium increases are now softening, they may still trend higher than the rate of inflation due to exceptional claims from fires, flooding, and other natural disasters. Staff will be estimating a 9% increase to insurance coverages for 2025 but will update that figure closer to the year end when UTRCA insurers typically provide information on trends in premiums and underwriting policies.

4. Further Downloading

Recent information from the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks (MECP) about UTRCA's Drinking Water Source Protection program indicates that administrative overhead costs will be reduced over the 2024-2026 transfer payment agreement. Annual reductions will be phased in over three years and may cap the eligible overhead expenses to $50,000. Overhead costs for the Thames-Sydenham Source Protection Region currently exceed $85,000 annually. Discussions continue with the MECP staff to clarify our process for overhead allocations. As a Category 1 program, unfunded costs will have to be covered through the levy.

5. Levy Increase

The extent of the general distribution levy increase is strongly influenced by costs in Category 1 and those costs are 80% weighted by wages. In 2025, the levy increase will also be influenced by the degree of savings found during 2024, which may lessen the burden of a deficit on operating reserves. If it becomes possible that 2024 produces a surplus in Category 1 programs by the end of the year, it is the intention that the general levy increase will be moderated as much as possible by that surplus. It is difficult to predict the year-end position, but minimizing levy increases will continue to be a priority, as it has in the past, until a reserve policy may dictate otherwise.

The extent of the special benefitting levy increase is driven by the projects and operations of each water and erosion control structure. Those operations and projects need to be managed with the staff resources we have and are more particularly dependent on the projects that the WECI program agrees to fund. Staff hope that the

2025 projects will not require a significant increase in the need for levy but, should it happen, it will be distributed among the special benefitting member municipalities.

6. Modified Current Value Assessment (MCVA)

The assessment rates provided annually by the Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR) dictate how much of the total levy increase is apportioned to each member municipality. Until those figures arrive, staff use the prior year MCVA to estimate the general levy apportioned to each member. Based on recent news reports, the relatively higher property values accruing in rural communities over urban communities are expected to continue. This implies that the proportion of the general levy will again be skewed towards rural members; a situation that is beyond the UTRCA's control, unfortunately.

Staff received MCVA figures for the Clean Water Act in 2024 and will use those figures to levy for the MECP funding cuts noted above until 2025 figures are forthcoming from the Province.

Budget Communications

At the May Finance and Audit Committee meeting, staff were directed to develop a budget communication overview based on feedback received from the committee and that it be added to the budget concepts report going to the Board in June. Due to unforeseen circumstances, the draft communication materials will not be provided at this time. Instead, once prepared, the draft will be circulated to Finance and Audit Committee members for preliminary feedback, then finalized by staff and presented at the August Board meeting along with the preliminary draft budget.

The budget communications will include:

1) A high-level overview of programs and services,
2) Funding challenges for Category 1 mandatory programs and services,
3) Sustainable funding options for Category 1 programs and services.

Summary

The preliminary draft 2025 budget will be prepared based on the concepts provided above. The preliminary draft budget and communications overview will be provided to the Board for consideration at the August meeting.

Recommended by:

Tracy Annett, General Manager, Secretary-Treasurer

Christine Saracino, Supervisor of Finance

UPPER THAMES RIVER CONSERVATION AUTHORITY

MEMO

To: UTRCA Board of Directors
From: Chris Tasker
Date: June 25, 2024
File Number: BoD-06-24-50
Agenda #: 6.2
Subject: 2024-25, 2025-26 WECI application update

Recommendation

That the Board approves the WECI application as submitted

Background

Staff provided a report to the May 2024 Board of Directors meeting on the projects which were being proposed for application under the WECI program. As anticipated in recommending the projects to the board, staff have reconsidered some of the projects based on updated information on the estimated cost of the projects and staff capacity to be able to complete all projects.

Discussion

Attached is the list of projects submitted for WECI application on June 3, 2024. The following projects have been amended as reflected in the attached tables.

- Dam Safety Reviews for Centreville and Dorchester Mill Pond have been deferred for the time being. If there is a second call for applications for 2025 we can reconsider whether to apply for these projects at that time.
- Initiation of the Dam Safety review for Harrington Dam has been deferred. If there is a second call for applications for 2025 we will apply at this time.
- Budget for Mitchell Dam Roof has been increased to $30,000. Staff have determined that they will not be able to undertake the work necessary and an engineer will need to be hired to assist with design and building permits.
- Fanshawe Dam Valve Seal/ Gate Valve Repair has been removed from the application at this time. This will allow the scope to be better defined before considering whether to apply as part of a second 2025 call for applications if available.
- Fanshawe Dam Access Elevator for the 2025/2026 WECI year has been removed from the application at this time. This will allow the scope to be better defined through the 2024 project before considering whether to apply as part of a second 2025 call for applications if available.
- Wildwood Dam Piezometer Installation and Stability Analysis has been split into two years instead of one.
- Mitchell Dam- Safety Review Completion (DSR) has been changed to Mitchell Dam- Geotechnical Investigations

Recommended by:
Chris Tasker, Manager, Water and Information Management

Prepared by
Jillian Smith, Water Control Structures Technologist

2024-2025 - YEAR 1 - Application Form for the MNRF Water and Erosion Control Infrastructure (WECI) Program

Conservation Authority: Upper Thames River Conservation Authority
Project Contact: Chris Tasker Taskerc@thamesriver.on.ca

Project ID	Project Title and Structure Name	Estimate of Total Project Cost	Project Timelines and Milestones	Project Description	WECI Database Score Changes
As assigned in the WECI Inventory Database	Provide a short title that describes the project and includes the specific structure name associated with the project	An estimate of the "Total" project cost. This is the total cost using local, municipal, and provincial funding to complete the entire project	Anticipated project activities, schedule, timelines, and milestones. For example: Jul. – Tender Aug. – Award & Startup Sept. – In-Water Work Dec. – Draft Report Feb. – Final Report	Indicate the type of project: REPAIR, STUDY, SAFETY or REMOVAL Describe the project: how the project was identified (e.g., plan, study, strategy, inspection); the condition of the structure; part of the structure requiring study/repair; reason or rationale for study/repair; proposed project work to complete the study/repair	Describe any score changes that need to be made to the database
R.24.047	Fanshawe Dam - Access Elevator Assessment	$50,000	July- RFP Aug.- Award & Startup, Site visit, inspections Sep- Feb- Prelim design	SAFETY - The access elevator is locked out due to it not complying with TSSA standards. The elevator is important as it is the only means of transporting large equipment or materials to/from the lower levels of the dam and would provide a secondary exit in an emergency (the primary being multiple levels of stairs). A contractor/consultant will be engaged to assess what work is required to bring the elevator into compliance with TSSA standards and initiate preliminary design.	

Project ID	Project Title and Structure Name	Estimate of Total Project Cost	Project Timelines and Milestones	Project Description	WECI Database Score Changes
R.24.003	Fanshawe Dam - Safety Boom Installation	$866,000	July – Tender Aug – Award & Startup Sept- Fabrication Oct to Feb – Install	SAFETY - The Design Services for the safety boom was submitted as Project ID # S.23.001. The DSR completed in 2022 by KGS Group recommended a safety boom be implemented in the reservoir on the upstream side of the dam as a high priority. The safety boom was designed in 2023/ 2024 by Geniglace. A contractor will be engaged to supply and install the safety boom. We require a permit from UTRCA which is in progress, we were notified we do not require a permit from MNRF. The consultant is waiting to hear back from DFO and Navigable Water if permits are required.	
R.24.052	Wildwood Dam - Drainage Gallery & Relief Wells Detailed Design & Repair	$205,000	Jun – RFP Jul to Aug – Design Work Sept to Nov – Rehabilitation Works Dec – Final Report	REPAIR – 2023/24 Dam Safety Review concluded that some reduction in uplift pressure from the pressure relief wells is necessary to meet the 2011 OMNR stability requirements. A condition assessment was undertaken in 2023-2024. This phase will include removing fouling/ build-up in relief wells, replacing relief wells' piping within larger diameter pipes, designing and replacing drainage piping, and installing pressure gauges and gate valves.	

Project ID	Project Title and Structure Name	Estimate of Total Project Cost	Project Timelines and Milestones	Project Description	WECI Database Score Changes
R.24.045	Wildwood Dam - Valve Repair	$15,000	Jul – RFQ Aug – Award Sep to Oct – Repair	REPAIR – A leak at one of the bypass valves requires fixing. Work will include retention of divers to plug the valve intake, to facilitate repairs.	
R.24.053	Wildwood Dam - Machine Guarding for Hoists	$15,000	Sep – RFQ Oct – Award and Site Visit Nov – Fabricate and Install	SAFETY - The DSR completed in 2023 by KGS Group recommended installing machine guarding on all four hoists to protect operators from moving mechanical parts, as a high 'priority'. A contractor will be retained to design, fabricate and install the machine guards, over chains, motors, etc.	
S.24.031	Wildwood Dam - Piezometer Installation and Stability Analysis	$50,000	July – RFP Aug – Award Sept – Piezometer install	STUDY – Related to project S.25.030 (2025/26 project). The DSR completed in 2023 by KGS Group recommended installation of piezometers and completion of a stability analysis on concrete abutment walls and wingwalls. A consultant will be engaged to complete this work. Piezometer installation is to be completed under this project and the analysis will be completed through the 2025 project.	
S.24.041	Wildwood Dam - Safety Boom Design	$90,000	July – RFP Aug – Project Award Aug- Jan. – Design Feb. – Tender Documents	STUDY -The DSR completed in 2023 by KGS Group recommended a safety boom be implemented in the reservoir on the upstream side of the dam as a priority. A consultant will be engaged to perform design services in 2024/25. An application (R.25.034) is being submitted for 2025/ 2026 for the supply and installation of the safety	

Project ID	Project Title and Structure Name	Estimate of Total Project Cost	Project Timelines and Milestones	Project Description	WECI Database Score Changes
				boom.	
S.24.020	Pittock Dam - Safety Boom Design	$90,000	July – RFP Aug – Project Award Aug- Jan. – Design Feb. – Tender Documents	STUDY – The DSR completed in 2023 by KGS Group recommended a safety boom be implemented in the reservoir on the upstream side of the dam as a priority. A consultant will be engaged to perform design services in 2024/25. An application (R.25.023) is being submitted for 2025/ 2026 for the supply and installation of the safety boom.	
S.24.045	R Thomas Orr Dam – Safety Boom Design	$90,000	July – RFP Aug – Project Award Aug- Jan. – Design Feb. – Tender Documents	STUDY - A DSR is currently being completed by DM Wills and current information suggests a safety boom will be recommended through a Public Safety Assessment and Plans. UTRCA staff will complete Public Safety Assessment and Public Safety Plan. A consultant will be engaged to perform design services related to the safety boom and provide cost estimates for supply and installation. Future applications may be made for supply and installation once costs are understood.	
R.24.050	R Thomas Orr Dam – Wingwall Tiebacks	$75,000	Jul – RFP Aug – Project Award Sep – Onsite investigations Feb – Design report	REPAIR - Installation of wingwall tiebacks (also called ‘soil anchoring’) is the recommended solution to the wingwalls’ stability issue, as per the Preliminary Design Report (AECOM, 2018). This phase will include detailed design, and initiation of approvals process for relevant agencies.	

Project ID	Project Title and Structure Name	Estimate of Total Project Cost	Project Timelines and Milestones	Project Description	WECI Database Score Changes
				Installation of tie-backs will reduce the risk of sliding and overturning at the upstream side and eliminate stability concerns on the downstream side.	
R.24.054	R Thomas Orr Dam - Gate Painting	$110,000	Jul – RFP Aug – Project Award Feb – complete project	REPAIR – Orr DSR identified repairing and repainting severely corroded gates and conducting thickness measurements as a 'High priority' item in the recommendations. A contractor will be engaged to remove the gates, transport off-site, and perform necessary repairs, and painting. Work will be completed on one gate at a time, between 2024 to 2026. An application (R.25.036) is being submitted for 2025/26 for the painting of the second gate.	
S.24.035	R Thomas Orr Dam - Geotechnical Investigations	$20,000	July – RFP Aug – Award Sep – Drilling and Install	STUDY- Dam safety review (2023) completed by DM Wills recommends further geotechnical investigation as 'High' priority. Boreholes will be drilled to establish the mechanical parameters for the subsurface conditions at the earth embankments. A desktop analysis will be conducted to review construction records to establish the limits of the embankment fill. Additionally, two piezometers will be installed to monitor the groundwater conditions. The data from boreholes and piezometers will be used to conduct a slope stability analysis in 2025/26. An application (S.25.037) is also being made	

Project ID	Project Title and Structure Name	Estimate of Total Project Cost	Project Timelines and Milestones	Project Description	WECI Database Score Changes
				for 2025/26 for the completion of the geotechnical investigations utilizing the data collected from this work.	
S.24.036	Mitchell Dam – Geotechnical Investigations	$20,000	Jul – RFP Aug – Award Sep – Drilling and Install	STUDY – During the 2023/24 Dam safety review (2023) completed by KGS Group, the consultant pointed out the lack of information regarding the subsurface conditions at the dam. Two boreholes will be drilled to establish the mechanical parameters for the subsurface conditions at the earth embankments. Additionally, two piezometers and a datalogger will be installed to monitor the groundwater conditions. An application (S.25.019) is also being made for 2025/26 for the completion of the geotechnical investigations utilizing the data collected from this work.	
R.24.061	Mitchell Dam - Building roof Replacement	$30,000	Fall/Winter- completion	REPAIR- As part of the asbestos removal, significant deterioration of the roof was identified. Roof requires immediate repairs and replacement.	
S.24.042	Fullarton Dam - Rehabilitation EA Completion, Recommended Studies & Design	$50,000	July- establish scope Aug- Begin studies Aug- Feb- Prelim design	STUDY – The rehabilitation EA was started in 2022. The EA will be completed, and studies recommended by the EA may be started, to prepare for the implementation of the EA. An application is being submitted for 2025/ 2026 for continuation of the design services. Project S.25.018 is a continuation	

Project ID	Project Title and Structure Name	Estimate of Total Project Cost	Project Timelines and Milestones	Project Description	WECI Database Score Changes
				of this project.	
S.24.037	Embro Dam - Recommended Studies & Design	$50,000	Jul – RFP Aug – Award Sep to Jan – Studies Feb – Report	STUDY - The EA identified the need for undertaking additional studies and work following completion of the EA and prior to implementing the preferred alternative (dam decommissioning). Additional work to be completed includes but may not be limited to additional/ongoing communications with the public (incl. Community Liaison Committee, First Nations, etc.), hydrogeology investigation to consider possible well interference, Archaeology Study Stage 2 and initiate preliminary design work.	
S.24.040	West London Dyke Ph8-13 Design	$300,000	Feb. - Feasibility Study Mar.- RFP Apr.- Proposal Received Jun.- Kickoff meeting Aug.- Preliminary Design Oct.- 50% Detail. Design Dec. 90% Detail. Design	Study (2024/25), Repair (2025/26) - The reconstruction of the West London Dyke was identified as part of the Master Repair Plan EA (2013). The existing structure does not meet stability standards or height requirements to meet regulatory flood level plus freeboard. Work has progressed on phases 1 –7 of the rehabilitation A consultant will complete detailed design for the remaining project phases (8 -13). The Design will be initiated in 2024 with construction being initiated in 2025. The construction of phases (11-13) will be	

Project ID	Project Title and Structure Name	Estimate of Total Project Cost	Project Timelines and Milestones	Project Description	WECI Database Score Changes
				initiated in 2025 and the construction of phases (9&10) will be initiated in 2026.Estimate of the design is $500,000, however, 40% is covered by Infrastructure Canada through the Disaster Mitigation and Adaptation Fund ($200,000) and an application for the remainder is being submitted through WECI. A similar approach is utilized for the subsequent construction costs in 2025/26. Work is expected to continue through 2026/27.	
S.24.033	London Dykes (Coves, Riverview/Evergreen, West London (CP to Beaufort only), Ada-Jacqueline) - Vegetation Management Plans	$25,000	Summer/Fall - site visits Dec to Feb - Report updates	STUDY - The vegetation management plan for London Dykes will be updated to assess vegetation that could be hazardous to the stability of the dykes and the public. Removal of hazardous trees will be completed where feasible. Dykes to be included in the study may include Ada-Jacqueline, Broughdale, Coves, and Riverview/Evergreen (based on similar structure scores).	
S.24.034	London Dykes (Nelson-Clarence, Byron) - Vegetation Management Plans	$10,000	Summer/Fall - site visits Dec to Feb - Report updates	STUDY - The vegetation management plan for London Dykes will be updated to assess vegetation that could be hazardous to the stability of the dykes and the public. Removal of hazardous trees will be completed where feasible. Dykes to be included in the study may include Byron, and Nelson/Clarence (based on similar structure	

Project ID	Project Title and Structure Name	Estimate of Total Project Cost	Project Timelines and Milestones	Project Description	WECI Database Score Changes
				scores).	
R.24.051	Nelson-Clarence Dyke rehabilitation	$15,000	Fall Repairs	REPAIR- During recent inspections it was noticed that there were eroded sections and areas impacted from downed trees. Affected areas to be restored.	
R.24.055	Centreville Dam – Gabion Baskets & Downstream Erosion Repairs	$30,000	Jul – RFP Aug – Award Sep – Complete project	REPAIR – In a recent inspection of the dam identified that scouring was noted along the downstream embankment adjacent to the spillway. erosion protection (gabion baskets, fill, or similar), will be placed to restore the area and reduce further erosion while future work proceeds to assess the Dam Safety and consider rehabilitation alternatives.	

2025-2026 – YEAR 2 - Application Form for the MNRF Water and Erosion Control Infrastructure (WECI) Program

Conservation Authority: Upper Thames River Conservation Authority
Project Contact: Chris Tasker Taskerc@thamesriver.on.ca

Project ID	Project Title and Structure Name	Estimate of Total Project Cost	Project Timelines and Milestones	Project Description	WECI Database Score Changes
As assigned in the WECI Inventory Database	Provide a short title that describes the project and includes the specific structure name associated with the project	An estimate of the "Total" project cost. This is the total cost using local, municipal, and provincial funding to complete the entire project	Anticipated project activities, schedule, timelines, and milestones. For example: Jul. – Tender Aug. – Award & Startup Sept. – In-Water Work Dec. – Draft Report Feb. – Final Report	Indicate the type of project: REPAIR, STUDY, SAFETY or REMOVAL Describe the project: how the project was identified (e.g., plan, study, strategy, inspection); the condition of the structure; part of the structure requiring study/repair; reason or rationale for study/repair; proposed project work to complete the study/repair	Describe any score changes that need to be made to the database
S.25.032	Wildwood Dam - Piezometer Installation and Stability Analysis	$60,000	Aug to Dec – Stability Analysis Jan – Draft Report Feb – Final Report	STUDY - Continuation of S.24.031 The DSR completed in 2023 by KGS Group recommended installation of piezometers and completion of a stability analysis on concrete abutment walls and wingwalls. A consultant will be engaged to complete the analysis based on data collected from the piezometers installed in 2024.	
R.25.034	Wildwood Dam – Safety Boom	$865,000	May – Tender Jun – Award & Startup Jul – Fabrication Oct – Install	SAFETY – The DSR completed in 2023 by KGS Group recommended a safety boom be implemented in the reservoir on the upstream side of the dam as a priority. A consultant will be engaged to perform design services in	

Project ID	Project Title and Structure Name	Estimate of Total Project Cost	Project Timelines and Milestones	Project Description	WECI Database Score Changes
				2024/25 (S.24.041) and work will proceed to supply and installation as part of this project in 2025/26.	
R.25.023	Pittock Dam - Safety Boom	$865,000	May- Tender June- Award & Startup July- Fabrication Feb- Completion	STUDY - The DSR completed in 2023 by KGS Group recommended a safety boom be implemented in the reservoir on the upstream side of the dam as a priority. A consultant will be engaged to perform design services in 2024/25 (S.24.020) and work will proceed to supply and installation as part of this project in 2025/26.	
R.25.035	R Thomas Orr Dam – Wingwall Tiebacks	$175,000	April To Oct – construction Jan – Report	REPAIR - Continuation of R.23.078. The installation of tie-back at the upstream and downstream wingwalls at the dam was identified as the most cost-effective and practical alternative for remediation of the tilting wingwalls at the dam, by AECOM (2018). The tiebacks will decrease the risks of sliding and overturning at the upstream side, as well as reduce the structural load at the downstream side.	
R.25.036	R Thomas Orr Dam - Gate Painting	$110,000	Oct to Jan – Repair 2nd gate Feb – Complete project	REPAIR – Continuation of R.24.054. Orr DSR identified repairing and repainting (severely corroded) and conducting thickness measurements as a ‘High priority’ item in the	

Project ID	Project Title and Structure Name	Estimate of Total Project Cost	Project Timelines and Milestones	Project Description	WECI Database Score Changes
				recommendations. A contractor will be engaged to remove the gates, transport those off-site, and perform repairs. Work will be completed on one gate at a time, between 2024 to 2026.	
R.25.037	R Thomas Orr Dam - geotechnical investigations	$50,000	Mar to Dec – Analysis Feb – Final Report	STUDY – Continuation of R.24.035. During the 2023/24 Dam safety review (2023) completed by KGS Group, the consultant pointed out the lack of information regarding the subsurface conditions at the dam. As part of the related 2024 project, two boreholes will be drilled to establish the mechanical parameters, two piezometers were to be installed to monitor the groundwater conditions. This project will use the data collected in the previous project to complete the geotechnical investigations.	
R.25.038	R Thomas Orr Dam - Emergency Power	$75,000	Apr – RFQ May – Project Award July – Install	REPAIR - An emergency backup generator is required for the operation and monitoring of the dam during power failures. Orr Dam is operated automatically in response to reservoir water levels which can respond quickly to runoff events. Currently, during a power failure, staff must be dispatched to the site to confirm current conditions and if necessary, hook up a gas-powered motor to hoist the gate hoists,	

Project ID	Project Title and Structure Name	Estimate of Total Project Cost	Project Timelines and Milestones	Project Description	WECI Database Score Changes
				significantly delaying the operations in response to quickly responding reservoir water levels. This project would allow for the supply and installation of an emergency generator and transfer switch to allow for the continued monitoring and operation of the dam during a power failure and eliminate concerns about worker training and safety in the use of the gas engine.	
S.25.019	Mitchell Dam – Geotechnical Investigations	$50,000	Oct – Feb - Analysis Feb – Final Report	STUDY - Continuation of S.24.036. The DSR was started in 2023 and is being completed by KGS Group. It is anticipated that additional work may be required in 2024 in order to complete it. This work will likely include the installation of boreholes and piezometers, and soil analysis to establish the soil parameters in 2024/25; and a subsequent stability assessment in 2025/26 based on the information collected.	
S.25.018	Fullarton Dam – Continuation of Design	$60,000	Apr- Feb- Continuation of design work	STUDY – Continuation of S.24.042. The rehabilitation EA was started in 2022. This phase will continue to work on the design to prepare for construction.	

Project ID	Project Title and Structure Name	Estimate of Total Project Cost	Project Timelines and Milestones	Project Description	WECI Database Score Changes
S.25.029	Embro Dam - Recommended Studies & Design	$60,000	Mar – RFP Apr to Dec – Studies Feb – Final Report	STUDY – This project is a continuation of project S.24.037. The EA identified the need for additional studies and work after completion of the EA and before implementing the preferred alternative (dam decommissioning). Additional work to be completed includes but may not be limited to: additional/ongoing communications with the public (incl. Community Liaison Committee, First Nations, etc), hydrogeology investigation, Archaeology Study Stage 2 and preliminary design work. This project will continue the design work from the previous phase.	
R.25.017	West London Dyke Ph8-13 Construction	$3,500,000	Jan.-100% Detailed Design Jan.- Tender & Award April-Stg.1-Const. Begins Nov.-Stg.1-Const. Ends	Study (2024/25), Repair (2025/26) - The reconstruction of the West London Dyke was identified as part of the Master Repair Plan EA (2013). The existing structure does not meet stability standards or height requirements to meet regulatory flood level plus freeboard. Work has progressed on phases (1 –7) of the rehabilitation and substantially completed. A consultant will complete detailed design for the remaining project phases (8 - 13). The Design will be initiated in 2024 with construction	

Project ID	Project Title and Structure Name	Estimate of Total Project Cost	Project Timelines and Milestones	Project Description	WECI Database Score Changes
				being initiated in 2025. The construction of phases (11 - 13) will be initiated in 2025 and the construction of phases (9 & 10) will be initiated in 2026.Estimate of the design is $500,000, however, 40% is covered by Infrastructure Canada through the Disaster Mitigation and Adaptation Fund ($200,000) and an application for the remainder is being submitted through WECI. A similar approach is utilized for the subsequent construction costs in 2025/26. Work is expected to continue through 2026/27.	
S.25.020	Dorchester Conservation Area - Rehabilitation EA (phase 1)	$50,000	April- RFP May- Award June- Feb- EA Investigations Feb- Baseline Report	STUDY- Dam safety reviews (2007) and additional geotechnical investigations indicated major repairs, replacement, or decommissioning of the Dam be considered. An environmental assessment will be initiated to evaluate the project's impact on the natural, social, economic and cultural environment. The work proposed in 2025/26 includes the collection of background data to establish the existing environmental conditions in preparation for an EA to assess rehabilitation alternatives.	

Project ID	Project Title and Structure Name	Estimate of Total Project Cost	Project Timelines and Milestones	Project Description	WECI Database Score Changes
R.25.056	Dorchester Mill Pond - Public Safety	$25,000	April- PSA and PSP June- Sept- Implement safety measures	SAFETY - Railings across the dam spillway were upgraded last year to meet current standards. This proposed safety work will complete a Public Safety Assessment and Plan; supply and installation of recommended signs; and additional improvements to safety railings and fencing.	

UPPER THAMES RIVER
CONSERVATION AUTHORITY

MEMO

To: UTRCA Board of Directors
From: Tracy Annett
Date: June 12, 2024
File Number: BoD-06-24-51
Agenda #: 6.3
Subject: Watershed Strategy and Strategic Plan Consultation

Recommendation

THAT the Board direct staff to begin municipal, partner, interest holder, and public consultation on the UTRCA Watershed-based Resource Management Strategy (Draft June, 2024) ("Watershed Strategy") and UTRCA Strategic Plan.

Background

The UTRCA has prepared the draft Watershed Strategy to meet the requirements for a Watershed–based Resource Management Strategy as set out under Section 21.1 of the Conservation Authorities Act (CA Act) and Ontario Regulation 686/21 (Mandatory Programs and Services). The goal of the Watershed Strategy is to ensure that the UTRCA's programs and services address watershed issues and priorities and reflect the organization's mandate under the CA Act.

The strategy sets out the UTRCA's guiding principles and objectives and outlines the conservation authority's programs and services. In 2024, these programs and services were organized into the following three categories, to conform with new legislative requirements:

- Mandatory Programs and Services – Category 1,
- Municipal Programs and Services – Category 2,
- Other Programs and Services – Category 3.

The Watershed Strategy is intended to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the mandatory programs and services and, where relevant agreements allow, the municipal and other programs and services.

Draft Watershed Strategy

The Watershed Strategy provides the context and rationale for the UTRCA's programs and identifies future directions. The main audiences for the Strategy are the Board and senior staff at participating municipalities, as funders of the UTRCA's programs.

After the engagement period, staff will report back on the Actions and Implementation Plan to achieve the Watershed Strategy. Implementation costs will also be provided, and the Inventory of Programs and Services updated. On-going monitoring, reporting, and updating will be required.

Strategic Plan

A consultant will be hired to update the UTRCA's Strategic Plan, as the UTRCA's Environmental Targets Strategic Plan (2016) pre-dates the major changes in the Conservation Authorities Act. It is expected the scope of the work required to update the Strategic Plan work will be reduced as much of the efforts to develop the draft Watershed Strategy complement the Strategic Plan.

The table below identifies how the components of the Strategic Plan and the draft Watershed Strategy align.

Components	Strategic Plan	Watershed Strategy
Vision	Vision	Vision
Guiding principles	Guiding principles	Guiding principles
Mission	Mission	Mission
Objectives and program areas	Strategic priorities	Objectives and program areas: - People and talent - Organization sustainability and innovation - Natural hazards management - Drinking water source protection - Science and stewardship - Conservation areas and nature - Empowerment and engagement
Characterization	Undertake environmental scan	Assess challenges, issues, and risks
Actions	Identify actions that will progress the plan	Identify actions to implement the strategy, and costs
Implementation	Implement the Plan	Implement the Strategy
Measure progress	Targets	Watershed reporting, metrics, timelines, and accountability to achieve results and measure success
Review and update	Review and update	Review and update

The Watershed Strategy and the Strategic Plan are both scheduled to be completed by the end of 2024.

Recommended by:

Tracy Annett, General Manager

Tara Tchir, Watershed Science Coordinator

Teresa Hollingsworth, Manager Community and Corporate Services

Attachment

UTRCA Watershed-based Resource Management Strategy (Draft, June 2024)

Upper Thames River Conservation Authority

Watershed-based Resource Management Strategy

Draft, June 2024

UPPER THAMES RIVER
CONSERVATION AUTHORITY

The Watershed and Traditional Territory

The Upper Thames River watershed is within the traditional territory of the Attawandaron, Anishinaabeg, Haudenosaunee, and Lunaapeewak peoples, who have longstanding relationships to the land, water, and region of southwestern Ontario.

The local First Nation communities of this area include Chippewas of the Thames First Nation, Oneida Nation of the Thames, Munsee Delaware Nation, and Delaware Nation at Moraviantown. In the region, there are 11 First Nation communities and a growing Indigenous urban population.

We value the significant historical and contemporary contributions of local and regional First Nations and all of the Original peoples of Turtle Island (North America).

Upper Thames River Conservation Authority Watershed-based Resource Management Strategy, published by:

Upper Thames River Conservation Authority, 1424 Clarke Road, London, Ontario, N5V 5B9 (phone 519-451-2800, email infoline@thamesriver.on.ca, website www.thamesriver.on.ca)

For more information or for a copy of this guide in an alternative format, please contact the UTRCA at 519-451-2800 or infoline@thamesriver.on.ca.

Cite as:

Upper Thames River Conservation Authority. 2024. Upper Thames River Conservation Authority Watershed-based Resource Management Strategy.

Table of Contents

Figures and Maps

1.0 Introduction

The Upper Thames River Conservation Authority (UTRCA) is a community-based environmental organization dedicated to achieving a healthy environment on behalf of the municipalities in the Upper Thames River watershed. Established in 1947 at the request of its member watershed municipalities, the UTRCA was the sixth conservation authority formed under the Conservation Authorities Act (CA Act).

The UTRCA administers its programs and services within a 3,430 square kilometre area, based on the upper watershed of the Thames River in southwestern Ontario. (Map 1). The UTRCA is governed by a Board of Directors comprised of 15 members representing 17 participating municipalities, with a population of approximately 594,000. Representation on the board is outlined in a provincial Order-in-Council.

Water and other natural resources are vital natural assets that help manage climate change impacts. The watershed's resources mitigate natural hazards, filter contaminants, assimilate waste, sustain biodiversity, and provide green spaces for recreation and other community benefits. Resource management decisions must be transparent and consider a broad range of community uses, needs, and values, including ecosystem needs.

1.1 Watershed Strategy Development

The UTRCA has prepared this Watershed Strategy to meet the requirements for a Watershed–based Resource Management Strategy as set out under Section 21.1 of the Conservation Authorities Act (CA Act) and Ontario Regulation 686/21 (Mandatory Programs and Services). The goal of the Watershed Strategy is to ensure that the UTRCA's programs and services address watershed issues and priorities and reflect the organization's mandate under the CA Act.

1.2 Categories of Programs and Services

The strategy sets out the UTRCA's guiding principles and objectives and outlines the conservation authority's programs and services. In 2024, these programs and services were reorganized into the following three categories, with specific funding and budgetary restrictions, to conform with new legislative requirements:

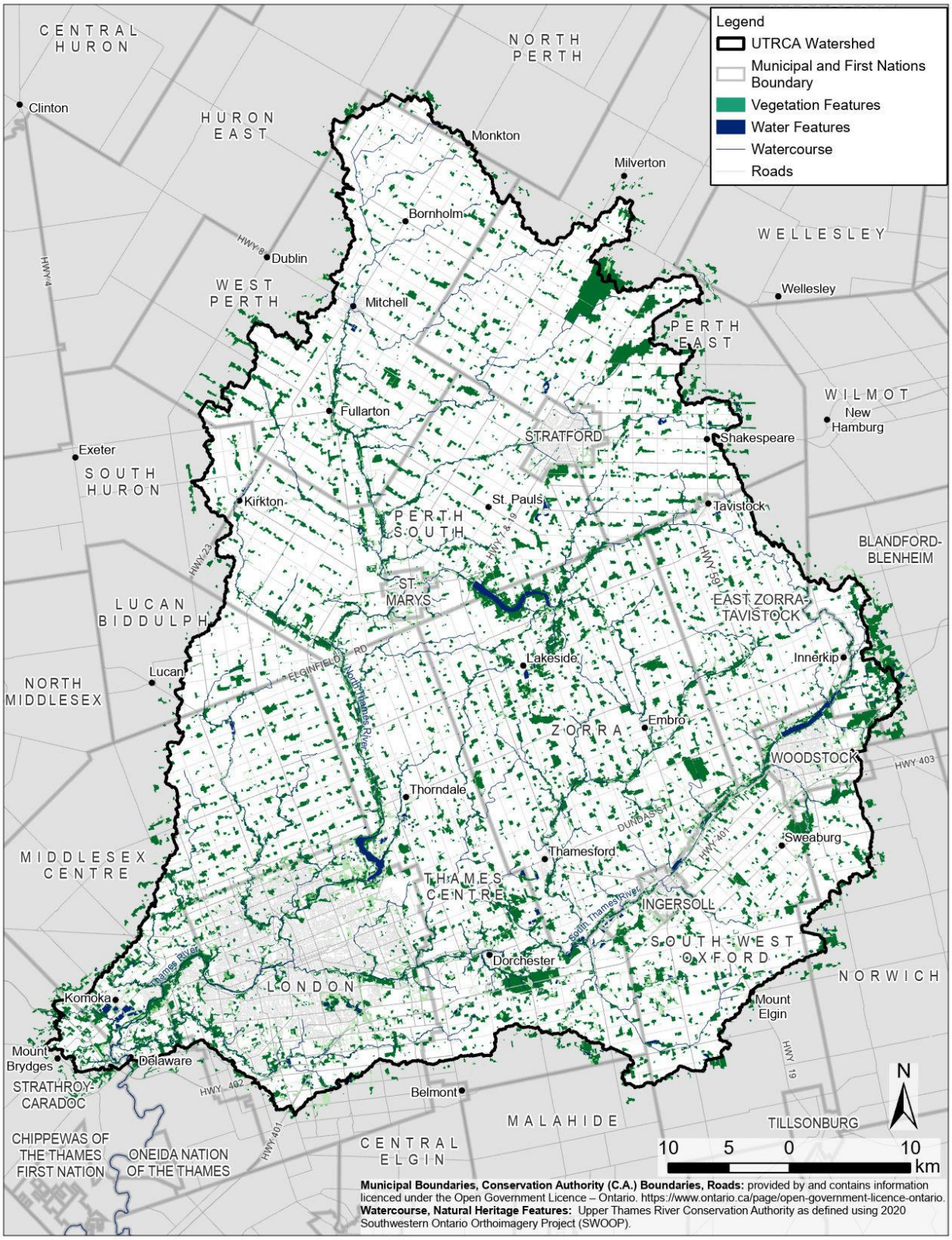
- Mandatory Programs and Services (Category 1): The UTRCA delivers mandatory programs and services as set out in the CA Act and Regulation 686/21. These programs and services are funded through provincial funding, municipal levy, and municipal special benefitting levies, with user fees for some services.
- Municipal Programs and Services (Category 2): UTRCA delivers some programs and services specifically on behalf of its member municipalities. Agreements have

been established with the participating municipalities to fund those specific programs and services.

- Other Programs and Services (Category 3): UTRCA delivers other programs and services that are not considered mandatory or municipal. These programs are funded through municipal agreements and/or self-generated funds. They are part of a larger integrated watershed management model and directly support, contribute to, and enhance the delivery of mandatory and municipal programs and services, as well as influencing watershed health and contributing to UTRCA knowledge and expertise.

The Watershed Strategy is intended to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the mandatory programs and services and, where relevant agreements allow, the municipal and other programs and services.

Through outreach with watershed municipalities, Indigenous communities, interest holders, and the public, the UTRCA's Watershed Strategy updates the inventory of programs and services, assessing resource conditions, trends, risks, and issues that impact the effective delivery of its mandatory and municipal programs and services. It also identifies desirable future programs, services, and actions that will assist the UTRCA in delivering its mandatory and municipal programs and services and meet its objectives and long-term goals.



Map 1. Upper Thames River Watershed

2.0 Vision, Guiding Principles, Mission, and Objectives

The UTRCA's past Strategic Plans have outlined priorities, organizational commitments, and environmental goals. The Strategic Plan directs the Watershed Strategy by providing the conservation authority's vision and mission, as well as guiding principles, objectives, and targets. These strategic directions may be refined as the UTRCA's Strategic Plan is updated in 2024 and input received through the consultation process.

2.1 Vision

Inspiring a Healthy Environment.

2.2 Guiding Principles

Guiding principles establish the fundamental approach that drives UTRCA's decision-making and informs the design and delivery of its mandatory programs and services.

We believe:

- That sound development and resource management decisions are best made in an integrated watershed context to achieve a healthy and sustainable environment.
- That a healthy natural heritage system and water resource system provide the foundation of a sustainable and resilient community and provide nature-based solutions to challenges posed by climate change.
- In a collaborative approach that involves the community in our decision making and programs through direct community participation, successful partnerships, and effective communications and educational initiatives.
- In being accountable and transparent to all our interest holders for the decisions made, the effectiveness of our communications, and being fiscally responsible with the resources provided and the outcomes achieved.
- In offering valued programs, services, and experiences that respond to the needs and interests of the people served in a respectful and timely manner.
- That science-based decision making and adaptive management will allow us to ensure that our programs and services continue to protect people, property, and natural resources for generations to come.

2.3 Mission

Dedicated to achieving a healthy environment, on behalf of the watershed municipalities, by:

- Leading through expertise, diversity, and accountability,
- Supporting sustainable organizational practices and policies,

- Protecting people and property from flood and erosion hazards and supporting safe development,
- Protecting and enhancing water quality and a sustainable water supply,
- Making science-based decisions and delivering landowner stewardship,
- Providing natural spaces and recreational opportunities,
- Empowering communities and youth.

2.4 Objectives and Program Areas

The UTRCA's seven objectives represent how we are going to achieve the mission. Each objective has multiple program areas.

The objectives inform the design and delivery of the UTRCA's mandatory programs and services, as well as the municipal and other programs and services that are considered essential to the support and delivery of the mandatory programs and services.

2.4.1 Objective: People and Talent

Providing and managing an efficient, adaptable, and trusted organization with a strong and skilled workforce and a culture of diversity, equity, and inclusion, contributing to responsive relationships, transparent decision making, and accountable results.

Program Area	Category of Programs and Services
Corporate Services	Mandatory (Category 1)
Governance	Mandatory (Category 1)

2.4.2 Objective: Organizational Sustainability and Innovation

Implement organizational practices that are socially, environmentally, and economically sustainable, adaptive, and responsible.

Program Area	Category of Programs and Services
Asset and Risk Management	Mandatory (Category 1)
Technology and Information Management	Mandatory (Category 1)
Financial Management	Mandatory (Category 1)

2.4.3 Objective: Natural Hazards Management

Protect people, property, and natural resources while supporting safe development that is in balance with the natural environment.

Program Area	Category of Programs and Services
Flood and Erosion Control Infrastructure	Mandatory (Category 1)
Natural Hazard Mapping	Mandatory (Category 1)
Flood Forecasting and Warning	Mandatory (Category 1)
Low Water Response	Mandatory (Category 1)

Program Area	Category of Programs and Services
Environmental Planning	Mandatory (Category 1)
Environmental Regulations	Mandatory (Category 1)

2.4.4 Objective: Drinking Water Source Protection

Protect municipal drinking water sources from contamination and overuse.

Program Area	Category of Programs and Services
Drinking Water Source Protection (DWSP) Source Protection Authority	Mandatory (Category 1)
DWSP Risk Management Services	Municipal (Category 2)

2.4.5 Objective: Science and Stewardship

Use environmental science, collaborative research, and data to inform stewardship and restoration activities that protect ecosystem integrity and resilience.

Program Area	Category of Programs and Services
Monitoring - Provincial Water Quality Monitoring Network	Mandatory (Category 1)
Monitoring - Provincial Groundwater Monitoring Network	Mandatory (Category 1)
Monitoring - Municipal Subwatersheds	Municipal (Category 2)
Reforestation, Restoration, and Enhancement	Other (Category 3)
Agricultural Stewardship	Other (Category 3)
Monitoring – Other Programs	Other (Category 3)
Inventories and Research	Other (Category 3)

2.4.6 Objective: Conservation Areas and Nature

Enhance and maintain our network of parks and greenspaces to protect the watershed's ecological integrity, promote a connected natural heritage system, and provide experiences that connect people with nature.

Program Area	Category of Programs and Services
Conservation Authority Lands	Mandatory (Category 1)
Municipal Lands Management	Municipal (Category 2)
Conservation Areas	Other (Category 3)

2.4.7 Objective: Empowerment and Engagement

Inspire action by fostering an appreciation of our environment through leading edge educational programming, outreach opportunities, and outdoor experiences.

Program Area	Category of Programs and Services
Community Engagement and Outreach	Other (Category 3)

Program Area	Category of Programs and Services
Community Education	Other (Category 3)
Community Partnerships	Other (Category 3)

The supporting watershed strategy background document describes the programs and services within each program area in more detail, and provides a comprehensive list of studies, strategies, and plans that support them. Figure 1 presents the seven objectives and the program areas within each objective.

Figure 1. UTRCA Objectives and Program Areas

3.0 The Upper Thames River Watershed

3.1 Indigenous Communities

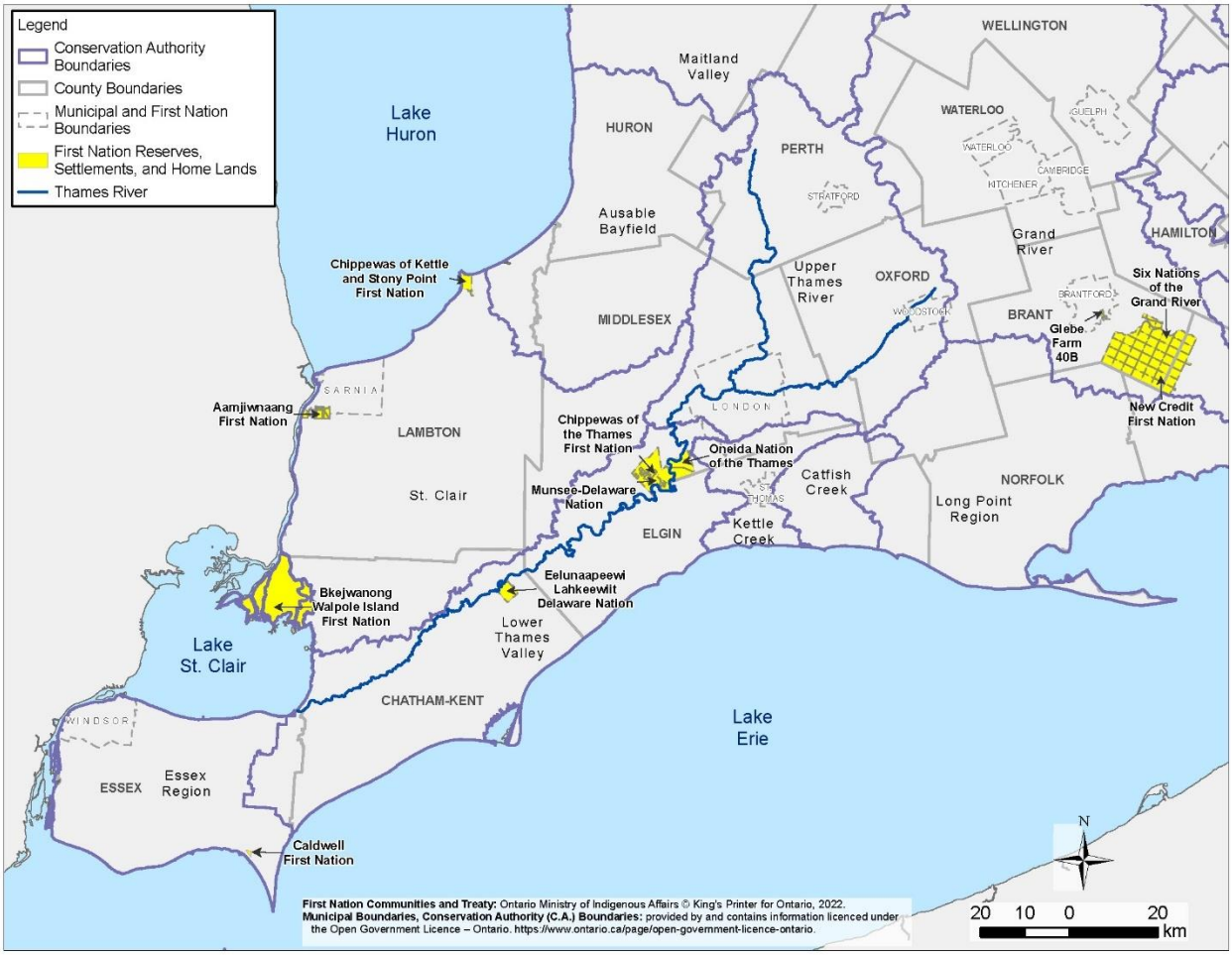
3.1.1 First Nations and Traditional Territories

The following is what we understand to be a very general overview of the First Nations in the entire Thames River watershed. This understanding is not necessarily comprehensive or definitive.

In the region, there are 11 First Nation Reserves, Settlements, and Home Lands (Map 2) and a growing Indigenous urban population. Many of the nations in these Reserves, Settlements and Home Lands are also signatories to the treaties covering the watershed (Section 4.1.2):

- Aamjiwnaang First Nation,
- Bkejwanong Territory Walpole Island First Nation,
- Caldwell First Nation,
- Chippewas of Kettle and Stony Point First Nation,
- Chippewas of the Thames First Nation,
- Eelünaapéewi Lahkéewiit (Delaware Nation at Moraviantown),
- Glebe Farm*,
- Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation (reserve is known as New Credit),
- Munsee-Delaware Nation,
- Oneida Nation of the Thames,
- Six Nations of the Grand River*.

*Glebe Farm and Six Nations of the Grand River are shared reserves that include all six Haudenosaunee nations (Mohawk, Cayuga, Onondaga, Oneida, Seneca, and Tuscarora). Lenape (Lunaapeew) People (also known as Delaware) live on these reserves as well.



Map 2. First Nation Communities near the Upper Thames River Watershed

The following First Nation Peoples have lived in this region since before the Europeans arrived:

- the Anishinaabek (Aamjiwnaang First Nation, Bkejwanong Walpole Island First Nation, Chippewas of the Thames First Nation, Chippewas of Kettle and Stony Point First Nation, Caldwell First Nation, and Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation),
- the Haudenosaunee (Oneida Nation of the Thames as well as Mohawk, Cayuga, Onondaga, Oneida, Seneca, and Tuscarora nations now at Glebe Farm 40B and Six Nations of the Grand River), and
- the Wendat (Huron).

Chippewas of the Thames First Nation, Oneida Nation of the Thames, Eelünaapéewi Lahkéewiit (Delaware Nation at Moraviantown), and Munsee-Delaware Nation settled permanently along the banks of the Thames between the 1780s and 1840s (Map 2). Delaware Nation at Moraviantown and Munsee-Delaware Nation are both settlements of

the Lenape (Lunaapeew) People. All four First Nation communities have maintained a strong Indigenous presence along the Thames River.

The Anishinaabek People refer to the Thames River as Deshkan Ziibi (Antler River in Ojibwe / Anishinaabemowin language). The river has also been called Askunessippi (Antlered River) by the Neutrals and La Tranchée (later, La Tranche, which means the Trench) by early French explorers, settlers, and fur traders. In 1793, Lieutenant Governor John Graves Simcoe named the river the Thames River after the River Thames in England.

First Nations have a strong cultural and spiritual connection to water (Swain, Louttit, and Hrudey 2006). With this relationship come responsibilities that are described in the Water Declaration of the Anishinaabek, Mushkegowuk, and Onkwehonwe (Chiefs of Ontario 2008), which was written to support First Nation communities in protecting the waters from contamination.

3.1.2 Treaties

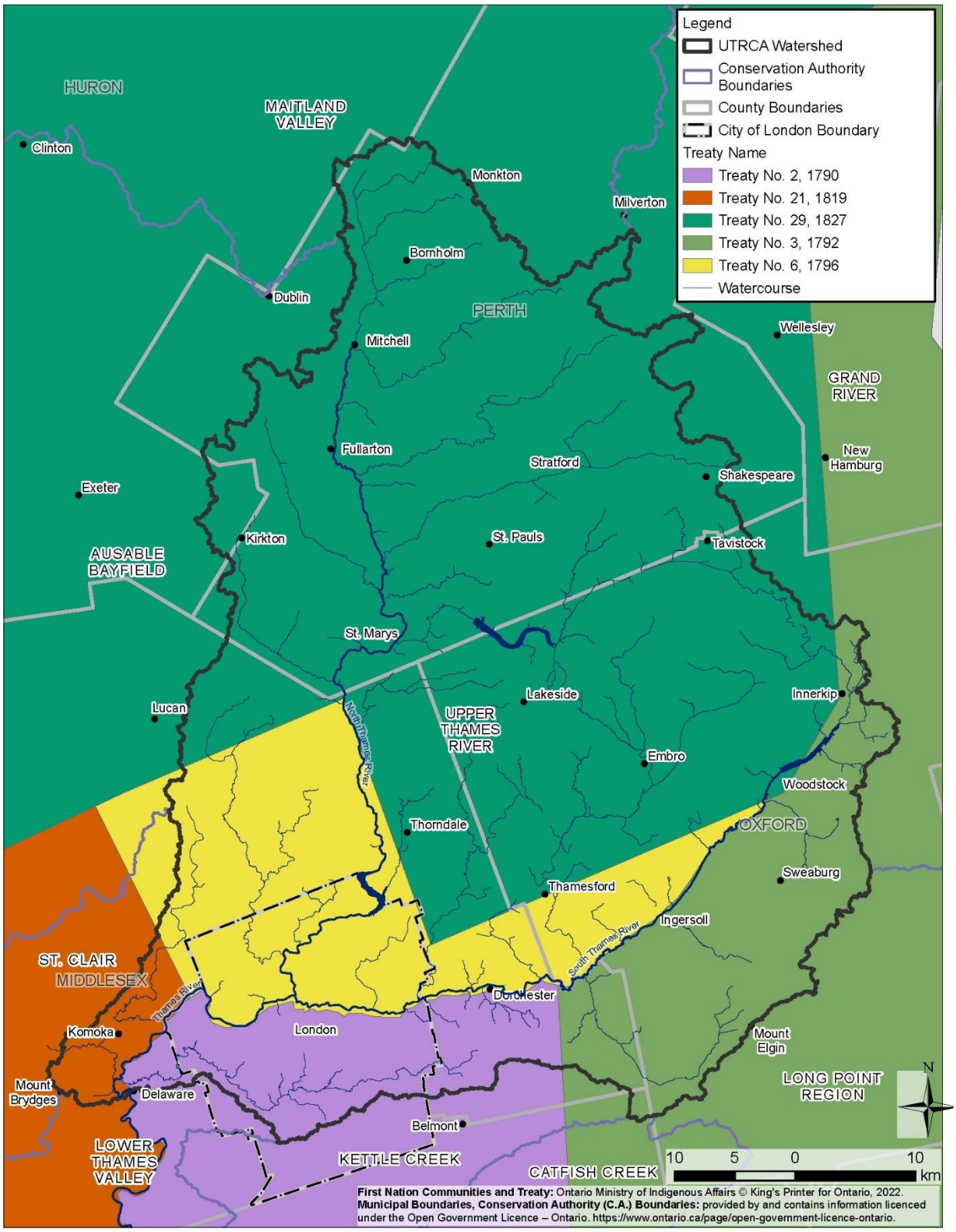
The Upper Thames River watershed is covered by the following Upper Canada Treaties (Map 3):

- Treaty 2, 1790: The McKee Purchase, signed with various First Nations,
- Treaty 3, 1792: The Between the Lakes Purchase and Collins Purchase, signed with Mississauga peoples,
- Treaty 6, 1796: The Chenail Écarté Treaty and the London Township Purchase, signed with Anishinaabe peoples,
- Treaty 21, 1819: The Long Woods Purchase, signed with Anishinaabe peoples,
- Treaty 29, 1827: The Huron Tract Purchase, signed with Anishinaabe peoples.

It is important to note that Caldwell First Nation was not present when the treaties were being signed because they already had a verbal agreement in place.

Other important treaties include:

- 1794 Treaty of Amity, Commerce and Navigation, or Jay Treaty, between Britain and the United States, which allows Indigenous people from Canada to live and work freely in the United States; and
- 1701 Nanfan Treaty or Fort Albany Treaty, which gave the Iroquois permanent hunting rights in southwest Ontario.



Map 3. Southwestern Ontario Treaties and the Upper Thames River Watershed

3.1.3 Other Indigenous Communities

While there are no Métis or Inuit settlements in or near the UTRCA watershed, the conservation authority has engaged with local members of the Métis community as opportunities present themselves.

3.2 Watershed Characterization

The Upper Thames River watershed is situated in a highly developed and highly agricultural part of southern Ontario (Map 1). The water and forests in this region face ongoing pressure from urban and rural land uses. Despite these pressures, the Thames remains one of the most biologically diverse rivers in Canada, and the Upper Thames River watershed is home to 80 species of fish, 30 freshwater mussel species, and many species at risk. The entire Thames River system, including tributaries, is designated a Canadian Heritage River.

There has been growing interest from watershed residents, municipalities, and agencies in understanding the health of the watersheds in which they live, and the larger Thames River watershed. There is an ongoing need for clear environmental information to support our understanding of the issues and inform decision-making.

The Thames River watershed has been studied extensively over many decades. Some of the major watershed reports and plans include the following:

- The Thames Valley (Above the City of London) Report 1946,
- Upper Thames Valley Conservation Report (1952),
- Twenty-Five Years of Conservation on the Upper Thames Watershed, 1947 – 1973,
- Water Management Study for the Thames River Basin (1975),
- Thames River Watershed Background Study for Nomination under the Canadian Heritage Rivers System (1998),
- Thames-Sydenham and Region Watershed Characterization Summary Report (2008),
- Thames River (Deshkan Ziibi) Shared Waters Approach to Water Quality and Quantity (2019), and
- Upper Thames River Watershed Report Cards (published every 5 years since 2001).

These documents are among the technical studies, monitoring programs, and other natural resources information that directly inform and support the UTRCA’s program and service delivery.

4.0 Challenges, Issues, and Risks

UTRCA has identified many challenges, issues, and risks in the watershed that may influence program priorities and services and/or impact the effective delivery of mandatory programs and services. Challenges, issues, and risks were considered for the watershed and for the delivery of UTRCA programs and services. These complex, interrelated, generational problems will require coordinated multi-party and multi-jurisdictional actions and innovative funding solutions.

4.1 Watershed Challenges, Issues, and Risks

4.1.1 Climate Variability and Change

Climate change is the most significant environmental challenge occurring today, complicating the prediction of future risks and the long-term impacts of decisions made today. Climate change has had many impacts on the natural and built environment, the most notable of which are due to changes in precipitation, temperature, and wind patterns, resulting in rising temperatures, more frequent and intense precipitation events, and more extreme storm events.

4.1.2 Land Cover, Land Use Change, and Increased Development Pressure

Growth pressure from the London area and, to a lesser extent, some of the other larger municipalities in the watershed (e.g., Komoka, St. Marys, and Woodstock) is resulting in increased development in the UTRCA watershed. Development pressures include the clearing of forested land for agriculture and urban growth, the loss of family farms to large landholdings by companies and/or corporations, destruction of wetlands, installation of tile drains on farmland, urban expansion, intensification, and redevelopment of seasonal-use properties to permanent residences, as well as road expansion. Industrial pressures include aggregate extraction, forestry and logging activities, large factories, landfills, and agricultural land use. These development and industrial pressures have reduced the land's natural water absorption and retention abilities, impacting land and water resources and sensitive areas.

4.1.3 Water Quality

Healthy river ecosystems rely on clean water. The average water quality in a river tends to change slowly. A changing climate that results in longer or more frequent wet or dry periods will affect water quality in each river differently depending on its regional characteristics. How people develop and use the surrounding land also impacts how quickly water quality changes. Water quality is generally good or excellent in undeveloped areas where native plants, trees, and soils purify the water before it reaches the river. Altered landscapes, industrial and sewage effluents, and atmospheric

deposition of chemicals can all affect water quality. Fertilizers, pesticides, and manure from livestock used to help crops grow can wash into nearby rivers or seep into groundwater, impacting water quality in those areas. Removing trees and other vegetation, which reduce the flow of surface water into rivers, may increase run-off of nutrients and contaminants into rivers.

4.1.3.1 Phosphorus and Harmful Algal Blooms

The Thames River has experienced excess levels of nutrients for decades, resulting in nutrient enrichment in the river system and contributing to algal blooms in Lakes Erie and St. Clair, and in the Thames River and tributaries (Shared Waters Approach 2019). Phosphorus is the primary nutrient that promotes excess growth of aquatic plants and algae and is correlated to sediment transport. Therefore, sediment transport and erosion are also of concern in several subwatersheds. In recent years, phosphorus has promoted the growth of blooms including cyanobacteria species such as Microcystis, which can produce a toxin that impairs drinking water, aquatic life, and recreational uses.

4.1.3.2 Contaminants of Emerging Concern

Contaminants of Emerging Concern (CECs) in groundwater and surface water include synthetic sweeteners, pharmaceutical and personal care products, pesticides, stimulants, and per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances. A number of CECs have proven to be persistent, bioaccumulative, and toxic, raising significant environmental and health concerns (Environment and Climate Change Canada and Health Canada, 2023).

CECs have been detected in urban surface waters and in sediment, and these compound mixtures become increasingly complex downstream. Stormwater could be an important source of CECs, either from agricultural or urban areas. Agricultural runoff has been reported to include several active use pesticides associated with crop applications in the region as well as veterinary medicines associated with animal husbandry. The human and ecological health consequences of environmental exposure to persistent CECs, particularly as complex mixtures, is not well understood.

4.1.4 Altered Water Flow Regimes

How water moves across the watershed impacts the number of people and amount of infrastructure at risk. Altered water flow can result from in-stream activities such as drain cleanouts and vegetation removal, infilling, enclosures, channelization, and watercourse barriers. It can also result from natural processes such as climate change, which can alter the ecologically important aspects of a river's flow (i.e., low flows, high flow pulses, and floods).

4.1.5 Recreational Pressure

During the COVID-19 pandemic, nature became more important to than ever to the wellbeing of individuals and communities. Locally, there has been an increase in public awareness of and interest in the health of our local rivers, forests, natural areas, and wildlife. Conservation areas and other public natural areas have seen record numbers of visitors; a trend which has continued.

The recent, large increase in visitation to UTRCA parks and natural areas can have a negative impact on the health of those natural spaces if usage is not managed and mitigated. The watershed's increasing urban population also puts more pressure on urban and near-urban green spaces.

4.1.6 Invasive Species and Environmental Diseases / Pests

Non-native invasive species, diseases, and pathogens are on the rise in the watershed due to the loss of vegetation and the increase in disturbances, as well as from introduction into the watershed from international trade and exchange of plant material. Invasive species, both terrestrial and aquatic, compete with and displace native species, impacting the diversity of native species and the health of local ecosystems. Ultimately, invasive species change the services and benefits that natural areas provide by affecting the intricate linkages that make ecosystems strong and resilient. The increased management (e.g., project planning and monitoring) and operational costs to control invasive species can result in major economic impacts on individual landowners and municipalities.

4.1.7 Environmental Injustice

Less well-resourced communities shoulder a disproportionate burden of environmental hazards, impacts of climate change, and pollution. This burden includes increased exposure to and reduced awareness of environmental hazards, as well as lack of access to safe and affordable water and healthy greenspace. Policies and practices often result in low-income and unhoused in close proximity to polluting facilities or to infrastructure such as major highways and bridges. Furthermore, the increase in new Canadians and unhoused/homelessness in the watershed present challenges in communicating information about hazards due to language barriers, lack of access to media, and competing priorities.

4.1.8 Disconnection from Nature

The connection between people and nature informs decision-making, stimulates positive action, and optimizes the benefits people and communities receive from nature. However, for some people there are barriers that can lead to a disconnection from nature, including economic, social, and geographic barriers. For new Canadians, the difference between real versus perceived hazards, as well as language barriers, can

lead to hazardous scenarios around water and in cold weather. There may also be beliefs about the safety of certain natural environments and different rules and norms around cultural practices (e.g., ceremony, angling, foraging, and hunting for food in natural areas).

4.2 UTRCA Resource Challenges, Issues, and Risks

4.2.1 Regulatory and Other Legislative Changes

The conservation authority must respond to provincial legislative and regulatory changes. These changes can occur with very little notice or consultation and can include changes to powers and financial tools conservation authorities use to oversee and protect watersheds, leading to increased risks to life and property. These changes can limit the financial and staffing resources that conservation authorities can devote to services that support but are outside of mandatory programs and services. Sometimes regulatory changes are accompanied by budget cuts, which can leave unexpected budget shortages that result in a restructuring of finances or delivery of programs.

4.2.2 Sustainable Funding

Conservation authority programs and services help the province and other levels of government to address environmental challenges and priorities such as climate change impacts, healthy Great Lakes, urbanization and growth, healthy people, and a sustainable economy. Many of these programs and activities require long-term, sustainable, and dependable funding to ensure quality programming and retain staff expertise. However, many of these activities, which carry out the work that is the responsibility of the government / municipality, are controlled by contractual relationships that affect the ability to adequately carry out these activities. Furthermore, there has been a shift from core funding to project funding, setting up a culture of competition for resources, as well as an audit and surveillance culture, that can challenge the ability to address the environmental challenges.

It is a challenge for conservation authorities to ensure a steady flow of funds for executing their projects and programs. It is worth noting that the provincial allocation to support provincially mandated flood management responsibilities had not increased since the mid-1990s and was further reduced by half in 2019. How conservation authorities can levy municipalities and charge fees is specified in regulations. Shortfalls are covered through self-generated funding or government grants and contracts, which are not guaranteed or long-term. Furthermore, inflation has significantly increased the costs of programs and services. This situation presents a challenge to continuing project activities and sustaining project outcomes after the initial or primary grant (funding) expires.

4.2.3 Staff Retention, Expertise, and Capacity

For the long-term success of the organization and its employees, it is important to consider both how to support younger staff to develop their technical and interpersonal skills at the outset of their career, and how to continue to support staff to grow their skills as they move into leadership roles. Although budgets are limited, the UTRCA needs to identify and support professional development opportunities for staff, to the benefit of both the individuals and the organization. New staff may require additional training and time to understand their roles and responsibilities as well as those of other staff, and to become subject matter experts. This means resources for training and recruiting efforts have increased.

4.2.4 Sustainable Long-term Monitoring

Long-term historic datasets of climatological data, hydrological data, and water chemistry and nutrient data (surface water and groundwater) are needed throughout the watershed to establish subwatershed baseline conditions and to engage citizen scientists and the public in supporting science and conservation programs. Sustained funding and expertise for long-term and large-scale monitoring programs are needed to ensure that robust monitoring programs can be established and maintained to monitor environmental management actions and responses to them.

4.2.5 Open Data

The desire for complete, accurate, and timely data for decision making, as well as the various publicly accessible data sharing platforms, needs to be managed properly to reduce the risk that information the UTRCA shares is misused (mishandled), misunderstood, or leads to loss of data privacy and security, issues with reproducibility, and loss of trust from research participants and the public. This unpredictability can result in outcomes that negatively impact individuals and the conservation authority.

4.2.6 Information Technology, Cyber Security, and Artificial Intelligence

Information technology (IT) is the use of any computers, storage, networking, and other physical devices, infrastructure, and processes to create, process, store, secure, and exchange all forms of electronic data. IT encompasses both computer technology and telecommunications. There are many ways cybercriminals can exploit networked computers and other devices to spread malicious software, disrupt computer systems or software, and steal data. These online attacks can have real, and sometimes devastating, impacts. Cyberattacks can cost the conservation authority money and time, threaten our reputation and privacy, and disrupt our business for years after the initial event.

The rapid rate at which technology is evolving creates a unique issue for monitoring equipment and telecommunication technology that is used for surface water stations and dams. The rate at which emerging technology becomes outdated is faster than ever before. For example, the unprecedented growth and increasing sophistication of artificial intelligence technologies means the security risks associated with their use and the potential for misuse also increase.

4.2.7 Reputational Risk

Reputational risk is a hidden threat or danger to the good name or standing of the conservation authority. It can be the result of the actions of the conservation authority, the actions of an employee or employees, or through peripheral parties, such as partners. In an increasingly globalized environment, reputational risk can arise even in a peripheral region far away from the Upper Thames watershed. Often the risk results in outcomes that are not easily measured but adversely affect a company's profitability and valuation. All the risks identified in Section 5 can damage the reputation of the conservation authority if not addressed.

5.0 Future Opportunities and Initiatives

Opportunities can materialize at any time for new environmental initiatives that the UTRCA could undertake to benefit the watershed and its municipalities. These potential programs, services, and projects could be in any of the UTRCA's program areas and in any of the categories permitted under the CA Act: mandatory, municipal, or other (Category 1, 2 or 3, respectively).

Staff have identified many gaps in current programs and services that could be addressed, if the opportunity arises and funding is available. These future opportunities would update existing studies or mapping, help address current and emerging issues, and/or assist with delivery of mandatory programs and services. Prioritizing these potential initiatives will enable the UTRCA to respond effectively to any future opportunities.

6.0 Consultation, Implementation, and Review

6.1 Consultation

The UTRCA is developing the Watershed Strategy with input from UTRCA staff, municipalities, interest holders, and the public. Outreach efforts will focus on understanding and prioritizing the challenges, issues, and risks in the watershed. This outreach includes:

- Notifying watershed municipalities, Indigenous communities, and interest groups advising of in person and online engagement opportunities,
- Presenting the draft Watershed Strategy to municipal partners and Indigenous peoples for feedback,
- Using a public engagement website to generate effective community input,
- Using social media and traditional news media to highlight the strategy and encourage feedback.

6.2 Implementation

Information gathered through the consultation efforts will be used to develop a Watershed Strategy Implementation Plan. The plan will include:

1. List of challenges, issues, and risks that limit the effectiveness of the mandatory programs and services,
2. Identification of gaps in programs and services needed to address the issues and mitigate the high priority risks,
3. Determination of whether the programs and services comply with the regulations made under clause 40 (1) (b) of the CA Act,
4. Cost estimate and high level work plan for the implementation of those actions, if the opportunity arises and funding is available.

6.3 Review

The Watershed Strategy should be reviewed every four years to allow the UTRCA to adapt its programs and priorities to consider evolving political and socio-economic matters and address emerging environmental issues. It will also give an opportunity for every Board of Directors, which is in place for four years, to review, update, and approve the Watershed-based Resource Management Strategy. This schedule also coincides with the term of provincial elections, which must be held at least every four years. An ongoing review of the Watershed Strategy by staff will facilitate the four-year review cycle.

Public engagement will occur during the periodic reviews, in a manner that aligns with the degree of revisions and meets any regulatory requirements.

UPPER THAMES RIVER
CONSERVATION AUTHORITY

MEMO

To: UTRCA Board of Directors
From: Jenna Allain, Manager, Environmental Planning and Regulations
Date: June 17, 2024
File Number: BoD-06-24-53
Agenda #: 8.1
Subject: Administration and Enforcement – Section 28 Status Report

Recommendation

THAT the Board of Directors receive the report for information.

Background

The attached tables are provided to the Board as a summary of staff activity related to Section 28 of the Conservation Authorities Act and Ontario Regulation 41/24: Prohibited Activities, Exemptions and Permits. The table covers permits issued between May 1, 2024 and May 31, 2024.

To date, 108 permit numbers have been assigned in 2024 with 74 of those permits issued before May 31st. An additional 15 permits were issued in 2024 where the permit number was assigned in 2023, and one permit was issued where the permit number was assigned in 2022. This brings the total number of permits issued in 2024 to 90. Thirteen permit extensions or amendments have been issued in 2024, and staff have issued 133 clearances for regulated properties where proposed development was reviewed and determined not to require a Section 28 permit.

Information about permits in progress has been provided in the table below in a tally format. As noted above, 108 permit numbers have been assigned in 2024, with 74 issued by May 31st. Nine permits have been issued in June 2024 and will be reported on in the next monthly Section 28 report. One permit was cancelled, leaving 24 permit applications currently in progress. We also have 15 additional permit applications from 2023 that are still in progress. In total, we have 39 permits in progress split by municipality and application type in the table below.

Table 1. Permits in Progress Tally

Municipality	Major	Minor	Routine	Total
Township of Blandford-Blenheim	0	0	0	0
Township of East-Zorra Tavistock	0	0	1	1
Town of Ingersoll	1	0	1	2
City of London	4	5	3	12
Township of Lucan-Biddulph	0	0	0	0
Municipality of Middlesex Centre	3	1	1	5
Township of Norwich	0	1	0	1
Township of Perth East	2	1	2	5
Township of Perth South	0	0	0	0
Town of St. Marys	0	0	0	0
City of Stratford	0	2	1	3
Municipality of South Huron	0	0	0	0
Township of South-West Oxford	1	0	0	1
Municipality of Strathroy-Caradoc	0	1	0	1
Municipality of Thames Centre	1	1	0	2
Municipality of West Perth	0	0	1	1
City of Woodstock	1	1	2	4
Township of Zorra	0	1	0	1
TOTAL	**13**	**14**	**12**	**39**

Recommended by:

Jenna Allain, Manager, Environmental Planning and Regulations

Prepared by:

Jessica Schnaithmann, Land Use Regulations Officer
Ben Dafoe, Land Use Regulations Officer
Cari Ramsey, Land Use Regulations Officer
Mike Funk, Land Use Regulations Officer
Dave Griffin, Land Use Regulations Assistant
Richard Brewer, Land Use Regulations Assistant
Karen Winfield, Planning and Regulations Resource Specialist

UPPER THAMES RIVER
CONSERVATION AUTHORITY

Thames
Canadian Heritage River

Section 28 Status Report – Summary of Applications for 2024

Ontario Regulation 41/24

Report Date: May 2024

Client Service Standards for Conservation Authority Plan and Permit Review (CO, Dec 2019)

Permit #	Municipality	Location/Address	Category	Application Type	Project Description	Application Received	Notification of Complete Application	Permit Required By	Permit Issued On	Comply with Timelines	Staff
74	Woodstock	745314/745364 Oxford Rd. 17	Major	Development	Pregrading Permit (SWM and Regulation Limit)	04-Oct-23	16-Apr-24	14-May-24	02-May-24	YES	Dafoe
38	Ingersoll	37 William St.	Major	Development	Floodproofing	15-Mar-24	02-May-24	30-May-24	03-May-24	YES	Dafoe
59	West Perth	47 Blanshard St, Mitchell	Major	Development	Geotech Review + Major Development - ARU and Septic Replacement	22-Apr-24	22-Apr-24	20-May-24	03-May-24	YES	Dafoe
39	London	887 South Wenige Drive	Routine	Municipal Project	SWMF Cleanout - Northdale Woods Channel	25-Mar-24	30-Apr-24	14-May-24	06-May-24	YES	Griffin
40	London	135 Optimist Park Drive	Routine	Municipal Project	SWMF Cleanout - Summercrest 1 SWMF	25-Mar-24	30-Apr-24	14-May-24	06-May-24	YES	Griffin
73	London	10 Rossmore Court, Units 38, 39, 40, 41, 43	Routine	Development	Replacement Decks	01-May-24	03-May-24	17-May-24	06-May-24	YES	Griffin

Permit #	Municipality	Location/Address	Category	Application Type	Project Description	Application Received	Notification of Complete Application	Permit Required By	Permit Issued On	Comply with Timelines	Staff
84	St Marys	1 Veterans Circle	Routine	Municipal Project	Construction of Accessible Pathway and Instalation of Accessible Floating Dock	19-Oct-2023	25-Apr-2024	9-May-2024	17-May-2024	NO	Dafoe
77	London	5250 Wellington Road South	Major	Development	Replacement school, including parking areas and new SWM features	26-Mar-24	03-May-24	31-May-24	06-May-24	YES	Funk
57	Stratford	300 William St. Lot 6	Major	Development	New Home	07-Mar-24	01-May-24	29-May-24	07-May-24	YES	Dafoe
60	London	76 Grand Ave	Minor	Development	Replacement Duplex	01-Mar-24	07-May-24	28-May-24	07-May-24	YES	Griffin
69	Perth East	Perth Line 29 (~1080m East of Road 107)	Minor	Utility Corridor	Directional drill pipe for fiber optic cable at depth of 1.7m below bottom of watercourse	19-Apr-24	07-May-24	28-May-24	07-May-24	YES	Brewer
71	Ingersoll	46 Bell St.	Minor	Development	Addition and garage replacement	16-Jan-24	02-May-24	23-May-24	07-May-24	YES	Dafoe
78	Middlesex Centre	13780 & 13755 Eight Mile Rd, Crossing Holden Drain	Minor	Utility Corridor	Install gas service: Directional drill 2" pipe at depth of 1.5m below bottom of watercourse, & 1 1/4" PE gas pipe 0.6m above culvert	25-Apr-24	08-May-24	29-May-24	09-May-24	YES	Brewer
56	Zorra	316725 31st Line (Township of Zorra)	Minor	Development	Septic Replacement	17-Apr-24	09-May-24	30-May-24	10-May-24	YES	Dafoe

Permit #	Municipality	Location/Address	Category	Application Type	Project Description	Application Received	Notification of Complete Application	Permit Required By	Permit Issued On	Comply with Timelines	Staff
83	EZ Tavistock	517121 11th Line	Routine	Utility Corridor	Install gas service: NPS 1 1/4" PE natural gas pipeline	06-May-24	10-May-24	24-May-24	14-May-24	YES	Brewer
88	Woodstock	Woodstock	Routine	Municipal Project	Routine SWMF Cleanout	23-Apr-24	13-May-24	27-May-24	14-May-24	YES	Dafoe
85	Perth East	Line 37	Major	Utility Corridor	Directional drill for fibre optic cable at depth of 1.7m below bottom of multiple watercourses	03-May-24	14-May-24	11-Jun-24	15-May-24	YES	Brewer
79	London	199 Cooper Street	Major	Development	Interior Renovations & Rear Two-Storey Addition	22-Apr-24	15-May-24	12-Jun-24	16-May-24	YES	Griffin
72	Perth South	1911 Perth Rd. 120A	Major	Development	Warehouse/Retail	03-May-24	16-May-24	13-Jun-24	17-May-24	YES	Dafoe
84	St Marys	1 Veterans Circle	Routine	Municipal Project	Construction of Accessible Pathway and Instalation of Accessible Floating Dock	19-Oct-2023	25-Apr-2024	9-May-2024	17-May-24	NO	Dafoe
87	Woodstock	Standard Tube Park (Lions Trail & Burgess Trail)	Routine	Municipal Project	Trail Erosion Control	06-May-24	15-May-24	29-May-24	21-May-24	YES	Brewer
80	London	720 Riverside Drive	Major	Development	Replacement House	07-May-24	08-May-24	05-Jun-24	23-May-24	YES	Funk
84	London	153 Walnut Street	Minor	Development	Proposal: 20'x25' Shed	09-May-24	21-May-24	11-Jun-24	23-May-24	YES	Griffin
89	London	980 Wilton Grove Road	Minor	Development	New Access Road	31-Jan-24	26-Apr-24	17-May-24	23-May-24	NO	Funk

Permit #	Municipality	Location/Address	Category	Application Type	Project Description	Application Received	Notification of Complete Application	Permit Required By	Permit Issued On	Comply with Timelines	Staff
94	Middlesex Centre	Twelve Mile Road - Lot 10, Con 12	Minor	Utility Corridor	Install ~42m gas service: NPS 2" natural gas pipeline Crossing Needham Drain	09-May-24	22-May-24	12-Jun-24	27-May-24	YES	Brewer
95	Perth South	Line 29 & Rd 125 - Lot 10, Con 4, Stratford	Minor	Utility Corridor	Install ~660m 2" plastic 420 kPa gas main Crossing Avon River	13-May-24	13-May-24	03-Jun-24	27-May-24	YES	Brewer
97	Perth East	25 Mill St East, Milverton	Minor	Municipal Project	Michiels Municipal Drain Review	13-May-24	13-May-24	03-Jun-24	27-May-24	YES	Brewer
75	London	1139 Hamilton Road	Routine	Municipal Project	Pathway improvements (including paddling access) and new seating	23-Apr-24	23-May-24	06-Jun-24	28-May-24	YES	Griffin
76	London	1875 Hyde Park Road	Routine	Development	Retail Building Extension	24-Apr-24	28-May-24	11-Jun-24	28-May-24	YES	Griffin
100	Perth East	25 Mill St East , Milverton	Minor	Municipal Drain	Municipal Drain review	18-Dec-23	13-May-24	03-Jun-24	30-May-24	YES	Brewer

UPPER THAMES RIVER CONSERVATION AUTHORITY

MEMO

To: UTRCA Board of Directors
From: Tracy Annett
Date: June 25, 2024
File Number: BoD-06-24-54
Agenda #: 8.2
Subject: Project Status Updates

Recommendation

THAT the Board of Directors receive the report for information.

Background

To assist the Board with previously discussed items the following status updates are provided. This report is updated and included at each meeting in order to identify project timelines and expected future reports.

Discussion

The table below provides progress and timelines associated with UTRCA projects and the strategies required to fulfil the requirements of O.Reg 686/21, Mandatory Programs and Services Regulation. Planned reports and updates at board meetings may change.

Many of the items provided below are directed by legislative changes, either directly through O.Reg 686/21 or through updated regulations that impact our projects / policy direction (e.g. Section 28 regulations under the CAA). These projects will continue throughout 2024, regular updates will be provided.

Report Back Items	Planned report or update	Project lead(s)	Status
2024 Draft Budget and discussion items (October 2023 meeting Draft Budget provided)	January, provide update on Municipal Feedback February AGM – 2024 Budget Consideration	Teresa Brad Christine Tracy	Complete – Municipal Communications Ongoing - Status of contract discussions with Environment and Climate Change Canada Provided updated numbers in October for the proposed Category 1 deficit and the proposed category 3 levy / cost apportionment. Complete – Communications plan
WCC Building Update	January Will be marked complete in next report	Brent & Mike	Complete - Board Request. To provide an overview of the building now that we have used the space for 10 years, building performance.

Report Back Items	Planned report or update	Project lead(s)	Status
Review of S28 Violations	February Will be marked complete in next report	Jenna	Complete - Review of the 2023 violations at the February 2024 Board of Directors meeting
Children's Safety Village(June 2023, February 2024)	October	Teresa & Brent	In Progress – Internal Discussions on-going, business plan for use as education / visitors centre and campground registration. Update to be provided to BOD in the fall.
Strategic Plan	Postponed to June to align with Watershed Strategy update	Tracy Teresa	In progress – RFP being developed. Timeline to be confirmed once consultant engaged. Report included with June Agenda
Hydro Plant (April 2024 report to BOD)	September	Chris and Brent	In Progress - Consultant to be engaged to determine potential issues and estimates to resolve the issues. Staff change had delayed the RFP process. Update provided in April Report to BOD.
Reserves Policy (April 2024 and May 2024 report to F&A)	September	Tracy Christine	In Progress Report to F&A – After the 2023 Audit the policy will be shared with the Finance and Audit committee for further discussion at May meeting. Following F&A discussion, staff directed to prepare Reserves Policy and Report to the Board to follow.
UTRCA Cash Management & Investment Policy	August	Christine and Tracy	In Progress – Report to F&A Committee in June, and report to the Board to follow.
Cyber Security	October	Tracy Christine Chris	In Progress Report to F&A – Staff to prepare a report on the current state of cyber security for the organization and any recommendations to improve to be presented to the Finance and Audit Committee at the April meeting, in-camera. Directed staff for future updates. Report to the Board to follow.
Retention Policy	August	Tracy & Michelle	Initiated – updated retention policy to be prepared based on a collaborative CA draft. The CA draft has been legally reviewed.

Report Back Items	Planned report or update	Project lead(s)	Status
Wetland Compensation Policy (March 2023 meeting and August 2023)	Postponed to align with Section 28 Policies as outlined below	Jenna and Sarah	In progress - Draft Wetland Compensation Policies initiated. Changes to the CAA and CA roles in commenting on natural heritage features have required further examination. Report to be provided once finalized, date to be confirmed.
Section 28 Regulation Policies (March, 2024)	August	Jenna	In Progress - Release of new Regulations on Friday February 16th, effective April 1, 2024. May Meeting included Technical Checklists and S28 Compliance Procedures Staff will continue to: develop policies and procedures, and undertake consultation with municipalities, partners and development groups., etc.
Land Tenant Program Update (March 2022 meeting, November 2023, March 2024)	August	Brent and Mike	In Progress – Ongoing status of land tenant program, in-camera.
Advocacy for Fee Freeze to be lifted	August	Tracy & Brian	In Progress – Letter drafted to circulate to Municipalities. Discussion with Minister Smith suggested that he wanted data to support. Brian to lead Municipal support request. Tracy to explore other data options with CA's, particularly those in High growth areas.
Draft 2025 Budget & Communications Plan	August	Tracy, Teresa and Christine	In Progress – Circulate budget communications to F&A committee for feedback in July, to finalize materials to include at August Meeting.

Legislative Requirements	Planned report or update	Project lead(s)	Status
Land Management Strategy (February 2024)	September	Brent Brandon Cathy	In Progress – To be completed by December 31, 2024 Inventory and acquisition and disposition policy are closely linked to this initiative. May
Land Inventory (August 2023 meeting and	September (Categories of use	Brandon, Phil, Cathy &	In progress – Inventory update was provided in August. To be included with Lands Strategy and a legislative

Legislative Requirements	Planned report or update	Project lead(s)	Status
February 2024)	included in Strategy)	Brent	requirement. The Lands Inventory will inform the Lands Strategy and acquisition and disposition strategy. To be completed December 31, 2024
Land Acquisition and Disposition Strategy (February 2024)	September (Goals and Objectives included in Strategy)	Brent & Brandon	In progress - Complements the Lands Strategy and Land Inventory. To be completed December 31, 2024.
Watershed-Based Resource Management Strategy (September 2023 and February 2024)	June	Tara	In Progress – Complements the Strategic Plan. To be completed December 31, 2024. To Align with UTRCA Strategic Plan Item included in June Agenda
Operations and Ice Management Plan (November 2023 meeting)	September	Chris	In progress - Compiling background information. To be completed December 31, 2024
UTRCA Asset Management Plan(January 2024 Policy approved)	September	Brent & Christine	In progress - May breakdown into Groups of Assets e.g. Natural Hazard Infrastructure, Fleet, Facilities etc. Regular progress reports to support the above Group of Assets as our first priority.
Asset Management Plans related to natural hazard infrastructure (November meeting)	September	Chris	In progress – One component of overall group of assets within the UTRCA's Asset Management Plan. To be completed December 31, 2024.

Definitions

Progress	Timeline
Not started	indicate project initiation date
In progress	anticipate completion date
Complete	date completed
Overdue	expected completion date and reasons for the delay
On Hold	other circumstances

Summary

The summary provided is intended to help track items requesting report updates to the Board and project updates to meet our legislative requirements. The number of projects underway is significant.

Recommended by:

Tracy Annett, General Manager

UPPER THAMES RIVER CONSERVATION AUTHORITY

MEMO

To: UTRCA Board of Directors
From: Michelle Viglianti, Administrative Assistant
Date: June 25, 2024
File Number: BoD-06-24-55
Agenda #: 9.1
Subject: Finance and Audit Committee Meeting May 24th Decisions

Recommendation

THAT the Board of Directors receives the report for information.

Background

The Finance and Audit Committee met on May 24th. The Committee meeting package and draft minutes can be found on the Upper Thames River Conservation Authority Website.

Decisions

The Committee discussed the budgetary and reserves plan and passed the following motions:

Mover: Harj Nijjar
Seconder: Brian Petrie
THAT The Finance and Audit committee receives this report for information and directs staff to develop a reserve policy based on the discussion paper and feedback received from the committee.
Carried.

Mover: Brian Petrie
Seconder: Harj Nijjar
THAT the Finance and Audit Committee directs staff to develop a budget communication piece based on feedback received from the committee at this meeting and that it be added to the budget concepts report going to the Board in June.
Carried.

Prepared by:

Michelle Viglianti, Administrative Assistant

Recommended by:

Tracy Annett, General Manager

UPPER THAMES RIVER CONSERVATION AUTHORITY

MEMO

To: UTRCA Board of Directors
From: Michelle Viglianti, Administrative Assistant
Date: June 25, 2024
File Number: BoD-06-24-56
Agenda #: 9.2
Subject: Hearing Committee – May 28, 2024 Decisions

Recommendation

THAT the Board of Directors receive the report for information.

Background

The Hearing Committee met on May 28th to consider one application. The full Hearing Committee meeting packages can be found on the Upper Thames River Conservation Authority Website.

Hearing Committee Decision from May 28, 2024 – Application #50-24

The following is the decision taken from the May 28, 2024 Hearing Committee minutes, in regard to a request to permit development within a riverine flood hazard associated with a river or stream valley and within a wetland area of interference and within an area regulated by the Upper Thames River Conservation Authority at 952 Southdale Road West in the City of London, Ontario.

THAT Application #50-24 for the proposed development within a riverine flood hazard and wetland be approved due to the following reasons:

- Appropriate technical information has been provided to identify the extent of flood hazard limit, to the satisfaction of the UTRCA.
- The applicant has provided confirmation that the proposed filling, although not balanced, will not negatively impact flooding on adjacent properties. UTRCA technical staff have reviewed and accepted the submitted information.
- The development limits align with the OS5 zone for the wetland and buffer, which were previously approved by the City of London in 2021 prior to the Floodline Analysis matter being fully addressed.
- Of the three options in the Floodline Analysis (Stantec), the “Do Nothing” approach affords the greatest protection to the wetland feature and its functions because it does not require grading within the wetland feature or its buffer to compensate for the loss of flood storage.

And subject to the following conditions:
That the requirement for final reports and drawings be prepared through the municipal site plan process and to the satisfaction of the UTRCA, and would include:

- Final EIS report and Environmental Management Plan;
- Final Stormwater Management/Servicing Report;
- Final Hydrogeological Assessment Report;
- Final Civil Engineering Drawings;
- Erosion and Sediment Control Plans; and,
- Final Retaining Wall Designs, signed by P.Eng. with appropriate floodproofing.

Carried.

Next meeting

The next meeting of the UTRCA Hearing Committee will be August 27th following the Board meeting.

Prepared and Recommended by:

Michelle Viglianti, Administrative Assistant