



Policy & Priorities Committee

Teleconference

1:00 pm

April 3, 2020

AGENDA

Note: this is not an official meeting of the Committee as it is being held by teleconference. No motions are being tabled for approval. No decisions are being made.

ROLL CALL

Information Item

1. Mississippi River Watershed Plan – Draft Goals and Objectives

Staff will walk members through the draft goals and objectives and solicit comments.

ADJOURNMENT

CALL IN

1-877-394-5901

Access Code

507-0264

Mississippi River Watershed Plan – Draft Goals and Objectives

The goals, objectives, and targets established through the watershed planning process will form the basis for management actions and planning decisions made under the watershed plan. They must align with applicable provincial policies and plans while avoiding duplication. They must also be appropriate for local conditions. Targets are typically quantitative measures from which progress towards achieving the corresponding objective can be assessed.

In drafting these goals and objective we have reviewed relevant provincial plans and strategies, local (municipal) plans and strategies, MVCA's own plans, and several examples of watershed plans developed by other Conservation Authorities. The documents reviewed are listed below.

We have also developed a draft Table of Targets and Performance Indicators to help inform the development of measurable goals and objectives. They include conventionally recognized targets that can be readily quantified (ex. Environment Canada natural area targets and Provincial Water Quality Objectives), as well as suggested performance indicators that can be used to document and measure trends and outcomes.

Provincial Level Plans and Strategies:

A number of Provincial plans, strategies and policy documents set out policies and actions to guide how water resources and the natural environment is protected and managed. These documents provide a useful foundation for ensuring that the overarching goals and objective of the Mississippi River Watershed Plan align with those of our key partners, while ensuring that we are not duplicating efforts. The documents reviewed include:

- A Made in Ontario Environment Plan (2018), Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks (MECP)
- Provincial Policy Statement (2020) , Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing (MMAH)
- Naturally Resilient – MNRF's Natural Resource Climate Adaptation Strategy (2017-2021)
- Ontario Biodiversity Strategy (2011), Ontario Biodiversity Council
- Protecting People and Property: Ontario's Flooding Strategy (2020), Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry (MNRF)

MVCA Plans:

MVCA also has several of its own plans for the Mississippi Watershed each focusing on a specific aspect of watershed management.

- Mississippi Valley Conservation Report (Department of Energy and Resources Management, 1970).
- Interim Watershed Plan (Mississippi Valley Conservation Authority (1983)
- Mississippi River Water Management Plan (Mississippi River Water Management Plan Steering Committee, 2007)
- Mississippi-Rideau Source Protection Plan (2014).

While each of these plans encompassed a variety of different aspects of water management and fulfilled their intended purpose, they lacked the scope, stakeholder engagement or an adaptive management process to fulfill the function of an integrated watershed plan.

Upper-tier Official Plans and Strategic Plans

As stated in the Provincial Policy Statement (MMAH, 2014), “Municipal official plans are the most important vehicle for implementation of this Provincial Policy Statement and for achieving comprehensive, integrated and long-term planning. Official plans provide the policy framework to guide land use decisions. They identify provincial interests and set out appropriate land use designations and policies for the management of future growth, development and change within the municipality. The goals and objectives set out in the following official plans for upper tier municipalities within the Mississippi River Watershed were reviewed. The lower tier municipalities each have their own Official Plan that is required to comply with these upper tier planning documents.

- County of Frontenac Official Plan (Adopted 2014)
- Lanark County Sustainable Communities Official Plan (2012)
- Lennox and Addington County Official Plan (2015)
- City of Ottawa Official Plan (2003)
- County of Renfrew Official Plan (2002)
- Lanark County Community Vision and County Strategic Plan (2005)
- Tay Valley Strategic Plan 2017 to 2021
- Frontenac County Strategic Plan 2019 to 2022
- North Frontenac Township Strategic Plan 2019 to 2022
- Ottawa – Plan for Sustainability & Resilience in Canada’s Capital Regions (2012)

Examples of Watershed Plans by other CAs

We have reviewed the shared goals, objectives as and directives that emerge from these documents to ensure the goals and objectives of the watershed plan align with those of our active partners including the municipalities and the province. We’ve also looked at four examples of watershed plans prepared by other Conservation Authorities throughout the province to assist in structuring the discussion.

- Ganaraska River Watershed Plan (2010), Ganaraska Region Conservation Authority (GRCA)
- Grand River Watershed Water Management Plan (2014), Grand River Conservation Authority
- Humber River Watershed Plan (2008), Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA)
- Nottawasaga Valley Integrated Watershed Management Plan (2019), Nottawasaga Valley Conservation Authority

Together these documents outline a number of visions, values, goals and objectives that are shared by the province, municipalities, Conservation Authorities and other groups.

Draft Watershed Plan Goals and Objectives

1. To collaborate with watershed partners in promoting an integrated and consistent approach to the health and management of the watershed and water resources.
2. To further our resiliency and adaptive response to addressing climate change.
3. To sustain or improve current water quality for all users.
4. To maintain, enhance, or restore natural features and systems for all users.
5. To minimize risk to human life and property due to flooding, erosion, and unstable slopes and soils.
6. To use and manage both surface water and groundwater wisely, to meet current and future needs under normal and extreme conditions.
7. To support sustainable growth and economic development.
8. To impart a sense responsibility for the watershed.

Goal 1: To collaborate with watershed partners in promoting an integrated and consistent approach to the health and management of the watershed and water resources.

OBJECTIVES

- Develop a plan that integrates all relevant aspects of watershed management and planning.
- Cultivate partnerships among individuals, community groups, businesses and government agencies that have a stake in the health of the watershed.
- Establish a coordinated approach to watershed management activities amongst government and other partners.

Goal 2: To further our resiliency and adaptive response to addressing climate change.

OBJECTIVES

- Improve our understanding of climate change impacts.
- Improve local resilience to evolving climactic and extreme weather conditions.
- Incorporate climate change considerations into planning and management decision making tools, guidelines, plans and policies.

Goal 3: To sustain or improve current water quality for all users.

OBJECTIVES

Surface Water Systems

- Establish water quality trends and determine sources of water quality impairment.
- Carry out remedial actions to mitigate further degradation.

Groundwater Systems

- Establish groundwater quality trends and determine sources of groundwater quality impairment.
- Prevent groundwater contamination to ensure safe drinking water supplies

Goal 4: To maintain, enhance, or restore natural features and systems for all users.

OBJECTIVES

- Protect and enhance the form and function of aquatic habitat and riparian areas.
- Reduce habitat fragmentation and protect, restore and enhance natural cover to improve connectivity, quality, biodiversity and ecological function.
- Maintain, enhance and restore the diversity of native species in the watershed.

Goal 5: To minimize risks to human life and property due to flooding, erosion, and unstable slopes and soils.

OBJECTIVES

- Provide effective flood forecasting and warning.
- Undertake water management operations to mitigate flooding and erosion to the greatest extent possible.
- Provide flood storage throughout the system.
- Identify and mitigate flood erosion, unstable slope and unstable soil risks within the watershed.

Goal 6: To use and manage both surface water and groundwater wisely to meet current and future needs under normal and extreme conditions.

OBJECTIVES

- Conduct water budget analysis to quantify potential impacts of climate change.
- Maintain and enhance the water balance and baseflow of the Mississippi River watershed.
- Maintain or enhance groundwater quantity, recharge and discharge.
- Balance competing demands for water use in a sustainable manner.

Goal 7: To support sustainable growth and economic development.

OBJECTIVES

- Quantify water use trends and needs by sector.
- Work with industry partners to develop and implement best practices in the watershed.
- Establish priority water use needs and management practices under extreme conditions.

Goal 8: To impart a sense responsibility for stewardship of the watershed.

OBJECTIVES

- Quantify the social, economic and ecological value of watershed resources and processes.
- Communicate and educate about the values of the watershed.
- Demonstrate best management and stewardship practices.
- Inspire and enable people to be stewards of the watershed.