



Policy & Priorities Committee

MVCA Administration Office

1:00 pm

October 2, 2020

AGENDA

ROLL CALL

Adoption of Agenda

Declaration of Interest (written)

1. Watershed Plan Goals and Objectives, Report 3079/20 (Alyson Symon)
2. Priority Setting Methodology, Report 3080/20 (Sally McIntyre)
3. Draft Stimulus Projects, Report 3081/20 (Sally McIntyre)
4. Provincial Groundwater Monitoring Program, Report 3082/20 (Sally McIntyre)
5. Employee Manual: Vacation and Gratuities Policies, Report 3083/20 (Sally McIntyre)
6. Rules Governing Electronic Meeting Participation, Report 3084/20 (Sally McIntyre)

Other Business

ADJOURNMENT

REPORT

3079/20

TO:	Policy & Priorities Committee, Mississippi Valley Conservation Authority
FROM:	Alyson Symon, Environmental Planner
RE:	Watershed Plan Goals and Objectives
DATE:	September 25, 2020

Recommendation:

That the Policy & Priorities Committee recommend that the Board approve the Goals and Objectives set out herein for the Mississippi River Watershed Plan.

1.0 BACKGROUND

MVCA is drafting a watershed plan for the Mississippi River. Work began in 2019 with the establishment of a Public Advisory Committee and the drafting of four Backgrounders¹ that summarize key facts, trends, and challenges facing the watershed. Draft Backgrounders were tabled with the Policy & Priorities Committee, circulated to area municipalities and key agencies, amended, and released to the public in Spring 2020.

Based on key findings, in April 2020 staff prepared and tabled draft watershed goals and objectives to the Policy & Priorities Committee² for review and comment. Staff subsequently amended the goals and objectives based upon Committee feedback and then workshopped them with the Public Advisory Committee. The resultant goals and objectives will provide a sound framework for the setting of priorities and actions to be taken by MVCA and others in the watershed.

2.0 GOALS

The following goals capture the range of watershed management aspirations identified.

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

¹ These documents can be found at <http://mvc.on.ca/mississippiriverwatershedplan/>

² This was an unofficial meeting of the Committee because the *MVCA Administrative By-law* had yet to be amended to address the need for remote meetings due to the COVID-19 pandemic. No motions were considered or passed.

2. To use and manage both surface water and groundwater wisely to meet current and future needs under normal and extreme conditions.
3. To minimize risks to human life and property due to flooding, erosion, and unstable slopes and soils.
4. To sustain or improve current water quality for all users.
5. To increase our resiliency and adaptive response to climate change.
6. To support environmentally sustainable growth and economic development.
7. To maintain, enhance, or restore natural features and systems for all users.
8. To support learning and environmental stewardship.

3.0 OBJECTIVES

The following objectives reflect the scope of matters to be tackled to achieve each goal. They have been organized and worded to minimize duplication and allow for a range of potential actions.

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:

- a) Develop a plan that integrates all relevant aspects of watershed management and planning.
- b) Clarify responsibilities for delivering and funding watershed assets, programs and services.
- c) Cultivate partnerships among individuals, community groups, businesses and government agencies that have a stake in the health of the watershed.
- d) Develop and strengthen Indigenous partnerships, respecting Indigenous values and rights.
- e) Establish a coordinated and adaptive approach to watershed management activities amongst government and other partners.

GOAL 2: To use and manage both surface water and groundwater wisely to meet current and future needs under normal and extreme conditions.

Objectives:

- a) Expand our understanding of the water budget of the Mississippi River watershed and the potential impacts of climate change.
- b) Maintain and enhance the hydrologic balance, including baseflow, groundwater quantity, recharge and discharge, within the Mississippi River watershed.
- c) Work with watershed landowners, communities and industry to balance competing demands for water use in a sustainable manner.

GOAL 3: To minimize risks to human life and property due to flooding, erosion, and unstable slopes and soils.

Objectives:

- a) Identify hazards and mitigate risks associated with flooding, erosion, unstable slopes, and unstable soils.
- b) Undertake water management operations to mitigate flooding and erosion.
- c) Provide flood storage throughout the system.
- d) Provide effective flood forecasting and warning.
- e) Communicate and educate about risks and mitigation strategies associated with flooding, erosion and unstable slope/soils.

GOAL 4: To sustain or improve current water quality for all users.

Objectives:

- a) Establish surface water quality trends and determine sources of surface water quality impairment.
- b) Carry out remedial actions to mitigate further degradation and ensure safe drinking water.
- c) Establish groundwater quality trends and determine sources of groundwater quality impairment.
- d) Prevent groundwater contamination to ensure safe drinking water supplies.

GOAL 5: To increase our resiliency and adaptive response to climate change.

Objectives:

- a) Improve our understanding of climate change impacts in the Mississippi River watershed.
- b) Improve local resiliency to changing climatic and extreme weather conditions.
- c) Incorporate climate change considerations into planning and management decision making tools, guidelines, plans and policies.

GOAL 6: To support environmentally sustainable growth and economic development.

Objectives:

- a) Monitor and report on watershed conditions.
- b) Quantify water use trends and needs by sector and establish priority needs and management practices under extreme conditions.
- c) Work with watershed partners to develop and implement best practices in the watershed.

GOAL 7: To maintain, enhance, or restore natural features and systems for all users.

Objectives:

- a) Protect and enhance the form and function of aquatic habitat and riparian areas.

- b) Reduce habitat fragmentation and protect, restore and enhance natural cover to improve connectivity, quality, biodiversity and ecological function.
- c) Maintain, enhance and restore the diversity of native species in the watershed.
- d) Optimize use of land acquisition tools and explore new means of acquiring public assets.

GOAL 8: To support learning and environmental stewardship.

Objectives:

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

4.0 NEXT STEPS

Following consideration by the Committee and Board, the goals and objectives will be included in a Discussion Paper to be tabled at Committee and released to the public in early 2021.

The Discussion Paper will summarize key issues and identify a range of actions that might be undertaken by MVCA or other organizations in the watershed. Staff has circulated draft ideas to other agencies and discussed them with the Public Advisory Committee through a series of meetings and online questionnaires.

In the meantime, the four Backgrounders will be re-released this fall and a public engagement program developed and implemented for the Discussion Paper.

REPORT

3080/20

TO:	Policy & Priorities Committee, Mississippi Valley Conservation Authority
FROM:	Sally McIntyre, General Manager
RE:	Priority Setting Approach
DATE:	September 25, 2020

For Discussion

1.0 PURPOSE

Staff reports 3069/20 and 3070/20 identified trends and pressures facing MVCA in the near term and over the next ten years. The purpose of this report is to obtain Committee feedback on a draft approach for prioritizing operating and capital budget pressures and corporate programs and services. The goal is to use a transparent approach to develop the Draft 2021 Budget, the Draft Interim Financial Plan, and a draft update to the 10-year Capital Plan. Priority-setting will focus on the period 2021-2023.

2.0 DRAFT APPROACH

Four pieces of information are proposed to support analysis and priority setting:

1. Identify the project driver:
 - External - Regulatory (including health and safety compliance)
 - External - Growth (addressing workload volumes and service standards)
 - Internal - Strategic direction (corporate planning documents; continuous improvement)
2. Assess the risk of not addressing the pressure (likelihood versus consequence analysis.)
3. Identify linkages to other projects (cost optimization and leveraging opportunities)
4. Estimate net pressure on municipal levy (identify funding offsets and financing options)

These four variables will allow the management team to identify the most urgent pressures as well as high value initiatives with leveraging and funding opportunities.

2.1 Risk Assessment

Table 1 presents draft likelihood and consequence indices to help gauge the degree of risk of leaving a pressure unaddressed (“Do Nothing” scenario.)

Table 1: Risk Index

	Likelihood	Consequence (examples)
Low	<25% within 2 years	Reduced frequency or quality of service; assets deteriorated but still functional and safe to operate; infrequent and minor errors and accidents and corporate liability; minor reputational impact; delayed ability to achieve corporate objective; limited corporate resilience; meet service standards >85% of the time.
Medium	25-60% within 2 years	Reduced scope of service; closure of an asset; above average staff turnover; major but limited reputational impact; more frequent errors and accidents and corporate liability; sustained inability to meet an important corporate objective; meet service standards 60-85% of the time.
High	>60% within 2 years	Regulatory non-compliance; harm to people and property; significant loss in corporate capacity and knowledge; significant error or accident and corporate liability; significant and lasting reputational impact; action is counter to and harmful to achieving a key corporate objective; meet service standards <60% of the time.

Figure 1 shows how these parameters combine to assign a level of risk associated with the Do-Nothing scenario. For example, where the risks of *not* addressing the pressure are on balance Low in likelihood and Low in consequence, it will be scored as LOW risk.

Figure 1: Risk Matrix

		Likelihood		
		High	Medium	Low
Consequence	High	MEDIUM	HIGH	HIGH
	Medium	LOW	MEDIUM	HIGH
	Low	LOW	LOW	MEDIUM
		Low	Medium	High

2.2 Impacts to the Municipal Levy

In some cases, budgetary pressures may be offset through the use of new or increased fees for service, grants, partnership agreements, and the judicious use of reserves and financing. To help

the Board gauge the affordability of moving forward with one or more actions, staff will identify the availability of these opportunities, and the potential net impact on the municipal levy.

3.0 EXAMPLES AND DISCUSSION POINTS

Table 2 provides three examples to help illustrate how this methodology will be used to guide priority setting activities.

Questions for the Committee:

- Are there any other key variables that would have a material impact on your decision-making?
- Do the proposed likelihood and consequence indicators represent your valuation of key risks to the organization?

4.0 NEXT STEPS

The methodology will be finalized and applied, and a short-list of pressures presented to the Board as part of the 2021 Budget, the 2021-2023 Interim Financial Plan, and an updated 10-year Capital Plan.

Table 2: Draft Working Examples

Pressure	1 FTE - Planning Technician	Gatehouse Accessible Door and Security System	Farm Lake Dam Safety Assessment
Driver	External - Growth: planning and permit applications have roughly doubled over past 5 years.	External - Regulatory: Building is not AODA compliant; Internal - improves cost effectiveness and security associated with building rentals	External - Regulatory: while not strictly required, industry standards recommend carrying out at least 1/10 years.
Risk	Medium - likely risks to service levels, quality control, staff turn-over, and reputation.	Medium - continued non-compliance, potential risk of fines, complaints, and reputation.	Low - No Dam Safety Assessment on file; dam <50 years old, small and recently repaired; delay of 2+ years acceptable.
Linkages	-	-	Opportunity to tie to LiDAR project for the Mississippi River to assess zone of impact if failure occurred.
Net Pressure	Gross \$80,000 (wage and benefits)	Gross \$10,000	Gross \$75,000
	Planning/Permit Fee offset 25%	Federal/provincial grant 50-80%	WECl or other grant 50-80% offset
	Net pressure \$60,000	Net pressure \$2,000-\$5,000	Net pressure \$15,000-\$36,500

REPORT	3081/20
TO:	Policy & Priorities Committee, Mississippi Valley Conservation Authority
FROM:	Sally McIntyre, General Manager
RE:	Stimulus Projects
DATE:	September 28, 2020

Recommendation:

That the Policy & Priorities Committee recommend that the Board endorse submission of grant applications for one or more of the projects identified herein; and approve the use of capital reserves as needed to meet MVCA’s financial commitment.

1.0 BACKGROUND

Several provincial and federal economic stimulus programs are expected over the coming months and there will be an opportunity for MVCA to complete planned works at significantly reduced costs. In all cases, there will be an expectation that MVCA make a financial commitment to the project. Therefore, in order to allow for timely submission of stimulus project applications, staff have prepared a list of projects for pre-approval. All of the projects identified can be completed by the end of 2021 as this appears to be the deadline that most programs will impose.

2.0 PROPOSED PROJECTS

Table 1 contains Water & Erosion Control Infrastructure (WECI) projects, disaster mitigation projects (e.g. LiDAR and flood plain mapping), and conservation area improvements. The table provides a brief description of each project, a brief rationale for the project, and identifies the estimated total cost and subsidy, potential partners, and possible constraints. The combined value of the 8 projects is just over \$2 million, of which just over \$1 million is expected could be subsidized. Table 2 shows the 2019 year-end reserve balances. It is unlikely that all proposed projects will be funded. If they were, reserves alone could not fund all the projects. Therefore, as replacement of the Shabomeka Lake Dam is a long-term asset improvement, it is recommended that that financing be sought for that project to enable the organization to retain adequate reserve balances.

Table 1: Recommended Projects for Stimulus Funding

Project	Cost Estm.	Estm. Grant
<p>1. Shabomeka Lake Dam Reconstruction</p> <p>Scope: Tendering, construction, contract administration and inspection services, as-built drawings. Rationale: Priority project per 2020 Budget and current 10-year Capital Plan. Potential partners: MNRF - WECl. Constraints: existing site bedrock conditions, procurement timelines; competition for construction services; agency approvals; limited construction season. It is recommended that MVCA obtain financing for its contribution to this project.</p>	\$1.5 million	50%
<p>2. LiDAR and Flood Inundation Mapping – Upper Mississippi River</p> <p>Scope: LiDAR data acquisition for the Mississippi River corridor upstream of Mississippi Lake and production of flood inundation mapping for major MVCA owned and operated dams in support of Lake Dam Safety updates; contracted and in-house services. Rationale: MVCA has limited elevation data upstream of Crotch Lake, no flood plain mapping, and limited ability to assess potential impacts of individual and cascading dam failures on public safety and economic and environmental damages. This was identified as a pressure in the Interim Financial Plan Background Report. Potential partners: MNRF-WECl, RVCA, SNCA, area municipalities. Constraints: data acquisition limited to spring; limited resources to produce mapping by YE 2021.</p>	\$350,000	50%
<p>3. Expansion of Gauge Network</p> <p>Scope: purchase, install, calibrate and commission 6 automated monitoring sites at dams and lakes in the upper Mississippi watershed that are connected to the WISKI data system. Rationale: The geodetic water levels are necessary for effective flood forecasting, warning and operation of the watershed system, and understanding of the watershed response to extreme weather events and changing climate. This gap has been identified in the Interim Financial Plan Background Report. Potential partners: MNRF? Constraints: site work by conservation staff.</p>	\$60,000	50%
<p>4. Evaluation of Wetland near Urban Area</p> <p>Scope: Desktop evaluation combined with field work to determine classification and extent of wetland complex. Rationale: area near Lavalee Creek is under development pressure; understanding of these in advance of receiving development proposals</p>	\$35,000	50%

Project	Cost Estm.	Estm. Grant
will allow for identification of constraints and good land use planning and resource protection; identified as issue in Watershed Plan background reports. Potential partners: MNRF and local municipalities. Constraints: landowner concerns; access to property; public engagement timelines.		
5. Mill of Kintail (MOK) Centralized Parking Lot	\$50,000	33%
Scope: site preparation, importation of gravel, and grading of 4-season parking lot near Education Center. Rationale: this item was identified in the 2013 approved Masterplan for the MOK; the site has seen a significant increase in demand; parking is disjointed with several small lots and would improve accessibility to developed areas of the site. Identified in 10-year Capital Needs Assessment. Potential partners: MVCF. Constraints: public engagement and potential review by municipal heritage committee.		
6. Gatehouse Access and Security System	\$10,000	33%
Scope: replace gatehouse exterior door and install automatic door openers with push paddles and FOB operated security system. Rationale: building access does not meet the accessibility standard for the built environment; use of a fob system will improve monitoring and use of the facility. Identified in 10-Year Capital Needs Assessment. Potential Partners: none. Constraints: none.		
7. Gatehouse Veranda Repair	\$8,000	33%
Scope: Repair floor joists and flooring of veranda on the front of the Gatehouse; contracted engineering services. Rationale: integrity and safety of building access. Identified in 10-year Capital Needs Assessment. Potential partners: none. Constraints: the gatehouse building exterior has a <i>Heritage Act</i> designation and work will need the Mississippi Mill Heritage Committee approval; building permit.		
8. Conservation Area Property Signage	\$8,000	33%
Scope: Design, construction, installation of new signs; contracted services. Rationale: conservation area directional signage both on and off-site require updating to reflect current information and branding; additional interpretative panels are needed		

Project	Cost Estm.	Estm. Grant
to explain the ecology of the sites and MVCA’s responsibilities. Identified in 10-Year Capital Needs Assessment. Potential partners: MVCF. Constraints: permits for installation of roadside signs.		

Table 2: Current Reserve Balances¹

Reserve	Current
Glen Cairn	\$578,771
Water Control Structures	\$208,885
Conservation Areas	\$17,000
Vehicles & Equipment	\$95,403
Information Technology	\$32,000
Building	\$38,000
Total	\$970,059

3.0 NEXT STEPS

Applications will be submitted for Board-approved projects. Where indicated, MVCA will reach out to area municipalities and other conservation authorities and organizations to partner and pool resources. Should approved grants be less than projected, staff will return to the Board to confirm financial support before proceeding.

¹ Current and Projected reflect estimated YE balances for 2019 and 2021, respectively.

REPORT

3082/20

TO:	Policy & Priorities Committee, Mississippi Valley Conservation Authority
FROM:	Sally McIntyre, General Manager
RE:	Provincial Groundwater Monitoring Program
DATE:	September 28, 2020

For Discussion

Conservation Authorities (CAs) collect and submit samples on behalf of the Ministry of Environment, Conservation, and Parks (MECP) in support of the Provincial Groundwater Monitoring Network (PGWMN) program. Currently, the program consists of 8 sites (9 wells) that are downloaded up to twice a year. The MECP annually requests MVCA to collect water samples from up to all nine wells at its discretion.

MVCA costs are confined to staff time and travel totalling approximately \$1,375 - \$5,115 per year depending on the amount of sampling requested. Groundwater data obtained in our watershed is of limited value to MVCA, and the Province does not compensate MVCA for this service. Given the Section 39 provincial funding cut of \$120,000 incurred in 2019, the Board determined to cease supporting the PGWMN program in 2020.

It has since come to light that an 8-year contract dated April 1, 2018 obligates the Authority to provide the Province with six month's written notice if it wishes to terminate this service. Due to COVID-19 and the closure of provincial labs, no requests were received from MECP in 2020 therefore there was no breach of contract. However, if MVCA intends to cease delivery of the program going forward, official notice will be required.

REPORT

3083/20

TO:	Policy & Priorities Committee, Mississippi Valley Conservation Authority
FROM:	Sally McIntyre, General Manager
RE:	Employee Manual – vacation and gratuities policies
DATE:	September 28, 2020

Recommendation:

That the Policy & Priorities Committee recommend that the Board amend the *Employee Manual* to read as follows:

Section 3.1.2 Gifts and Gratuities

- a) **No employee will accept cash gifts.**
- b) **No employee will accept gifts of food and drink greater than \$10.**
- c) **Staff that receive gifts, gift-cards, or e-vouchers valued at greater than \$10 shall inform the GM.**
- d) **The GM will determine whether the gift can be accepted and an appropriate response to the giver.**
- e) **Where gifts are accepted, they will be:**
 - a. **placed into the MVCA Social Fund and used for the benefit of all staff, the beautification of the main office, or other initiatives in keeping with the mandate of the MVCA; or**
 - b. **auctioned off as a fundraising item.**

Section 7.1 Vacation

Employees cannot carry a balance of more than 4 weeks at the end of any year of employment (i.e. employment anniversary date.)

This report deals with two administrative items:

- a) Receipt of gifts and gratuities; and
- b) Carry-over of vacation balances.

1.0 GIFTS AND GRATUITIES

Earlier this year significant gifts were offered to senior staff prompting a review of the existing policy, which states:

You may accept gifts or entertainment (but never cash) with a value not greater than \$150 from clients, contractors or suppliers. These gifts must not be of a nature that might suggest they are a bribe, incentive or pay-off. All gifts must be reported to your supervisor.

You may not offer gifts or entertainment with a value greater than \$150 to any customer or potential customer of Mississippi Valley Conservation Authority.

You may not demand or agree to accept payments, services or other incentives from contractors or suppliers of Mississippi Valley Conservation Authority that are intended as a solicitation of business.

As it was felt that the value of \$150 does not align with best practices for public service entities, the first paragraph was amended (as noted in the Recommendation) to limit any perception of conflict of interest. The stricter policy was introduced in May 2020 but should be approved by the Board as an amendment to the Manual.

2.0 VACATION BALANCES

The Employee Manual states: "You can bank up to four weeks of vacation to be used in future years. Employees cannot carry a balance of more than 4 weeks at the end of any year."

Vacation banks are replenished in full on an employee's anniversary date, i.e. the date they commenced work. Therefore, where an employee's anniversary date falls late in the calendar year, it can be difficult for the employee to use the required number of vacation days before the end of the year. This policy disproportionately affects senior employees who have significant vacation leave.

The current policy was introduced in 2018 with problems identified at the end of 2019. The recommended wording change allows for differing deadlines and more reasonable timelines for all staff to take their allotted vacation.

REPORT

3084/20

TO:	Policy & Priorities Committee, Mississippi Valley Conservation Authority
FROM:	Sally McIntyre, General Manager
RE:	Rules Governing Electronic Meeting Participation
DATE:	September 28, 2020

For Discussion

1.0 PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to initiate discussion regarding the future use of electronic meeting tools for Board and Committee meetings.

2.0 BACKGROUND

Due to COVID-19, in April 2020 the Province gave permission to Conservation Authorities to meet electronically despite what their Administrative By-laws might say. The Province extended this permission beyond the Statement of Emergency in mid-September.

Currently, Section 10 of MVCA's Administrative By-law states:

Members may participate in a meeting that is open to the public by telephonic or other electronic means that permits all participants to communicate adequately with each other during the meeting. A Member participating in a meeting electronically shall not be counted in determining quorum. A Member participating in a meeting electronically shall have no vote.

A Member shall not participate electronically in a meeting that is closed to the public.

Over the past few months, the Board has gained experience at MVCA and through local councils etc. with participating remotely in decision-making meetings. There has been considerable discussion in the public sphere about the potential for people to make greater use of technology to mitigate travel impacts, time, risks, and costs in recent weeks. Therefore, it is prudent that the Board begin to discuss if and how it envisions use of virtual meetings and remote meeting participation on a go-forward basis, post the pandemic.

3.0 DISCUSSION

The following questions are posed to support exploration of this subject by the Committee. An initial list of answers is provided based upon feedback heard to date.

Under normal circumstances:

1. What are the impediments to Members meeting:
 - a) Physically in-person?
 - Time/meeting conflicts; weather conditions; vehicle access; poor health.
 - b) Remotely electronically?
 - Internet/cellular quality and access, hardware and software.
2. What are impediments to Members feeling engaged and participating:
 - a) Physically in-person?
 - Audio quality; other?
 - b) Remotely electronically?
 - Difficult to view materials and monitor/read “the room” concurrently; audio delays and poor audio; challenges with speakers list management;
3. What could be done to improve the quality of Member participation:
 - a) Physically in-person?
 - Change meeting time/dates; improve audio system; other?
 - b) Remotely electronically?
 - Use designated remote access sites with better connectivity/equipment; improve audio system to allow for integration of in-room and virtual audio streams; establish electronic meeting protocols for meeting management; hands-on training for anyone needing assistance.
4. Are there other matters/variables you believe should be considered?
 - Costs (fuel, catering); GHG emissions; other?
5. When do you feel it is appropriate that a meeting be held virtually?
6. When do you feel it appropriate that Members be allowed to participate remotely?
7. Do you feel the current limits on remote participation should stand or be amended?