

Board approved December 2022

1. Purpose

The purpose of this document is to describe the process for determining and implementing fees, and to set out the fees approved by MVCA's Board of Directors. These policies were developed in accordance with Section 21 of *The Conservation Authorities Act (CAA)* and *Ontario Regulation 686/21*, which allow for the charging of fees.

2. Definitions

Category 1 Program and Service – Provincially mandated programs and services prescribed by Ontario Regulation 686/21.

Category 2 Program and Service – Municipal programs and services subject to Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) per Section 21.1.1 of the CAA.

Category 3 Program and Services – Community programs and services that may be subject to Cost Apportionment Agreements (CAA) per Section 21.1.2 of the CAA.

3. Scope

Table 1 sets out the types of programs and services subject to fees at MVCA.

Table 1: Programs & Services Subject to Fees by Category Type

Program and Service	Cat. 1	Cat. 2	Cat. 3
a) Administration of Section 28 and 28.1 of the <i>Conservation Authorities Act (CAA)</i> including technical advice and studies.	✓		
b) Response to legal, real estate and public inquiries regarding a CAA Section 28 and 28.1 and natural hazard inquiries under the Planning Act.	✓		
c) Activities requiring a permit made pursuant to section 29 of the CAA.	✓		
d) Review and commenting on applications under other legislation noted under O. Reg. 686/21 and associated inquiries.	✓		
e) Access to Authority owned or controlled land for activities not requiring direct authority or another staff involvement.	✓		

Program and Service	Cat. 1	Cat. 2	Cat. 3
f) Municipal programs and services may include but are not limited to administering septic approvals and providing comment on <i>Planning Act</i> applications for technical and policy matters other than for consistency with natural hazard policies, such as related to natural heritage, storm water management, or other matters requested by a municipality, county, corporation or individual.		✓	
g) Extension Services (e.g. technical advice/implementation of erosion control measures, forest management/tree planting, wildlife/fisheries habitat management, management of forests/recreational land owned by others, technical studies.)			✓
h) Property rentals and recreational activities that are provided on land that is owned or controlled by the authority with the direct support or supervision of staff employed by the authority or by another person or body, or with facilities or other amenities maintained by the authority, including equipment rentals and renting facilities for special events.			✓
i) Community relations to help establish, maintain, or improve relationships between the authority and community members.			✓
j) Public education services to improve awareness of issues relating to the conservation, restoration, development, and management of natural resources in watersheds in Ontario.			✓
k) The provision of information to the public.			✓
l) The sale of products by the authority.			✓
m) Staff time and expenses for specific services not listed.	✓	✓	✓

4. Principles

MVCA fees are set with consideration given to the following guiding principles:

- Recover full-costs where feasible.
- Balance user-pay principle with maintaining affordable access for all.
- Harmonize fees with neighbouring conservation authorities in shared municipalities where feasible.

5. Public Consultation

MVCA will consult with the public a minimum of thirty (30) days prior to approving or amending the Fee Policy or Fee Schedule. Notification shall consist of:

- E-mail or direct mail to member municipalities and key stakeholder groups;
- Posting proposed changes for comment on the MVCA website; and
- Promotion of the web posting using social media.

Comments received will be provided to the Board of Directors prior to consideration of any changes.

6. Public Notification and Availability

Following approval of new fees or fee policies, MVCA shall notify the public, member municipalities, and neighbouring conservation authorities of proposed changes no less than thirty (30) days before the changes take effect. Notice shall consist of:

- E-mail or direct mail to member municipalities and key stakeholder groups;
- Posting proposed changes for comment on the MVCA website; and
- Promotion of the web posting using social media.

The MVCA website shall be updated as needed to ensure that posted fee policies and fee schedules are current and consistent with the Board's direction.

7. Review of Fees

The fee policy will be reviewed a minimum of once every four years, and the fee schedule will be reviewed annually by MVCA staff to monitor their effectiveness. Any proposed changes will be brought to the Board of Directors for consideration, normally in the fall during development of the annual budget. This does not preclude the review and update of individual schedules as needed to fulfill the operational needs of the Authority.

8. Collection of Fees

Payment of fees for programs and services can be made:

- a) in person at the MVCA administrative office during posted business hours;
- b) over the telephone during posted business hours;
- c) using direct mail;
- d) using e-transfer; and
- e) through an MVCA-approved organization and process.

Fees to be collected shall be based upon the fee schedule in effect on the date of the financial transaction. MVCA will not commence processing of applications, program registrations, or other service requests until all applicable fees have been received in full.

9. Refund of Fees

MVCA may issue refunds when:

- MVCA cancels a program or service or is otherwise unable to fulfill its service obligation;
- A payee is overcharged or overpays; and
- A payee cancels registration within pre-set timelines.

MVCA does not issue refunds for permit and planning services unless the application or service request is withdrawn before action is taken by the Authority. Where a refund is approved by the General Manager or designate, a 10% handling charge may apply.

10. Fee Appeals

Appeals shall be submitted in writing to the General Manager and state the reason for the request. The General Manager may contact the appellant or others to enable proper consideration of the appeal. The General Manager may waive, uphold, or alter the fee. The decision of the GM is final, and is not appealable to the Board of Directors. Applicants will be notified of the GM's decision and shall pay any and all stipulated fees.

11. Implementation

The Fee Policy and Schedules becomes effective as of the date set by the MVCA Board of Directors and shall be made available to the public on the MVCA website.

The establishment of this Fee Policy and Schedules supersedes and replaces all previous fee policies and/or schedules. The Policy also applies to proposals not previously invoiced (e.g. planning applications that predate the new fee schedule.)