



MEDIA RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

NVCA announces Interim CAO's work plan to deliver continuous improvement

UTOPIA, Ontario (March 3, 2025) – Sheryl Flannagan, the Nottawasaga Valley Conservation Authority's (NVCA) Interim CAO, shared a [work plan to improve operations](#) with the NVCA Board of Directors at its recent meeting.

The plan consists of four key priorities and commitments:

1. Strengthening Municipal Relationships;
2. Restoring and Enforcing Customer Service Standards;
3. Improving Planning, Permitting and Engineering Processes; and
4. Developing a Strategy for Planning, Permitting and Engineering to Complete Existing Files.

"NVCA is going through a transformative time with the upcoming recruitment of a new CAO," said Flannagan. "To ensure stability and continuity of our organization, we have implemented a focused work plan that addresses feedback from our stakeholders and member municipalities, while positioning the organization for success under new leadership."

To date, NVCA has engaged with several municipalities to discuss development priorities and address concerns. The organization reinstated a customer service strategy that lapsed in practice due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Last week, NVCA also launched a new e-permitting system, to help residents and businesses better navigate NVCA approval processes. Further, NVCA is initiating an external review to evaluate the planning, permitting and engineering processes in order to identify efficiencies and improvements.

"Conservation authorities do important work to protect people, property and our environment, but we also must ensure this work is efficient, expeditious and meets the high standards of our customers," added Jonathan Scott, Chair of NVCA. "Our goal is to ensure concerns raised in recent months are addressed and the

organization meets its commitments to our member municipalities. I am confident this plan represents a thorough approach to achieve these important goals.”

Staff at NVCA works with many partners across the Nottawasaga Watershed to avoid the loss of life and damage to property due to flooding and erosion. They restore rivers, streams, wetlands and forests, and provide environmental education opportunities to watershed residents to help them connect with our natural world and become the future stewards of our watershed. NVCA staff ensure visitors have a safe and enjoyable experience at NVCA’s 11 conservation areas, and also identify stressors that are impacting the local environment.

- 30 -

About NVCA: The Nottawasaga Valley Conservation Authority is a public agency dedicated to the preservation of a healthy environment through specialized programs to protect, conserve and enhance our water, wetlands, forests and lands.

Media contact: Chris Parker, Communications Assistant, 705-424-1479,
cparker@nvca.on.ca



Staff Report: 04-02-25-BOD

Date: 28/02/2025

To: Chair and Members of the Board of Directors

From: Sheryl Flannagan
Interim Chief Administrative Officer/Director, Corporate Services

SUBJECT: Interim CAO Workplan

Recommendation

RESOLVED THAT: the Board of Directors receive Staff Report No. 04-02-25-BOD regarding the Interim CAO workplan.

Purpose of the Staff Report

The purpose of this Staff Report is to update the Board on the Interim CAO's workplan during this transitional period and to update the Board on progress and commitments moving forward.

Background

The NVCA is going through a transformative time with the departure of the previous CAO and the upcoming recruitment of a new CAO. To ensure stability and continuity, the Interim CAO has implemented a focused workplan that addresses current challenges while positioning the organization for success under new leadership.

Issues/Analysis

The following is a list of the four key priorities and commitments.

1. Strengthening Municipal relationships

The Interim CAO, Chair, and Vice-Chair have prioritized engaging with partner municipalities to foster collaboration and address concerns. To date, meetings have been held with Wasaga Beach, New Tecumseth, and Oro-Medonte, with a meeting scheduled with Springwater on February 26th. Additionally, the Chair has issued an introductory letter inviting all partner municipalities to share any concerns or ideas with the NVCA.

Progress to Date:

- Engaged with four municipalities to discuss development priorities and address concerns
- Implemented a 48-hour response protocol for issues raised by municipal partners
- Issued a Chair's introductory letter inviting all municipalities to meet or connect with the NVCA

Continued Commitment:

Goal – Meet with any municipality that expresses interest in engaging with the NVCA

Next Steps – Continue outreach to municipalities and respond promptly to all requests for meetings.

Outcome – Strengthen municipal partnerships and identify opportunities for process improvements based on their feedback.

2. Restoring and Enforcing Customer Service Standards

The NVCA's customer service strategy and charter, implemented in 2013, lapsed in practice due to high workloads during the COVID-19 pandemic. In January 2025, the Interim CAO reinstated compliance with the customer service strategy and reminded all staff of their obligations to meet service standards. A copy of the strategy is attached (see attachment #1).

Progress to Date:

- Customer Service Strategy compliance was reinstated in January 2025
- All staff have been instructed to comply with service timelines as outlined in the charter

Continued Commitment:

Goal – Achieve full compliance with the Customer Service Strategy within Q1 2025

Next Steps – Review customer service strategy compliance with senior staff on a monthly basis and identify any issues of concern

Reporting – Provide progress updates to the Board at the end of Q2 and again at year-end

Outcome – Improve response times and enhance customer satisfaction

3. Evaluating Planning, Permitting, and Engineering processes

The NVCA recognizes the need for a comprehensive evaluation of planning, permitting, and engineering process to ensure efficiency and alignment with legislative changes. The Interim CAO is currently consulting with other CAO's to identify the best approach for this review.

Progress to Date:

- Initiated discussions with other conservation authorities to evaluate process review options
- Solicited recommendations for consultants experienced in conservation authority process evaluations.

Continued Commitment:

Goal – Initiate an external process review by March 31, 2025

Next Steps – Select a consultant or peer conservation authority(s) to conduct the review and set a clear timeline for completion

Outcome – Identify inefficiencies, streamline workflows and enhance service delivery

4. Developing a backlog reduction strategy for Planning, Permitting, and Engineering

The NVCA is exploring immediate and long-term solutions to address the backlog in planning, permitting and engineering files. While process improvements from item 3 will drive long-term efficiency, short-term solutions are also under review.

Progress to Date:

- Considering third-party consultants to expedite peer reviews, but cost estimates (approximately \$100,000) raise concerns due to budget constraints

- Exploring internal measures to reduce workload on engineering staff without compromising service standards

Continued Commitment:

Goal – Present a backlog reduction strategy to the Board by the March 2025 meeting

Next Steps – Conclude process review from item 3 to identify internal efficiencies, investigate phased or capped use of consultants if internal measures are insufficient, and provide the Board with a cost-benefit analysis before committing significant funds to peer reviews.

Outcome – Reduce backlog while maintaining fiscal responsibility and service standards.

Relevance to Authority Policy/Mandate

The workplan directly supports the NVCA's mandate under the *Conservation Authorities Act* by ensuring efficient operations, enhancing customer service and fostering productive relationships with partner municipalities.

Impact on Authority Finances

Staff time to prepare this report is addressed in the 2025 budget. Any additional costs related to external consultants for process reviews or backlog reduction will be brought to the Board for approval with a clear cost-benefit analysis.

Climate Change Implications

There are no climate change implications related to this report.

Reviewed by:

Original Signed by

Sheryl Flannagan

Interim Chief Administrative Officer/
Director, Corporate Services

Approved for submission by:

Original Signed by

Sheryl Flannagan

Interim Chief Administrative Officer/
Director Corporate Services

Attachment #1 – Customer Service Strategy