



2024 to 2027 Business Plan

Service: Kettle Creek Conservation Authority

\$1.22

Annual cost for the
average rate payer
(2024 to 2027)

0.03%

Of the 2024 to 2027
City of London Net
Property Tax
Supported Budget

Who we are:

- Conservation Authorities are local watershed management agencies that deliver programs and services to protect and manage impacts on water and other natural resources, in partnership with all levels of government, landowners and many other organizations.
- The Kettle Creek Conservation Authority (KCCA), incorporated in 1965, works in partnership with 7 member municipalities (London, St. Thomas, Central Elgin, Southwold, Malahide, Thames Centre and Middlesex Centre) which appoint 10 members to the Board of Directors. The Board of Directors makes program decisions and allocates funds.
- The Conservation Authorities Act and its related Regulations prescribe the roles and responsibilities of conservation authorities.

What we do:

- Maintain and/or enhance programs and services that safeguard people and property from natural hazards such as flooding and erosion and a changing climate.
- Maintain and/or enhance programs and services that monitor or contribute to the environmental health of the watershed through collaborative, integrated science.
- Maintain and/or enhance Authority owned lands to support outdoor recreational opportunities, protect natural features and mitigate the effects of invasive species.
- Promote a positive community profile of KCCA's programs and services and foster respect for the Kettle Creek watershed through outreach, engagement and education.
- Ensure effective and efficient delivery of KCCA's programs and services in an equitable and respectful manner.

Why we do it:

- **Mandatory** - KCCA is mandated by the Conservation Authorities Act, and its related regulations to provide programs and services designed to further the conservation, restoration, development and management of natural resources in watershed in Ontario. KCCA undertakes watershed-based programs to protect people and property from flooding and other natural hazards and to conserve natural resources for economic, social and environmental benefits. Positive actions in one part of the watershed will have positive impacts downstream. All municipalities benefit when these programs are undertaken on a watershed basis.

The following table provides an overview of the budget for this service:

Budget Summary (\$000's)	2024	2025	2026	2027	2024 to 2027 TOTAL
Gross Operating Expenditures	\$2,974	\$3,013	\$3,098	\$3,188	\$12,273
Other Revenues	-\$2,329	-\$2,321	-\$2,378	-\$2,439	-\$9,467
Net Operating Budget	\$645	\$692	\$720	\$749	\$2,806
Net Tax Levy Supported Operating Budget	\$258	\$277	\$288	\$299	\$1,122
Wastewater and Treatment Rate Supported Operating Budget	\$387	\$415	\$432	\$450	\$1,684
Total Capital Expenditures	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Full-Time Equivalents (FTE's)	19.0	19.0	19.0	19.0	N/A

Reflects 2024 to 2027 adopted City budget as of December 1, 2025.

Linkage to the 2023 to 2027 Strategic Plan

This service supports the following Strategic Areas of Focus in the 2023 to 2027 Strategic Plan:



Environmental, Socio-economic Equity and Governance (ESG) Considerations

Environmental, Socio-economic Equity and Governance Profile for this service:

Environmental:

- KCCA's business is closely aligned with a number of actions in London's Climate Emergency Action Plan and assists the City of London in increasing resilience to extreme weather events through the implementation of a science-based integrated watershed approach. Each one of KCCA's programs and services works in collaboration to inform watershed residents about the natural environment in which they live, work and play. Programs and services protect life and property from natural hazards such as flooding and erosion and mitigate the effects of natural hazards including a rapidly changing climate by planting trees, undertaking stewardship works such as wetland and tall grass prairie creation and managing and protecting significant landholdings from invasive species while ensuring these areas are available for both passive and active recreation.
- KCCA ensures that its programs and services are relevant to the user groups it serves by complying with the Conservation Authorities Act and its related regulations, consulting regularly with the community and user groups and working closely with member municipalities.
- KCCA's business plan addresses a variety of climate emergency aspects as summarized below:

Climate Emergency Aspect/Issue/Impact: Energy Use and Conservation.

Climate Emergency Response:

- Phasing out gas powered hand-tools and switching to battery powered alternatives.
- Investigating Electric Vehicle use for fleet and researching investment to provide charging units on Conservation Authority properties.
- Meter readers installed in campgrounds to help campers monitor and reduce energy consumption.
- Continuing pandemic business protocols such as on-line meetings to reduce travel.
- Continuing and enhancing electronic business practices (paperless accounting) to reduce paper usage and carbon emissions.

Climate Emergency Aspect/Issue/Impact: Carbon Sequestration Potential Natural Heritage Loss/Disconnection
Biodiversity Loss

Climate Emergency Response:

- KCCA preserves and protects 548 acres of land including (woodlots, in-land lakes, wetlands and significant areas).
- Manages invasive species on KCCA's own landholdings and provides technical advice and funding for landowners to undertake management plans on their own property.
- Planting an average of 50,000 trees per year – making KCCA the top planter of all time in the City of London's One Million Tree Challenge.
- Manages the Elgin Clean Water Program and the Kettle Creek Clean Water Initiative that provide incentives to landowners to undertake stewardship projects on their own lands including wetland creation, tall grass prairie establishment and erosion control.
- Acquired 63 new acres of land through land donation program from 2022-2023.

Climate Emergency Aspect/Issue/Impact: Extreme Weather Events Risks/Rising Insurance Costs and Shifting
Access to Capital Requirements

Climate Emergency Response:

- Operate a flood forecasting and warning system to ensure that residents and municipalities are aware of potential flood related events in a timely manner.
- Issues Flood Warning messages and conducts outreach and education on flood forecasting program and safety measures.
- Monitor watershed conditions to detect low water conditions and support the Water Response Team in responding to low water events.
- Acquire and maintain floodplain mapping and conduct necessary communication initiatives to inform stakeholders and update mapping, Board approved policies, official plans and KCCA's on-line mapping tool.
- Deliver the Authority's permitting responsibilities, ensuring compliance with Ontario Regulation 181/06 and related policies, site inspections, communications with agents and consultants, and appropriate enforcement action.
- Meet the Authority's delegated responsibility to represent the Provincial interest in natural hazards (Section 3.1 of the Provincial Policy Statement) providing technical information and advice on land-use planning documents (Official Plans and Zoning By-Law Amendments, Subdivisions, Consents and Minor Variances).

Socio-economic Equity:

KCCA works toward creating an inclusive work environment respecting ethnic backgrounds, religious beliefs, gender expression, sexual orientation and physical or mental ability.

KCCA is taking actions to address barriers to inclusion in its programs and services including the following:

- Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act compliant website.
- Accessible Administration office, accessible pools at both Dalewood and Lake Whittaker Conservation Area, accessible dock at Lake Whittaker Conservation Area.
- Training provided to employees and board members on Equity, Inclusion and Diversity and Truth and Reconciliation.
- KCCA maintains 28 kilometres of natural surfaced hiking trails with 19 kilometres, or 67%, open for free access to the public.
- ReWild the Family program offers a free weekend of camping and all the associated gear to families that have never camped before due to socio-economic hardship. In 2023, four families participated in the program.
- The Environmental Youth Corps provides a no cost opportunity for any interested youth to participate in local environmental projects – by identifying local stewardship projects and participating in implementation.

Governance:

- The Conservation Authorities (CA) Act and its related regulations guide the programs and services offered by KCCA and hold it accountable to the Province and its member municipalities.
- KCCA is bound by the CA Act and Ontario Regulation 686/21 to offer the following programs and services:
 - Risk of Natural Hazards (Planning and Regulation, Flood Forecasting/Warning/Low Water, Dam Operations, Technical Studies).
 - Conservation and Management of CA Lands.
 - Provincial Water Quality Monitoring.
 - Drinking Water Source Protection Program.
 - General Operating Expenses (Administration, Communications, Information Technology and Geographic Information System (GIS)).
- As a result of Ontario Regulations 686/21 additional programs and services have been added which need to be in place by December 31, 2024, including:
 1. Conservation Areas Management Plan – strategy to guide the management of Conservation Authority owned lands.
 2. Conservation Area Lands Inventory.
 3. Watershed Based Resource Management Strategy.
 4. Ice Management Plan.

KCCA has no option but to meet the requirements outlined in the CA Act and Ontario Regulation 686/21. KCCA's programs and services are monitored by KCCA's Board of Directors, which is comprised of representatives from KCCA's seven member municipalities. The Board makes program decisions and allocates funds.

KCCA's Board of Directors meets monthly on the third Wednesday of every month. Board meetings are fully transparent and documented with agendas, meeting minutes and recordings available on KCCA's website. Meetings are also streamed live to Facebook. Audited financial statements, budgets, annual reports are also posted to KCCA's website.

The Board of Directors' contact information is also publicly available on the Authority's website.

The following section provides an overview of the key activities the service plans to undertake from 2024 to 2027 to implement the Corporation's 2023 to 2027 Strategic Plan, as well as an overview of the risks and challenges the service is anticipated to experience during this period:

Service Highlights 2024 to 2027

- Continue transition to paperless work environment by digitizing historical records and making more services and resources available on-line.
- Continue to mitigate climate change and the loss of forest cover by pursuing funding opportunities and planting on average, 50,000 trees per year throughout the watershed, maintaining status as Reforest London's top tree planter and bolstering wetland cover by undertaking wetland creation projects through the Elgin Clean Water Program and the Kettle Creek Clean Water Initiative with at least 3 hectares of wetland per year.
- As a tributary to Lake Erie, a source of drinking water, KCCA is committed to working collaboratively with a variety of agencies to reduce phosphorous loadings by undertaking erosion control projects, tree planting, wetland creation and other projects as identified in the Lake Erie Action Plan. Specifically supporting phosphorous mitigation measures within rural areas of the City of London in the Kettle Creek watershed through the creation, enhancement and/or restoration of wetlands, planting of stream/field buffers, tallgrass prairie plantings, and erosion control projects.
- Continue and enhance environmental education opportunities in the watershed including the Environmental Youth Corps, Carolinian Forest Festival and the St. Thomas Elgin Children's Water Festival.
- Improving access, public safety and improvements to 7 conservation areas and associated 28 kilometres of recreational trails including revamping the Kirk Cousins Management Area, a conservation area in the City of London, by updating the parking lot, trail entrance and undertaking invasive species management.
- KCCA's campgrounds and other fee for service program areas help to support almost 50% of staffing expenses and generate revenue to implement capital asset management plans.
- Continuously improving KCCA's floodplain mapping to ensure that development is directed away from natural hazards and accounts for a changing climate.

- Fulfilling requirements of Ontario Regulation 686/21 by ensuring the following items are completed by December 31, 2024, including: Conservation Areas Management Plan – strategy to guide the management of Conservation Authority owned lands; Conservation Area Lands Inventory; Watershed Based Resource Management Strategy and Ice Management Plan.

Risks and Challenges Anticipated in 2024 to 2027

- KCCA is obligated to deliver all the mandatory programs and services outlined in Ontario Regulation 686/21 by December 31, 2024. A legislative business case was approved as part of the 2024 to 2027 Multi-Year Budget to secure funding to back-fill for the resources required to fulfill the new legislative requirements.
- Use of KCCA's passive recreation facilities continues to increase, taxing staffing levels as well as uncontrollable costs, such as proper maintenance and safety measures. While the use of KCCA's passive recreation trails has increased, staffing levels have remained constant.
- Inflationary pressures are being mitigated by staging the implementation of a 2022 Salary and Pay Equity review over five years – however, staffing retention, cost of living and succession planning will remain pressures for years 2024 to 2027.
- KCCA's water control infrastructure is aging and must be appropriately accounted for in capital asset management planning.
- In late 2025, the Ontario government proposed consolidating its 36 conservation authorities into 7 regional ones, under this proposal, KCCA would be consolidated into the new Lake Erie Regional Conservation Authority together with seven other CA's and encompass 81 municipalities. This new governance structure is proposed to be effective following the municipal elections in 2026.

Other reference information and links:

- Link to Kettle Creek Conservation Authority website www.kettlecreekconservation.on.ca

Contact:

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