



## STAFF REPORT

THE CORPORATION OF THE TOWN OF COBOURG

# Community Services, Protection, and Economic Development Standing Committee

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Report to: Mayor, Deputy Mayor, and Councillors  
From: Brian Geerts, Director, Community Services  
Standing Committee Date: January 10, 2024  
Report Number: COMM-2024-001  
Council Meeting Date: January 31, 2024  
Subject: **Ganaraska Region Conservation Authority MOU**

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### 1. Recommendation:

THAT Council receive this report for information; and

FURTHER THAT Council direct staff to prepare a bylaw to enter into a Memorandum of Understanding with the Ganaraska Region Conservation Authority for services rendered to the Town of Cobourg; and

FURTHER THAT Council approves the MOU effective to January 1, 2024, so as to reflect the full fiscal year of the GRCA and ensure compliance with O.Reg 687/21 under the Conservation Authorities Act.

### 2. Executive Summary:

The purpose of this report is to provide background on the request from the Ganaraska River Conservation Authority (GRCA) to enter into an MOU for services based on new legislation introduced by the province.

Conservation Authorities in Ontario have a unique purpose and specialized knowledge that can benefit communities in many ways. Their Category 1 services

provide life-safety measures that can only be efficiently and effectively accomplished at the watershed level. Category 2 and 3 services add value to local governance services in a way that can be tailored to suit local needs and preferences.

### **3. Background**

New legislation introduced by the Province of Ontario changed the ways that Conservation Authorities in Ontario can deliver services with and for local municipalities. The Association of Municipalities of Ontario provides an excellent summary of the changes (attached).

The following link leads to Ontario Regulation 687/21 which outlines the transition plan and new agreement structures for programs and services under 21.1.2 of the Conservation Authorities Act.

[O. Reg. 687/21: TRANSITION PLANS AND AGREEMENTS FOR PROGRAMS AND SERVICES UNDER SECTION 21.1.2 OF THE ACT \(ontario.ca\)](#)

On October 2, 2023, Cobourg Council received correspondence from the GRCA regarding a proposed MOU for services.

[Home - RC Oct02 2023 \(escribemeetings.com\)](#)

Staff reviewed the information provided by the GRCA and held a meeting with the GRCA staff in person at the Cobourg Community Centre on November 1, 2023. After the meeting, senior staff reviewed and discussed the draft MOU's details. The GRCA provided updates to the MOU based on in-person discussions and information shared via email following the meeting.

### **4. Discussion:**

The new regulations introduced by the Province stipulate three categories of services to be delivered by conservation authorities:

1. Category 1 programs and services - the mandatory programs and services provided under section 21.1 of the Act.
2. Category 2 programs and services - the municipal programs and services provided under section 21.1.1 of the Act.
3. Category 3 programs and services - the other programs and services provided under section 21.1.2 of the Act.

Category 1 services are to be funded by the municipality and are mostly related to flood protection and hazard management. Category 2 services are delivered as requested by a municipality and can include such services such as erosion control

or planning review. Category 3 services are any other additional services benefiting the watershed that a local municipality agrees to support financially.

The stated purpose of the new regulations is to add transparency and consistency to funding streams and services provided by conservation authorities in Ontario.

The MOU proposed by the GRCA focuses on two service areas of benefit to the community:

- |                                 |                              |
|---------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1. Watershed Monitoring         | \$5,000.00                   |
| 2. Option for Category Transfer | \$7,756.00 (3% of 2024 levy) |

Watershed monitoring is a critical service the conservation authority provides that allows for emergency planning and flood control for the Town of Cobourg. The second item is a contingency item to be used if a category 3 service sustains a shortfall *and* there is sufficient funding within category 1 services. The GRCA commits to notify the town if this contingency funding mechanism is utilized.

## **5. Financial Impact and Budget**

Schedule A services will be reviewed annually in coordination with the municipal budget process.

## **6. Relationship to Council's Strategic Plan Priorities 2023 to 2027 and beyond:**

- Thriving Community
- Service Excellence
- Sustainability

## **7. Public Engagement:**

N/A

## **8. Attachments:**

Attachment 1 - AMO Summary of Conservation Act Changes  
Attachment 2 - Draft MOU and Schedule A Services

## Report Approval Details

Document Title:	GRCA MOU.docx
Attachments:	- AMOFactSheet1CAsOverview20211027.pdf - Ganaraska Conservation - MoU.pdf
Final Approval Date:	Jan 3, 2024

This report and all of its attachments were approved and signed as outlined below:

**Tracey Vaughan, Chief Administrative Officer - Jan 3, 2024 - 11:24 AM**