

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

FND–BOD-07-21

November 25, 2021

**Meeting - 10:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.**

**Lunch – 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.**

Ball’s Falls Centre for Conservation

REVISED AGENDA

***“The Niagara Peninsula Watershed is located on the traditional territory of indigenous peoples dating back countless of generations. We want to show our respect for their contributions and recognize their role in treaty-making in what is now Ontario.”***

ROLL CALL

Board of Directors:

Mike Balsom

Donna Cridland

Mickey DiFruscio

Robert Foster, Treasurer

Tom Insinna, Chair

Gayle Wood, Vice Chair/Secretary

NPCA

Brenda Johnson, Chair

Chandra Sharma, CAO/Secretary-Treasurer

Lise Gagnon, Director, Corporate Services, NPCF Assistant Treasurer

Adam Christie, Director, Land Operations

Rebecca Hull, Manager Strategic Business Planning and Public Relations

Gina Shaule, NPCA Administrative Assistant

1. ADOPTION OF AGENDA

* 1. Addition of Items
  2. Change in Order of Items
  3. Motion to approve Agenda  
       
     **Recommended:**  
       
     **That the Agenda for the NPCF Board of Directors’ Meeting FND-BOD-07-21 held November 25, 2021 be approved as printed.**

2. DECLARATION OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST

3. APPROVAL OF FOUNDATION MINUTES

**3.1** Minutes of the NPCF Board of Directors Meeting dated October14, 2021 (attached)

**Recommended:**

**That the minutes of the NPCF Board of Directors FND-BOD-06-21 meeting held October 14, 2021 be approved as printed.**

4. COMMENTS FROM THE CHAIR

Foundation Chair Insinna will provide comments to the Board of Directors.

5. COMMENTS FROM THE NPCA CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

Chief Administrative Officer/Secretary, Chandra Sharma will overview updates from the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority. CAO Sharma will provide a formal presentation on the Authority’s approved Strategic Plan under agenda item 9.1.

6. CORRESPONDENCE

**6.1** Attached is correspondence from Niagara College, dated August 2021 thanking the Foundation for their educational scholarship contributions and including a Financial Summary.

**Recommended:**

**That the correspondence from Niagara College dated August 2021 regarding the Foundation’s educational scholarship funds be received.**

7. DEPUTATIONS AND PRESENTATIONS

Adam Christie, NPCA Director, Land Management will provide a presentation regarding

a request to utilize Nevada funding for conservation area signage.

8. COMMITTEE UPDATES

**8.1** The Gallery at Ball’s Falls Centre for Conservation Capital Campaign (attached)

Campaign Co-Chair, Rob Foster will provide the Board with and update on the Capital Campaign for The Gallery Project at Ball’s Falls Centre for Conservation.

9. ITEMS FOR APPROVAL

9.1 NPCA Strategic Plan (attached)

Report No. FND-BOD-02-2021 regarding the NPCA’s approved Strategic Plan is attached to the agenda. CAO Sharma will provide a presentation on the Authority’s new Strategic Plan.

**Recommended:**

**That the NPCF receive the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority’s Strategic Plan 2021-2031; and**

**FURTHER that the NPCF consider the 10-year priorities within the Strategic Plan for future fundraising initiatives.**

9.2 Draft Interim Fundraising Plan (attached)

Vice Chair Wood and CAO Sharma will review a Draft Interim Fundraising Plan for 2022, for discussion and input from the Board of Directors.

**Recommended:**

**THAT the Draft Interim Fundraising Strategy be received and accepted, and**

**FURTHER that a proposal be brought back to the Board at the first meeting in 2022 for a formal long term fundraising strategy engaging fundraising professionals in Niagara.**

3, 2021

10. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

**10.1** Foundation Financial Reporting

NPCA Director, Corporate Services/Foundation Assistant Treasurer, Lise Gagnon will provide a verbal report to the Board of Directors relating to the finances.

**Recommended:**

**That the update on finances provided by NPCA Director, Corporate Services/Foundation Assistant Treasurer, Lise Gagnon, be received for information.**

11. NEW BUSINESS

**11.1** Agenda and Minutes Electronic Management System for 2022 (verbal update from CAO)

**11.2** Timelines for the NPCF Annual Report and Audit (verbal update from NPCA CAO)

**11.3** Election of Officers

With the departure of Gayle Wood from the Board effective December 3, 2021, an election for the position of Vice Chair and Secretary will be conducted by CAO Sharma.

**Recommended:**

**That \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ be elected as Vice Chair until the 2022 Annual Meeting.**

**That \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ be elected as Secretary until the 2022 Annual Meeting.**

**That Rebecca Hull be appointed as Assistant Secretary to the NPCF.**

12. CLOSED SESSION

There are no Closed Session items identified for the agenda.

13. ADJOURNMENT

**Recommended:**

**That the FND-BOD-07-21 meeting held November 25, 2021 be adjourned at \_\_\_\_a.m.; and**

**Further that the Board reconvene at the call of the Chair.**

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BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

FND–BOD-06-21

October 14, 2021

**10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.**

Video Meeting

In accordance with Ontario Regulation 107/20

made under

*The Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act*

MINUTES

Chair Insinna called the meeting to order at 10:01a.m. and provided the following indigenous acknowledgment. The Chair also indicated that he will be receiving the indigenous acknowledgement statement used by Niagara Region for future reference.

***“The Niagara Peninsula Watershed is located on the traditional territory of indigenous peoples dating back countless of generations. We want to show our respect for their contributions and recognize their role in treaty-making in what is now Ontario.”***

ROLL CALL

The Chair outlined that the meeting had a quorum and welcomed the Board Members and NPCA staff. NPCA CAO, Chandra Sharma, introduced Rebecca Hull as the new Manager, Strategic Business Planning and Public Relations, who will be devoting 30% of her time to the Foundation. Ms. Hull introduced herself and her background experience.

Board of Directors:

Mike Balsom, Member

Donna Cridland, Member

Mickey DiFruscio, Member

Tom Insinna, Chair

Gayle Wood, Vice Chair/Secretary

Regrets:

Robert Foster, Treasurer

NPCA Staff

Chandra Sharma, CAO/Secretary-Treasurer

Lise Gagnon, Director, Corporate Services, NPCF Assistant Treasurer

Adam Christie, Director, Land Operations

Rebecca Hull, Manager Strategic Business Planning and Public Relations

Gina Shaule, NPCA Administrative Assistant

1. ADOPTION OF AGENDA

* 1. Addition of Items

Member Wood requested an additional item be considered under “New Business” on the Ontario Not for Profit Corporations Act (ONFPCA).

* 1. Change in Order of Items
  2. Motion to approve Agenda

**Resolution No. BOD-52-21**

**Moved by: Mike Balsom**

**Seconded by: Gayle Wood  
  
That the Agenda for the NPCF Board of Directors’ Meeting held October 14, 2021 be approved, as amended to include an item under New Business on the ONFPCA.**

**CARRIED**

2. DECLARATION OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest at the meeting.

3. APPROVAL OF FOUNDATION MINUTES

**3.1** Minutes of the NPCF Board of Directors Meeting dated August 12, 2021

**3.2** Closed Session Minutes of the Board of Directors Meeting dated August 12, 2021

**Resolution No: BOD-53-21**

**Moved by: Mickey DiFruscio**

**Seconded by: Donna Cridland**

**That the minutes of the NPCF Board of Directors meeting held August 12, 2021 be approved as printed.**

**CARRIED**

**Resolution No.: BOD-54-21**

**Moved by: Gayle Wood**

**Seconded by: Mike Balsom**

**That the minutes of the NPCF Board of Directors Closed Session meeting held August 12, 2021 be approved as printed.**

**CARRIED**

4. COMMENTS FROM THE CHAIR

The Foundation Chair noted that he will be providing the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority’s Board of Directors with his annual presentation at their Board of Directors’ meeting on October 15, 2021.

The Chair advised of the need for new recruits to the Board of Directors and that he was currently having discussions with potential members. He asked Board Members to consider providing recommendations regarding new members.

Chair Insinna thanked the NPCA staff and Member Wood for their assistance during the transition of the Foundation since the departure of the Executive Coordinator.

5. COMMENTS FROM THE NPCA CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

Chief Administrative Officer/Secretary-Treasurer, Chandra Sharma thanked the Foundation Board for their continued partnership with the Conservation Authority.

CAO Sharma advised that the NPCA’s new Strategic Plan will be presented to her Board on October 15, 2021 and that would like to present the final document to the Foundation Board at their December 9, 2021 meeting.

The CAO advised that the NPCA Director, Corporate Services and Foundation Assistant Treasurer, Lise Gagnon, is developing a new Budget Information System which she recommended should be applied to the Foundation.

CAO Sharma further advised that the Authority is introducing a new Records Management System to move corporate files into a digital format. Foundation files will also be incorporated into this system. Member Wood thanked CAO Sharma and advised that the Foundation spent the last two years updating their files which should be in good shape to be incorporated into the new Authority system.

6. CORRESPONDENCE

**6.1** Letter from the Office of Niagara Regional Chair Bradley

Chair Insinna advised that a letter was received from Ms. Bridget Nuttall, Executive Assistant to Regional Chair Jim Bradley, advising that the NPCF was selected as a recipient of proceeds, in the amount of $10,000, from the 2021 Regional Chair’s Charity Golf Tournament.

Chair Insinna has provided Regional Chair Bradley with a letter thanking him and the Region for selecting the NPCF as a charity of choice to receive proceeds from the 2021 Charity Golf Tournament.

**Resolution No.: BOD-55-21**

**Moved by: Donna Cridland**

**Seconded by: Mike Balsom**

**That the $10,000 received from the Niagara Region’s Charity Golf Tournament be directed to the Foundation’s Capital Campaign for The Gallery Project at Ball’s Falls Centre for Conservation.**

**CARRIED**

7. DEPUTATIONS AND PRESENTATIONS

There were no deputations or presentations scheduled for this meeting.

8. COMMITTEE PRESENTATIONS

**8.1** The Gallery at Ball’s Falls Centre for Conservation Capital Campaign

In the absence of Campaign Co-Chair, Rob Foster Chair Insinna advised that Board that just shy of $42,000 has been raised in 2021 toward the $60,000 target for Phase 2 of the Capital Campaign for The Gallery Project at Ball’s Falls Centre for Conservation.

**Resolution No.: BOD-56-21**

**Moved by: Mickey DiFruscio**

**Seconded by: Donna Cridland**

**That the Board receive the verbal update from Chair Insinna on behalf of Campaign Chair, Rob Foster, regarding the Gallery Campaign at Ball’s Falls Centre for Conservation.**

**CARRIED**

The Board of Directors agreed that Chair Insinna will provide Gallery Campaign Chair Foster with a copy of Resolution No. BOD-55-21 and request him to host another Campaign Committee Meeting in October to address how the additional $18,000 of the 2021 campaign will be raised. The Chair will request Campaign Chair Foster to reach out to the Auditors for a donation as well as request NPCA staff to launch a media campaign, Member Cridland volunteered to be on the Capital Campaign Committee.

9. ITEMS FOR APPROVAL

There were no items requiring approval on the agenda.

10. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

**10.1** Foundation Financial Reporting

NPCA Director, Corporate Services, and Assistant Foundation Treasurer, Lise Gagnon provided a verbal report to the Board of Directors relating to the finances. Ms. Gagnon outlined that she provides two reports to the Foundation on a quarterly basis – a fund balance report and an operational position vis a vis the approved budget.

Board Members asked several questions of clarification. Chair Insinna indicated that he would call the three Education Bursary receipts that still need to forward information to the Foundation.

It was noted that a report to request Nevada funding will be presented to the Board at their December 9, 2021 meeting.

**Resolution No.: BOD-57-21**

**Moved by: Mike Balsom**

**Seconded by: Donna Cridland**

**That the update on finances provided by NPCA Director, Corporate Services/Foundation Assistant Treasurer, Lise Gagnon, be received for information.**

**CARRIED**

**10.2** NPCF Transition – Status of NPCF Activities

The Vice Chair reviewed a Briefing Note appended to the agenda regarding

the status of Foundation activities, programs, and projects in light of the departure of

the Executive Coordinator.

**Resolution No.: BOD-58-21**

**Moved by: Gayle Wood**

**Seconded by: Donna Cridland**

**That the Briefing Note to Chair Insinna and CAO Sharma dated September 26, 2021, regarding the status of Foundation activities, programs and projects be received.**

**CARRIED**

11. ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

11.1 Greater Toronto Area (GTA) Conservation Foundation Review

The Vice Chair reviewed the report on the GTA Conservation Foundations which was originally considered in February 2021. Members discussed the merits of the report and the Board agreed that Chair Insinna should meet with NPCA Chair Johnson and CAO Sharma to discuss how to move consideration of this report forward.

12. NEW BUSINESS

Vice Chair Wood advised the Board that the Ontario Not for Profit Corporations Act will be proclaimed on October 19, 2021 and the Foundation will have three years to bring itself into alignment with the Act. Vice Chair Wood indicated that Bylaw #8 for the Foundation moved the organization into alignment with the Act but should be reviewed again in the future.

13. CLOSED SESSION

There are no Closed Session items identified for the agenda.

14. ADJOURNMENT

**Resolution No.: BOD-59-21**

**Moved by: Mickey DiFruscio**

**That the FND-BOD-06-21 meeting be adjourned at 11:53 a.m.; and**

**Further that the Board reconvene at 10:00 a.m. on December 9, 2021 or at the call of the Chair.**

**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Tom Insinna, Chair D. Gayle Wood, Vice Chair/**

**Secretary**



Report To: Niagara Peninsula Conservation Foundation

Subject: NPCA Strategic Plan: 2021-2031

Report No.: FND-BOD-02-2021

Date: November 25, 2021

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Recommendations:

1. **THAT** the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority's Strategic Plan 2021-2031 **BE RECEIVED.**
2. AND **FURTHER THAT** the NPCF be requested to **consider 10-year strategic priorities in their future fundraising efforts**.

Purpose:

To update the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Foundation Board on the NPCA 10 Year Strategic Plan (Report No. FA-59-21) approved by the Board on October 15, 2021.

Background:

The development of the new NPCA Strategic Plan was identified as a Board priority for 2020. As a result, an *Ad Hoc* Strategic Planning Committee was formed in July 2020 to support the staff-led process of creating a new 10-year Strategic Plan to guide future organizational priorities with feasible, measurable performance targets to evaluate NPCA's collective outcomes and impact. All deliverables noted in the Committee's Terms of Reference have been completed, including a draft Strategic Plan.

From January to August 2021, the NPCA consulted broadly with its Board of Directors, Public Advisory Committee, staff, Indigenous groups, partners, members of the public, and other local stakeholders to guide the NPCA's strategic direction for the next 10 years. The input received was essential in shaping and facilitating the development of our new strategic plan.

On September 17, 2021, the Strategic Planning Committee passed a motion recommending that the draft Strategic Plan 2021-2031 be brought to the Full Authority for approval (Recommendation No. SPC-17-2021). Additionally, on October 5, 2021, the Public Advisory Committee passed resolution PAC-03-21, endorsing the draft strategic plan. Finally, the Strategic Plan was approved by the Full Authority on October 15, 2021.

Discussion:

Strategic Plan (2021-2031)

NPCA's new 10-year strategic plan reaffirms NPCA's commitment to the mandate/purpose of Conservation Authorities in Ontario. Please refer to Appendix 1 for a detailed version or view the published version: <https://issuu.com/npca/docs/strat_plan_-_layout-_issuu>. This new strategic plan reflects the importance of collaboration between people, communities, and organizations on a collective response to a changing landscape through six overarching priorities and twenty-one specific, measurable goals. The plan builds on the principles of conservation leadership, customer service, collaboration, and accountability to nature. It provides strategic direction for the NPCA and is vital for charting the course of conservation in our watershed toward achieving vibrant and healthy nature for all.

For the first time, the NPCA's strategic plan focuses on outcomes and performance measures. Each strategic priority has specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, and timely goals to ensure the NPCA delivers on its mandate and particular outcomes. The report also includes comprehensive metrics to measure the success of our organization's activities and to support the achievement of our key performance indicators (KPIs). Strategic actions and priorities will be integrated within the Watershed-based Resource Management Strategy to be developed as a requirement of the updated *Conservation Authority Act* regulations (through Bill 229).

With this significant milestone completed, the next step is to begin implementing the strategic plan by developing an operational plan that sets out specific actions to enable the NPCA to meet its goals in collaboration with our communities and partners from 2021-2031. In addition, progress on outcomes will be monitored and shared publicly through the NPCA's Annual Report.

Outreach and Engagement

At the beginning of the strategic planning process, a comprehensive outreach and engagement plan was developed to inform and encourage participation from internal and external stakeholders in the development of a new Strategic Plan.

Public outreach efforts were successful and showed overall support of the NPCA's strategic plan. In spring 2021, the NPCA administered a public survey to obtain feedback on draft strategic priorities proposed by staff toward a shared vision. In August, the NPCA hosted a virtual public information session to further engage the public and stakeholders in providing their feedback on key components of the draft strategic plan through a moderated Q&A session and via the NPCA's Get Involved online engagement platform (until September 3, 2021). The NPCA also accommodated non-virtual methods of engagement (e.g., paper survey, hardcopy meeting materials mailed, and phone calls) upon request.

An Outreach and Engagement Report (Appendix 2) compiles and synthesizes the results of all engagement efforts toward the development of NPCA's new strategic plan.

Financial Implications:

This 10-year Strategic Plan presents an excellent road map for Foundation's future fundraising campaigns. NPCA staff will work with the NPCF to help develop proposals and campaigns to diversify self-generated revenues for NPCA activities aligned with the Foundation's objectives.

Links to Policy/Strategic Plan

Approval of the strategic plan will guide the organization's future and fulfill the NPCA's responsibilities as part of the *Conservation Authorities Act* (2020).

Related Appendices:

Appendix 1: NPCA Strategic Plan: 2021-2031

Appendix 2: Outreach and Engagement Report: NPCA Strategic Plan 2021-2031

Authored by:

*Original Signed by:*

Natalie Green, M.Sc., PMP

Project Manager

Reviewed & Submitted by:

*Original Signed by:*

Chandra Sharma

Chief Administrative Officer/Secretary-Treasurer

**Appendix 2**

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| Outreach & Engagement Report: |
| NPCA Strategic Plan: 2021-2031 |

|  |
| --- |
| October 2021 |

# Introduction

In 2020, the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority (NPCA) launched a staff-led strategic planning process to guide the organization’s priorities and operations from 2021-2031. Due to the unforeseen impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and changes to the Conservation Authorities Act, there was a delay in formally launching the strategic planning process until January 2021.

During the early planning stages, the NPCA committed to communicating frequently and creating opportunities for meaningful, respectful dialogue with the watershed community, partners, Indigenous groups, and other stakeholders throughout the entire strategic planning process. NPCA staff conducted a thorough stakeholder analysis and developed a comprehensive plan to communicate and engage with various internal and external stakeholders.

The NPCA relied on virtual engagement tools to ensure broad public and community participation; however, given the restrictions of the pandemic, accommodations were made for those who did not have computer or internet access to participate in the public engagement process.

As a result of the extensive outreach and engagement efforts, the NPCA earned its highest project engagement with more than 5,700 visits to the Strategic Plan project webpage on Get Involved NPCA portal, more than 500 responses to the public survey of proposed strategic priorities and shared vision, and more than 70 participants attending the virtual public information session to provide feedback on the key components of the NPCA’s draft Strategic Plan.

After careful review of all feedback from staff, members of the public, partners, NPCA Board of Directors, the Strategic Planning Committee, the Public Advisory Committee, and other stakeholders, the NPCA developed its 10-year Strategic Plan in October 2021. The Strategic Plan is available on at [www.npca.ca](http://www.npca.ca).

The NPCA thanks every person who contributed their perspective, which was essential in shaping the organization's first 10-year Strategic Plan. The NPCA looks forward to continuing to build on this important engagement as it operationalizes the Strategic Plan by working with the community, partners, and stakeholders to accomplish the priorities and goals ahead.

# Overview of Outreach and Engagement Process

The NPCA used a tailored outreach and engagement approach with a mix of traditional and digital communications methods to inform and engage a wide range of internal and external stakeholders.

## Internal Stakeholder Engagement

Internal stakeholders included NPCA staff, Board of Directors, Strategic Planning Committee, and Public Advisory Committee. These groups were informed regularly via email, virtual meetings, and a dedicated internal project site. In addition, the Strategic Planning Committee (comprised of members of the Board of Directors) and the NPCA’s Public Advisory Committee received regular progress updates at each of their meetings from July 2020 to October 2021 and provided input before each critical milestone. Members of the Public Advisory Committee were also encouraged to share information and opportunities to provide feedback with their respective networks, communities, and the general public.

Involvement from a staff working group and Senior Leadership Team sought to gain broader staff input from across the organization. It provided additional communication touchpoints for all staff to stay informed and to get involved in the process.

All internal stakeholders were engaged in strategic planning activities such as providing input into the NPCA’s strengths-weaknesses-opportunities-threats (SWOT) and participating in several facilitated discussions. These formed the basis of the draft strategic priorities, goals and actions, values, and mission and vision statements used in subsequent engagement with external stakeholders.

## Indigenous Engagement

Beginning in November 2020, NPCA staff reached out to staff at local First Nations whose Traditional Territory and/or Treaty Lands are within the NPCA watershed jurisdiction (Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation, Six Nations of the Grand River, and Haudenosaunee Confederacy), as well as the Métis Nation of Ontario (Region 9) were contacted by email (which was the indicated preference) to determine if there was an interest in participating in the strategic planning process and, if so, to seek guidance on their desired method for participation. Follow-up emails were sent to these contacts in April and August at key milestones. In addition, NPCA staff reached out to inform and engage local Indigenous peoples through emails to Indigenous Friendship Centres, partners, and news media outlets (e.g., Two Row Times and Turtle Island News, Jukasa Indigenous community radio).

Staff at the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation (Department of Consultation and Accommodation) requested a virtual meeting with NPCA staff following the Public Information Session to review and discuss the draft Strategic Plan. There were no concerns or disagreements with the strategic goals, actions, or performance indicators shared.

At a separate meeting, NPCA staff met with representatives of the Six Nations of the Grand River to share knowledge and build relationships. During the meeting, suggestions were provided that were incorporated into the Strategic Plan.

## External Stakeholder Engagement

The NPCA sought to engage partner municipalities, residents, local interest groups, conservation area users, business owners, members of the agriculture, environment, planning, development, tourism, and education sectors, and the general public within the Niagara Region, Haldimand County, and the City of Hamilton to inform these external groups about the NPCA’s strategic planning process and provide opportunities for engagement and giving feedback. A summary of the outreach and engagement tools is included below.

# Results of External Outreach and Engagement

The NPCA is pleased with the level of public engagement and the critical feedback received thanks to extensive communication and outreach efforts. Several additional metrics were used to measure and report on a broad awareness of the NPCA’s Strategic Plan process and to ensure that the public and other groups had opportunities to engage and provide their feedback throughout key points in the process.

An overview of all the outreach and engagement tools/tactics used, and their associated results, are provided below. A more detailed summary of the public survey and public information session is provided in the following sections of the report.

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| --- | --- |
| Outreach or Engagement Tool/Tactic | Results |
| Strategic Plan project webpage (incl. timelines, important dates, documents, digital engagement tools (Q&A, ideas tool, survey) | 5,800 visits to project page  32 new registrations  4,762 visitors aware[[1]](#footnote-1)  1,378 visitors engaged[[2]](#footnote-2)  105 document downloads |
| Placed-based marketing (i.e., posterboards, postcards offered at targeted locations) | 6 key locations distributing print materials (i.e., NPCA & Niagara Region headquarters) |
| Traditional earned media (radio interviews and print stories) | 2 media releases  11 media interviews  18 media stories |
| Direct emailing to local organizations and stakeholder lists | 5,610 e-letters sent  2,307 e-letters opened |
| Direct mail to stakeholder lists | 204 letters sent |
| Digital marketing (social media, digital advertising) | 1,064,376 Impressions[[3]](#footnote-3)  1,448 Reactions[[4]](#footnote-4) |
| Public survey on draft strategic priorities | 498 online surveys submitted |
| Public Information Session | 138 people viewed[[5]](#footnote-5) session  22 questions asked  Positive feedback |
| Non-virtual methods (i.e., paper surveys, print slide deck, phone calls, and meetings) | 3 paper surveys submitted  1 request for a paper copy of the slide deck |

## Public Survey

A public survey was launched from March 30 until May 6, 2021, to allow the public, partners, and other stakeholders the opportunity to provide feedback and comments on the NPCA’s draft strategic priorities. A total of 501 surveys (combined online and paper methods) were submitted and reviewed in detail by NPCA staff. The feedback received led to changes in the proposed strategic priorities and informed the development of the Strategic Plan.

The main goal of the survey was to obtain feedback on seven draft strategic priorities proposed by staff. The survey results demonstrated strong public support for the majority of the NPCA’s strategic priorities. The average rating for each of the proposed strategic priorities is indicated below (out of 5):

* Healthy and Climate Resilient Watersheds: 4.6
* Sustainable Growth: 4.1
* Connecting People to Nature: 4.5
* Organizational Excellence: 4.1
* Financial Sustainability and Innovative Business Models: 3.9
* Partner of Choice: 3.9
* Marketing as a Destination of Choice: 3.4

The NPCA reviewed the survey feedback and updated its strategic priorities, goals, and actions to reflect the priorities and input received from the public in the survey results. For example, the “Marketing as a Destination of Choice” strategic priority was instead included as a strategic goal within “Connecting People to Nature” because it did not receive strong support as its own priority. Other topics of importance raised by respondents in the public survey included issues such as flood protection, climate change impact, agricultural practices, protection of habitat, smart growth, low impact development, public access, more environmental education, customer service, transparency, fees for service, alignment with public and private sector partners, partnerships with municipalities and local environmental and education groups.

Respondents were asked to indicate which watershed municipality they lived in to ensure the NPCA reached people within its watershed jurisdiction. Overall, 88% of respondents indicated that they lived in the Regional Municipality of Niagara, while 6% and 3% were from the City of Hamilton or Haldimand county, respectively. These demographics are aligned with the proportion of the Niagara Peninsula watershed within those municipal areas. The remainder lived elsewhere or preferred not to share.

The NPCA also wanted to know if it was hearing from different stakeholder groups. Survey participants were asked to select the option that best described their role in the watershed. Most survey participants identified as a member of the general public or as a Conservation area user (44% and 30%, respectively). The remainder of survey participants indicated they were from a non-government organization (5%), government organization (5%), academic institution (3%), agricultural sector (3%), tourism sector (2%), business sector (1%), development sector (1%), First Nations member (1%), and other (3%) or prefer not to say (2%).

## Public Information Session

On August 19, 2021, the NPCA hosted a virtual public information session to engage the public and stakeholders. They were asked to provide feedback on key components of the draft Strategic Plan (i.e., priorities, goals, mission, vision, and values) through a moderated Question and Answer session and via the NPCA’s Get Involved online engagement platform. The NPCA also accommodated non-virtual methods of engagement (e.g., paper survey, hardcopy meeting materials mailed, and phone calls) upon request.

The Virtual Public Information Session was attended by 71 unique viewers, from the original 141 people registered. A poll was used at the beginning of the session to determine if the NPCA had been successful in reaching people within the NPCA’s watershed jurisdiction. Of those that completed the poll, 92% indicated they resided in the Niagara Region, 4% in the City of Hamilton, 0 participants from Haldimand County, and 4% from areas other than Niagara, Hamilton, and Haldimand. Like the survey on strategic priorities, attendees of the information session were asked to choose an option that best described their role in the watershed. Most of the attendees were members of the public (28%), conservation area users (28%), and non-government organizations (18%). The remainder were from government organizations (e.g., municipalities) (9%), agricultural sector (5%), tourism sector (5%), business sector (2%), development sector (4%), and other (2%, not specified). In a final poll, attendees were asked if they participated in the public survey on draft strategic priorities. Of those attendees participating in the poll, 47% indicated they had participated in the strategic plan survey, 42% did not participate, and 10% of respondents were not sure if they had participated.

After the presentation was provided, there was an opportunity for attendees to ask questions. There were 22 questions asked which were addressed by the moderator and NPCA staff during the session. Many of the questions pertained to land-use planning and protecting environmentally sensitive lands, the NPCA’s relationship with community partners, Indigenous engagement, the Conservation Authorities Act, and financial sustainability. Questions that were posed outside of the scope of the strategic plan, for example, questions about specific NPCA sites or properties, were shared with NPCA staff for follow-up after the virtual session.

Following the public information session, a link to the evaluation was circulated to all attendees. Overall, 30% of attendees completed the assessment. Feedback received from the session was generally positive, receiving an average rating of 3.8 of out 5. While attendees remarked that the meeting was well-organized, the platform was easy to use, participate and ask questions, some attendees noted that there was not enough time for discussion and questions. Other participants would have preferred an in-person information session.

After the session, the NPCA welcomed additional feedback, questions, and comments from the community until Sept. 3, 2021, through the NPCA’s Strategic Plan project web page. A recording of the session and supporting documents were posted to the webpage for those unable to attend. The recording was viewed 67 times during that period, and there were 6 questions/comments submitted after the public information session. The NPCA also offered non-virtual methods of engagement to accommodate those without internet access or with a preference for traditional methods. One person reached out to receive hardcopy materials following the Public Information Session.

# Conclusion

The NPCA thanks every person who contributed their perspective to the organization’s first 10-year Strategic Plan. The diverse viewpoints and contributions led to a stronger Strategic Plan and ensured that it reflects the priorities of the communities and partners the NPCA serves.

This important project and public engagement exercise further proved the community’s passion for nature and conservation and the NPCA looks forward to working with the watershed communities and partners as it operationalizes and implements the new Strategic Plan to 2031 toward a shared vision of *Nature for All!*

Visit the online engagement space at [getinvolved.npca.ca](https://getinvolved.npca.ca) to get involved in sharing your feedback on future projects.

For more information about the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority, visit [www.npca.ca](https://npca.ca/) or follow us on [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/NPCAOntario/) and [Twitter](https://twitter.com/NPCA_Ontario) for more updates.

1. Aware = visited at least one page [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Engaged = viewed a video, downloaded a document, visited key dates section, completed survey, asked a question [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Impressions = number of times the ad was seen [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Reactions = likes, clicks, shares, comments on social media platforms [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Combined number of people that attended the live session and watched the recorded session [↑](#footnote-ref-5)