



Sault Ste. Marie Region Conservation Authority

2025 Proposed Budget and Levy For Municipal Consultation

Version 1.0

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SSMRCA 2025 Draft Budget and Levy for Municipal Consultation

Executive Summary:

The 2025 Draft Budget has been set at \$895,795.00 which includes a Total levy of \$609,182.00 of which the City of SSM pays an Operational Levy of \$577,172.00 plus an additional \$25,000 Capital Levy ask for capital related projects for a total levy of \$602,172.00. The remainder constitutes Prince Township's share at \$7,010.00. The 2025 draft budget contains a 1.24 to 2.04% (dependent on Municipality) increase to the Operational Levies compared to 2024, and an overall increase to the Total Levy (operational + capital) of 3.90% compared to 2024. The 2025 draft Budget has been reformatted to adhere to the requirements in [O. Reg. 402/22](#). A resolution was passed at the September 17, 2024, SSMRCA Board Meeting to circulate the draft Budget and proposed Levy to the member municipalities. The 2025 draft Budget will come before the SSMRCA Board of Directors for final approval on November 19, 2024, at 4:45 p.m. at the SSMRCA Administration Office located at 1100 Fifth Line East, Sault Ste. Marie.

Background:

[O. Reg. 402/22](#): Budget and Apportionment specifies that the 2025 budget and all subsequent budgets must adhere to this regulation. It provides details on the budget process and municipal apportionment methods for levying participating municipalities and includes revocation of the previous regulations that governed municipal levies ([O. Reg. 670/00](#) and [O. Reg. 139/96](#)).

The regulated budget process includes:

First Phase

Budget must include:

- All sources of revenue (other than municipal levy)
- Categorize operating expenses into Category 1, 2 and 3
- Categorize capital expenses into Category 1, 2 and 3
- Amount of levy for each Member Municipality
- Specify if the Authority considered opportunities to raise and use self-generated revenue to help finance the authority's operations, including the programs and services it provides, a description of what the authority considered

Budget must:

- Apply any relevant revenue to specific programs to offset levy
- Apply Modified Current Value Apportionment method to determine levy for each program
- Apply Benefit Based Apportionment method to sole benefitting programs



Second Phase

Draft Budget Process:

1. Notify all Member Municipalities of Draft Budget meeting if a Member Municipality will owe levy for Category 1 *Clean Water Act* programs and services.
 - a. Advise of amounts owing or to be owed for Category 1 Clean Water Act programs and services.
2. Hold meeting to consider draft budget.
3. Hold vote on whether or not to approve the draft budget for consultation.
 - a. If there is a levy for Category 1 *Clean Water Act* programs and services, hold a separate vote of Members from applicable municipalities for that portion of the draft budget.
 - b. Vote is a one-member-one vote method.
4. Send Member Municipalities a copy of the Draft Budget and all financial information relating to the apportionment of operating and capital expenses.
5. Post a copy of the Draft Budget and financial information on Governance section of Authority's website.
6. Consult as necessary with Member Municipalities on draft budget in order to finalize final budget.

Third Phase

Final Budget Approval Process:

1. Notify all Member Municipalities of Budget meeting.
 - a. Notification must be at least 30 days prior to meeting.
 - b. Must include copy of most recent draft of the budget.
 - c. Must specify amount of levy for the given year.
2. Hold meeting to approve budget.
3. Hold a recorded vote to municipal levy/amounts owing.
 - a. If there are any Category 1 *Clean Water Act* apportionments, hold a vote with participating municipality representatives.
 - b. Weighted vote to approve municipal levy/amounts owing.
 - c. Authority can not send a notice of apportionment unless a vote has occurred.
4. Hold a recorded vote to approve final budget. a. One -member-one vote to approve final Budget Document.
5. "Promptly" after the final budget process is approved, provide a copy of the final budget to the Minister and each Member Municipality.
6. Post final budget on the Authority's website in the Governance section.

Discussion:

This 2025 Draft Budget document contains details for the Sault Ste. Marie Region Conservation Authority's (SSMRCA) 2025 planned operations and capital activity. The budget has been set at \$895,795.00 which includes a Total levy of \$609,182.00 of which the City of SSM pays an Operational Levy of \$577,172.00 plus an additional \$25,000



Capital Levy ask for a capital related project for a total levy of \$602,172.00. The remainder constitutes Prince Township's share at \$7,010.00.

The budget results in a 2.04% increase to the Prince Township Operational Levy and a 1.24% increase to the City of SSM Operational Levy in 2025 compared to 2024 (this percentage increases to 3.36% when the Capital Levy is included for SSM). The 2025 total budget requires an overall 3.90% (operational + capital) increase in order to maintain its current level of service. The Draft Budget utilizes the 2024 Current Value Assessment (CVA) that was provided by MNR where 98.80% of the CA Levy is apportioned to the City of SSM, with the remaining 1.20% apportioned to Prince Township.

Financial pressures anticipated in 2025 include: continued increases in fuel and utility costs; increased costs of goods and services due to inflation; and changeovers in staff.

Changes to the *Conservation Authorities Act* within *Bill 229, Schedule 6* and the released Phase 1 and 2 regulations have been incorporated into the budget. The 2025 draft budget has been reformatted to adhere to these legislative changes. Programs have been categorized into three mandated categories including:

- Category 1: Mandatory Programs and Services
- Category 2: Non-Mandatory Programs and Services at the request of a Municipality
- Category 3: Non-Mandatory Programs and Services

Highlights of the 2025 draft Budget expenditures include:

- Continuation of annual programming including:
 - Plan Input and Review,
 - Development Regulations,
 - Flood Forecasting and Warning,
 - Operation and maintenance of SSMRCA owned properties & structures
 - DWSP
- An increase to operational staff capacity by hiring 2 students for the summer months
- Staff training – necessary for staff health and safety, GIS and regulation staff
- Staff travel for training and committee work

SSMRCA self-generated revenue (from both Development Regulations and Miscellaneous N/G Revenue) have been estimated based on volume and fee increases over previous years and incorporated into the budget to help offset the total levy ask for 2025. Development Regulation Fees are those fees that are collected under Section 28 of the *Conservation Authorities Act*. Miscellaneous N/G Revenues are those user fees that are collected by the Authority for the use of Conservation Areas or Conservation Authority property/facilities by the public/businesses to help offset the costs associated with taxes, maintenance, and insurance of said properties.



The \$25,000 Capital Levy ask for capital related projects includes the following project:

- 1) The Fort Creek Dam Safety Review is required every 10 years to ensure that the Dam is operating at optimal levels. This project is estimated to cost \$50,000 with a 50% cost-share with the Province through the WECl (Water and Erosion Control Infrastructure) Program. The cost share from the Province has been confirmed.

Overall, the 2025 draft Budget reflects the short-term objectives of the Authority and considers long-term requirements to ensure the SSMRCA can provide sustainable benefits to the watershed residents.

The full Draft 2025 Budget is attached. Please accept this letter as an offer to present to Member Municipalities on the draft 2025 Budget if necessary.

Conclusion:

The Draft 2025 Budget is being presented for review. The Budget has been reformatted as required in *O. Reg. 402/22*. As outlined in the new process, this document is being shared for consultation purposes, with final approval of the Budget taking place at the November 19, 2024, Board meeting.

Expenditures		2024 Budget	2025 Budget	2024-2025 VARIANCE	Notes	
CATEGORY 1 - MANDATORY	Natural Hazard Management					
	Staffing	\$ 264,146.73	\$ 257,465.00	-\$ 6,681.73	+ 3% CPI, + 2 students	
	Operating	\$ 68,071.74	\$ 80,000.00	\$ 11,928.26	+ 3% inflation, + 5% insurance increase, + increase to fuel and utilities	
	Capital	\$ 12,500.00	\$ 25,000.00	\$ 12,500.00	Capital anticipated for Fort Creek Dam Safety Review	
	Prov Water Quality-Quantity Monitoring					
	Staffing	\$ 2,340.00	\$ 2,690.00	\$ 350.00	+ 3% CPI, + 2 students	
	Operating	\$ 2,143.22	\$ 2,210.00	\$ 66.78	+ 3% inflation	
	Capital	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -		
	Regional Drinking Water Source Protection					
	Staffing	\$ 91,759.75	\$ 97,006.00	\$ 5,246.25	As per Regional SP Agreement - revenue recovered	
	Operating	\$ 29,240.25	\$ 37,027.00	\$ 7,786.75	As per Regional SP Agreement - revenue recovered	
	Core Watershed-Based Resource MGMT Strategy					
	Staffing	\$ 15,000.00	\$ -	-\$ 15,000.00	No longer a line item	
	Operating	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -		
	CA Lands and Areas					
	Staffing	\$ 11,100.00	\$ 11,755.00	\$ 655.00	+ 3 % CPI, + 2 students	
	Operating	\$ 42,872.61	\$ 45,133.00	\$ 2,260.39	+ 3% inflation, + increase to utilities, services and maintenance of buildings and vehicles	
	Capital	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -		
	Enabling Services					
	Staffing	\$ 239,920.28	\$ 232,584.00	-\$ 7,336.28	+ 3 % CPI, + changeover in staff	
	Operating	\$ 73,462.88	\$ 94,925.00	\$ 21,462.12	+ 3% inflation, + increase to utilities, services and maintenance of buildings and vehicles	
	Capital	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -		
	Total Expenditures Category 1 =		\$ 852,557.46	\$ 885,795.00	\$ 33,237.54	3.90%
	Revenue		2024 Budget	2025 Budget	2024-2025 VARIANCE	Notes
	Provincial Funds	\$ 68,113.00	\$ 68,113.00	\$ -	Stays the same	
	Federal Funds	\$ 10,000.00	\$ 10,000.00	\$ -	CSJ if 2 students approved @ 5000 each	
	City of SSM - Operational Levy	\$ 570,074.81	\$ 577,172.00	\$ 7,097.19	Levy allocated - 1.24% increase over 2024	
	Prince Township - Operational Levy	\$ 6,869.65	\$ 7,010.00	\$ 140.35	Levy allocated - 2.04% increase over 2024	
	City of SSM - Capital Levy	\$ 12,500.00	\$ 25,000.00	\$ 12,500.00	Capital anticipated for Fort Creek Dam Safety Review - Provincial share secured	
	Development Regulations	\$ 39,000.00	\$ 39,500.00	\$ 500.00		
Regional Drinking Water Source Protection	\$ 121,000.00	\$ 134,000.00	\$ 13,000.00	As per contract		
Misc N/G Revenue / General Donations	\$ 25,000.00	\$ 25,000.00	\$ -	Dependent on rentals of SS, CAs, etc.		
Total Revenue Category 1 =	\$ 852,557.46	\$ 885,795.00	\$ 33,237.54	3.90%		
Expenditures		2024 Budget	2025 Budget	2024-2025 VARIANCE	Notes	
CATEGORY 2 - NON-MANDATORY	Natural Hazard Management					
	Staffing	\$ 7,500.00	\$ 7,500.00	\$ -	Projection based on agreement with the City (Grass Cutting Services)	
	Operating	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -		
	Local Risk Management Part IV					
	Staffing	\$ 2,000.00	\$ 2,000.00	\$ -	Projection based on agreement with the City (RMO/RII Services)	
	Operating	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -		
	CA Lands and Areas					
	Staffing	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -		
	Operating	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -		
	Capital	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -		
	Total Expenditures Category 2 =	\$ 9,500.00	\$ 9,500.00	\$ -	No change	
	Revenue		2024 Budget	2025 Budget	2024-2025 VARIANCE	Notes
	Provincial Funds	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -		
	Federal Funds	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -		
	City of SSM - Operational Levy	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -		
Prince Township - Operational Levy	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -			
City of SSM - Capital Levy	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -			
City of SSM - SP Agreements	\$ 9,500.00	\$ 9,500.00	\$ -	Special Agreements with City of SSM		
Misc N/G Revenue / General Donations	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -			
Total Revenue Category 2 =	\$ 9,500.00	\$ 9,500.00	\$ -	No change		
Expenditures		2024 Budget	2025 Budget	2024-2025 VARIANCE	Notes	
CATEGORY 3 - SPECIAL PROJECTS	St. Marys Canadian Heritage River					
	Staffing	\$ 500.00	\$ 500.00	\$ -	Annual Heritage River Updates	
	Operating	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -		
	Watershed Stewardship and Restoration					
	Staffing	\$ 500.00	\$ -	-\$ 500.00		
	Operating	\$ 2,550.00	\$ -	-\$ 2,550.00		
	Total Expenditures Category 3 =	\$ 3,550.00	\$ 500.00	-\$ 3,050.00	86% Decrease	
	Revenue		2024 Budget	2025 Budget	2024-2025 VARIANCE	Notes
	Provincial Funds	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -		
	Federal Funds	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -		
TD Tree Days	\$ 2,550.00	\$ -	-\$ 2,550.00			
Development Regs	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 500.00	-\$ 500.00	Staff time to aid with reporting		
Total Revenue Category 3 =	\$ 3,550.00	\$ 500.00	-\$ 3,050.00	86% Decrease		
Total Expenditures	\$ 865,607.46	\$ 895,795.00	\$ 30,187.54	3.49%		
Operational Levy	\$ 576,944.46	\$ 584,182.00	\$ 7,237.54	1.25%		
Capital Levy	\$ 12,500.00	\$ 25,000.00	\$ 12,500.00	100.00%		
Total Levy	\$ 589,444.46	\$ 609,182.00	\$ 19,737.54	3.35%		