

# 2022 Annual Report

Our Future Taking Shape

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## A Message from the Chair and CAO

Tom Adams

Chair, Credit Valley Conservation

Quentin Hanchard

Chief Administrative Officer, Credit Valley Conservation

In 2022, we came out of the pandemic. We were pleased to reconnect with our watershed residents, visitors and partners in-person once again. We serve an incredible watershed community and we are always inspired by their dedication and commitment because together, we can create a thriving watershed that protects, connects and sustains us.

2022 also marked the conclusion of CVC's 2020-2022 Strategic Plan, *Our Future Taking Shape*. This strategy has been instrumental in directing the priorities of the organization and showing staff how their individual work contributes to the larger mission. CVC has made significant strides in accomplishing the goals, objectives and directions embedded in the plan. This annual report highlights 2022 projects completed as part of delivering on the strategy, including:

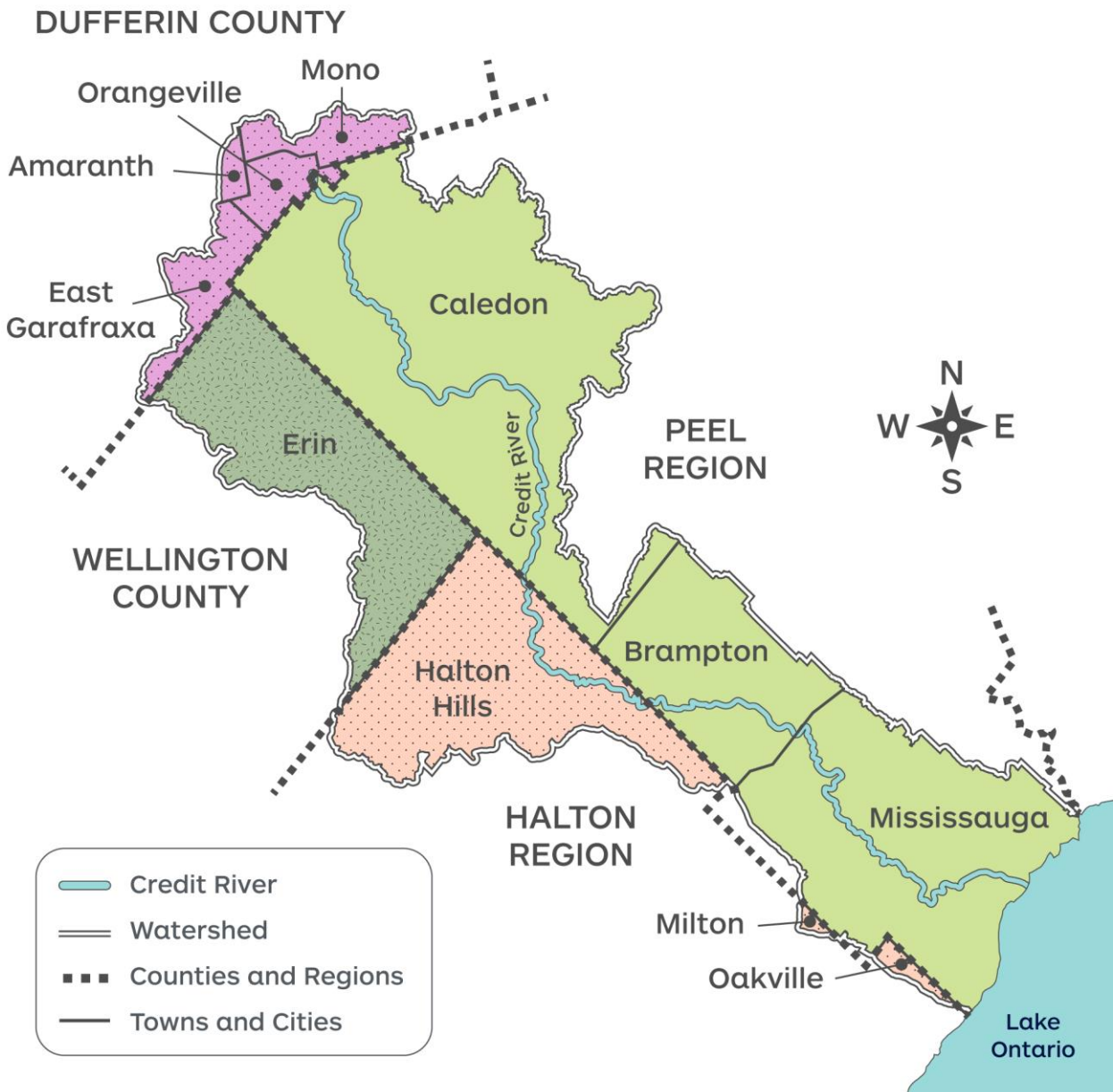
- Supporting City of Brampton first responders during the February ice jam flooding
- Completing Belfountain Phase I (including the dam, channel and heritage gardens) and reopening the Conservation Area to the public
- Acquiring 83 acres of new greenspace
- Re-opening Terra Cotta Outdoor Education Centre and in-school programs post-pandemic
- Starting a three-year partnership with ALUS and the Region of Peel to expand agricultural stewardship
- Launching an Open Data portal

As we emerge from the pandemic and look ahead to a new corporate strategic plan in 2023, we also reconfirm the urgent need to respond to and take action on climate change. This is the pressing issue of our time. In 2022, we continued to focus on building resilience in our watershed communities through a number of programs for our watershed residents as well offer tools and services to our municipal partners to facilitate understanding and action.

## Our Mission

Together, we conserve, restore, develop and manage the natural resources of the Credit River Watershed through the power of science, education, policy, planning and leadership.

## Where we work



## Recognizing the Enduring Presence of Indigenous Peoples

As we work to further our mission, we acknowledge the rich history and enduring presence of Indigenous peoples as stewards of the land and water of the Credit River Watershed.

We acknowledge that the Credit River Watershed is part of the Treaty Lands and Territory of the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation. The Credit River Watershed is also part of the traditional territory of the Huron-Wendat and Haudenosaunee, and home to many First Nation, Metis and Inuit Peoples today.

Treaties made with Indigenous Peoples are enduring and include responsibility for both parties. We affirm that this land and water is our common source of life and we must all share responsibility for its care and stewardship for now and future generations.

## Our Services

CVC projects and programs are organized according to five service areas.

- Natural Hazards Planning and Risk Management
- Lands and Conservation Areas
- Watershed Studies and Strategies
- Environmental Resilience
- Corporate Services

Discover our 2022 accomplishments to see how our future is taking shape.

## Plan for an environmentally sustainable future

### SNAP: Communities in Action

We're working with residents, businesses, schools, community groups and our municipal partners to put the Fletchers Creek (Brampton) and Hungry Hollow (Halton Hills) [Sustainable Neighbour Action Plans](#) (SNAP) into action.

Fletchers Creek SNAP [celebrated three years of implementation](#) in 2022.

#### **Our Lady of Fatima Rain Garden**

In summer 2022, a rain garden was built at Our Lady of Fatima Catholic School. This project was part of CVC's [Students for Stormwater](#) project, in partnership with the Dufferin Peel Catholic School Board, and is the second school rain garden in the Fletchers Creek SNAP neighbourhood.

Students, teachers and staff helped to select and plant an amazing 700 native wildflowers and 34 native trees and shrubs in the new rain garden, which will help slow down and filter stormwater runoff before it enters Fletcher's Creek. This is an important part of protecting the habitat of redbreasted dace, an endangered fish found in the creek.

#### **Building Climate Resiliency**

In 2022, across several CVC programs and with the hard work of many volunteers, we planted over 960 native trees and shrubs in the Hungry Hollow SNAP neighbourhood. These trees and shrubs, planted in neighbourhood parks, in residents' yards and in the ravine, are helping to increase the climate resiliency of the neighbourhood. They also provide habitat for wildlife, supporting pollinators and providing many other benefits that enhance quality of life in this community.

### Planning for the Future

We continued work on the Watershed Plan, a tool that helps us understand the past and plan for the future health of the watershed.

In 2022, we completed 16 chapters of the *Phase 1 Characterization Report* that tells the story of the health of the Credit River Watershed and how it has evolved from the 1950s to today. This work included:

- Developing over 100 maps.
- Securing over 260 mapping layers from member municipalities to use in Phase 2 where we will model future scenarios to assess impacts.
- Completing mapping of groundwater and surface water systems and important groundwater recharge areas.

## Other 2020-2022 Accomplishments

- Headwaters Subwatershed 19 Plan
- Hungry Hollow SNAP Action Plan (Halton Hills)
- Screening and neighbourhood selection process for a future Mississauga SNAP

## Safeguard people, property and communities from natural hazards

### Identifying Flood Risks in Vulnerable Communities

Working with our municipal partners, we developed a leading-edge optimization tool for natural and built watershed infrastructure assets. The tool was specifically designed to meet Infrastructure Canada's funding requirements by prioritizing investments to reduce flood and erosion risk with the greatest return on investment.

In 2022, we ran the optimization tool in six priority areas to identify priority riverine and erosion risks and assessed urban flooding and social vulnerability in our jurisdiction. Mapping produced by the tool was used to support the cities of Mississauga and Brampton in planning for climate change and identifying priority flood risks within socially vulnerable neighborhoods.

### Supporting Growing Communities

We provide our member municipalities with technical and environmental planning expertise to keep people and properties safe, ensuring new development and changes to existing development stay away from flood-prone and hazardous areas.

In 2022...

- 192 Plan review applications reviewed
- 10 Environmental Assessment applications reviewed
- 349 Permit applications received
- 96% "Excellent" overall customer satisfaction rating
- 93% "Good" or higher overall customer satisfaction rating from municipal partners
- 100% Defined permit timelines met

### Protecting Drinking Water Sources

The CTC Source Protection Plan outlines policies and programs to protect water sources from contamination and depletion. The 2021 Annual Progress Report on implementation of the CTC Source Protection Plan was released in May.

Through a new two-year funding agreement with the Province, we're leading the delivery of a source protection program for the CTC Source Protection Region to promote best practices to protect non-municipal drinking water sources.

## Other 2020-2022 Accomplishments

- Lake Ontario Shoreline Hazard Report update

## Manage a healthy, resilient environment through protection, restoration and enhancement

### Bringing Life to Jim Tovey Lakeview Conservation Area

We're creating 26 hectares of new forest, meadow, stream and coastal wetland ecosystems along the shores of Lake Ontario in Mississauga, at the future Jim Tovey Lakeview Conservation Area. In 2022, progress was made and we're seeing wildlife making the area home including deer, coyote, foxes, mink, muskrats, great blue herons, belted kingfisher, red-tailed hawks and more!

The public realm features will be coming to life over the next few years as we get ready for the park's opening in 2025. We're working with Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation and our partners to create meaningful Indigenous Placemaking opportunities including a Teaching Amphitheatre and Gateway Drums.

### Fostering On-the-ground Action

With almost 85 per cent of the watershed privately owned, participation by farmers, rural landowners, urban residents and businesses is critical for a healthy, resilient watershed. In 2022, private landowners took actions to green their properties.

Through our Greening Corporate Grounds program, we completed sustainable landscaping assessments on 17 corporate sites and supported the installation of 21 green infrastructure projects. This included the planting of 2,000 trees and shrubs to mitigate flood risk and enhance urban biodiversity.

### Projects by Landowner Type

- 21 Agriculture
- 25 Rural Residents
- 224 Urban Residents
- 21 Corporations and Institutions

## Creating Pollinator Habitat

We're creating habitat for pollinators across the Credit River Watershed.

In June 2022 we installed a new demonstration garden outside the Terra Cotta Conservation Area store. This garden is full of over 600 native wildflowers, shrubs and grasses to show visitors just how beautiful native plants can be for their own gardens.

With help from City of Mississauga, Cloverleaf Garden Club and Port Credit Library staff, we added over 700 new native plants to the Jack Darling Pollinator Garden and provided regular monitoring and maintenance to keep it thriving.

## Protecting Greenspaces

In March 2022, we acquired 83 acres of new protected greenspace known as the Albers parcel in the Town of Caledon. This will integrate into the Terra Cotta Forest Conservation Area.

We were successful in receiving 100 per cent of funds through the Region of Peel Greenlands Securement Program and Environment and Climate Change Canada Challenge Fund. The federal fund supports Canada's Target 1 Challenge to protect 30 per cent of Canada's terrestrial and aquatic habitats by 2025.

## Building Resilient and Accessible Parks

In 2022, we upgraded infrastructure and amenities at our parks to improve safety and accessibility.

- Ken Whillans: We started construction on new flush washrooms and a staff building.
- Rattray Marsh: At our most visited conservation area, we rebuilt sections the boardwalk on three trails.
- Upper Credit: We replaced the existing pedestrian bridge with a new three-metre-wide bridge and restored the river channel below to improve habitat and reduce erosion.

## Other 2020-2022 Accomplishments

- Sustainable Forest Management Plan
- Invasive Species Strategy
- Stormwater Management Guide update

## **Develop, maintain and share leading-edge knowledge to advance science-based decision making and on-the-ground action**

### 20 Years of Watershed Science

We released the Integrated Watershed Monitoring Program Status and Trend Technical Report Series which documents over 20 years of monitoring the health of the Credit River Watershed.

The collection of 15 reports each focus on a different monitoring attribute:

- Forests
- Wetlands
- Streams
- Groundwater

And two drivers that influence ecosystems:

- Climate
- Land cover/land use

The reports feature robust trend analysis results and highlight good news, trends to watch for and of concern, as well as recommendations for conservation actions.

### Identifying Safe Passages for Wildlife

In 2022, we posted our data and results from our Road and Valley Crossing Project to [CVC's Open Data Platform](#). This tool helps municipal partners and planning staff proactively identify strategic investments to bridges and culverts, where future upgrades can improve fish and wildlife passage.

Improving passage through bridges and culverts helps connect forests, wetlands and streams for species movement and helps improve human health and safety by reducing wildlife-vehicle collisions.

### Identifying Water Quality Risks

In November 2022, we brought together experts to share cutting-edge modeling and monitoring tools used to understand water quality risks. Almost 100 staff attended the workshop from local municipalities, provincial ministries, consultants and academia, increasing our collective knowledge to track water quality risks.

We presented a technique that can help identify E. coli sources in local waterways. In a collaborative project with City of Mississauga and Region of Peel, this technique

was successfully applied. A contaminating source was identified and, after the issue was addressed, the receiving waterway is showing recovery.

## Other 2020-2022 Accomplishments

- Conservation Areas Emergency Management Plans
- Principles and Guidelines for Ecological Restoration
- Integrated Watershed Monitoring Program entered its 24<sup>th</sup> year and results shared via story map collection
- CVC led the Flood Resiliency Strategy on behalf of the Peel Climate Change Partnership and developed multi-flood and erosion risk mapping through Risk and Return on Investment Tool
- STEP Water delivered training to Region of Peel staff and collaborated to offer subsidized training to Ontario professionals with McMaster University and Canadian Society of Civil Engineers.

## Connect people with nature, culture and greenspace to promote environmental awareness, appreciation and action

### Youth Making an Impact

In 2022, our [Conservation Youth Corps \(CYC\)](#) and Frontline Leadership programs returned to regular programming post-pandemic. One hundred and thirty-two teens made a difference in their communities while gaining hands-on experience in conservation.

Projects included stream restoration to prevent erosion in city parks and installing turtle basking logs at Terra Cotta Conservation Area.

### Welcoming Visitors to our Parks

In 2022, we reopened Belfountain Conservation Area to the public. During the park closure, we restored a 180-metre natural channel in the West Credit River, built a new flood-resilient heritage garden in the former headpond area of the park, preserved and restored the Mack Park cultural heritage features, replaced the pedestrian bridge overlooking the river and installed new and upgraded trails throughout the park.

We also returned to in-person events in our parks. We connected people to nature through our Conservation Interpreters that engaged almost 10,500 park visitors, hosted new Canadians through our [Health and Wellness](#) program and engaged

students from kindergarten through grade 8 to our Terra Cotta Education Centre for field trips.

### **Our Parks by the Numbers**

- 987,200 Park Visitors
- 15 Park Events
- 117 km of trail
- 7,241 Acres land held

## **Keeping Visitors Safe and Informed**

Our Conservation Parks' growing enforcement program yielded a higher rate of enforcement blitzes, public open houses, collaboration with the Ontario Provincial Police and, by-law and provincial offences officers. We provided de-escalation training for staff and increased our presence on our properties to safeguard our visitors and parks.

### **2022 Accomplishments**

- 479 Events
- 39,451 Participants and volunteers

## **Other 2020-2022 Accomplishments**

- Belfountain Conservation Areas Phase 1 work
- CVC fostered a robust public and corporate volunteer base that supports community tree planting and restoration efforts
- CVC conducted 222 property visits and 88 property assessments to help businesses, institutions, rural landowners and farmers create conservation action plans for their properties, with 551 projects implemented.
- Credit Valley Trail (CVT) work guided by a Leadership Council and six chapters (five municipal and Indigenous Roundtable), with 32 kilometres of trail operational, 44 acres secured and seven Indigenous sites identified and planned (one site under construction).

## **Provide trusted expertise, tools and resources to our clients and partners that protect the environment and support climate change and sustainability goals**

### **Building Resilience to Climate Change with our Municipal Partners**

Together with Toronto and Region Conservation Authority and Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority we developed the Natural Assets Carbon Assessment Guide and Toolbox. This guide provides methods, tools and resources to standardize carbon sequestration and storage estimations across Greater Toronto Area and Lake Simcoe Region. Having a consistent way to calculate the amount of carbon dioxide stored by local ecosystems enables our municipal partners to report on climate change targets and develop climate change mitigation strategies.

### **Promoting Sustainable Technologies**

In collaboration with municipal staff and the Sustainable Technologies Evaluation Program (STEP), we trained over 130 municipal staff from almost 50 Ontario municipalities on stormwater pond inspections.

The three in-person and one virtual session received funding from the Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks and covered processes on how to achieve compliance with provincial regulations as well as improve functionality. These training sessions helped municipalities maintain stormwater ponds that support climate resilience in their communities.

### **Other 2020-2022 Accomplishments**

- CVC continued coordination with municipal and agency partners through Plan Review and Plan Input programs to provide advice and technical clearances

## **Ensure that Credit Valley Conservation is a well-managed, sustainable and service-driven organization**

### **Advancing our Corporate Social Responsibility**

CVC's *Corporate Social Responsibility Strategy (2018-2022)* was developed to inform decisions on corporate policies to ensure we are environmentally, socially and economically responsible. The strategy provides staff and the CVC Board of Directors with a tool to help make decisions about policies, services and approaches to our internal business operations.

## Highlights of Progress

### Impact on the Environment: Reducing Greenhouse Gas Emissions

We're reducing our corporate and staff commuter greenhouse gas emissions and developed a corporate mitigation policy for asset management and replacement.

To date we have:

- Reduced emissions by an estimated 5 per cent from a peak of 322 tonnes to 305 tonnes and continue to make progress.
- Electrified 10 per cent of our fleet vehicles.
- Installed 10 electric vehicle charging stations between our Head Office in Mississauga and Island Lake Conservation Area in Orangeville.
- Added or reprogrammed existing thermostats at our satellite offices for energy efficiency.
- Electric equipment and vehicles were sourced, tested and purchased in Conservation Parks. We have a new EV grass mower and a compliment of battery powered equipment that continue to fulfil our commitment to emissions reduction.

### Impact on our People – Promoting a Safe, Diverse and Equitable Workplace

We set a goal to increase the percentage of employees that feel CVC promotes a safe, diverse, equitable and inclusive workplace.

As of 2021...

- 96 per cent of staff feel that CVC promotes a safe work environment.
- 92 per cent feel CVC is diverse, equitable and inclusive.

To achieve this, CVC formed the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee which aims to celebrate and foster diversity, equity and inclusion through education, social events and training sessions for staff.

In 2021, we hired Taneja and SMD Consulting to conduct an organization-wide assessment of systemic barriers to Black, Indigenous and People of Colour. Their final report included over 75 recommendations for changes to policies, programs, and services, and summarized key themes that emerged from the staff survey. Since receiving the final report, we have been working to advance the recommendations.

## Raising Funds

In 2022, we were successful in receiving additional funds through grant applications and sponsorships to support our ongoing work. Projects supported included activities to protect safe drinking water, address the impacts of climate change, support agricultural incentives, enhance safety at our parks and more.

## 2022 Financial Highlights

### **Total contributions from municipal levies**

Budget: \$26,892,159

Actual: \$26,797,209

### **Total generated by parks, planning fees, etc.**

Budget: \$3,748,782

Actual: \$5,163,618

### **Total raised through grants and other sources**

Budget: \$1,821,314

Actual: \$1,821,314

### **Total funding**

Budget: \$32,462,255

Actual: \$36,489,725

For more details see our [Audited Financial Statements](#).

**Thank you to our member municipalities for your support and valued partnerships!**

## Other 2020-2022 Accomplishments

- RIMS system implementation and digitization of over 3.7 million papers. We are significantly reducing and where possible eliminating our use of paper.
- Launched a new corporate website (cvc.ca).
- A diversity, equity and inclusion consultant was engaged to assess CVC and recommendations are in the process of being implemented.
- CVC's Climate Change Strategy risk assessments are underway with 635 risks identified and 1,458 risk response actions proposed.
- Adoption of Board-approved *Indigenous Engagement Guidelines* across all CVC departments

## Expand Partnerships and Build new Business Models to increase Organizational Resilience and Capacity

### Celebrating Environmental Champions

Our [Friends of the Credit Conservation Awards](#), hosted by our Board of Directors, honours the important work being done in our watershed. In 2022, we celebrated 19 award winners across seven categories.

### Impact in our Community: Meaningful Indigenous Placemaking

We're supporting our Indigenous partners to build the first Indigenous placemaking space along the Credit Valley Trail (CVT).

The CVT will be a 100-kilometre pathway through the Credit River Valley from the hills of the headwaters in Orangeville to Lake Ontario in Port Credit. The Crane Gathering Space will be the first of seven key sites along the trail. This groundbreaking project will recognize and honour Indigenous knowledge, history and present-day culture through placemaking.

The Crane Gathering Space is an Indigenous-led and collaborative project developed in association with the CVT Indigenous Roundtable, an Indigenous-led community group with representation from the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation, Cree and Huron-Wendat First Nation. Guided by these relationships, CVC has worked with several Indigenous-owned and employed business to develop the Credit Valley Trail Strategy, Indigenous Experience Plan and to design and construct the Crane Gathering Space.

### Foundation

Despite the challenges presented to us by the ongoing effects of the pandemic, staffing changes and the many uncertainties still looming in the philanthropic landscape, the CVC Foundation has once again saw incredible success in our efforts to fundraise for the critical projects within the Credit River Watershed.

- Our flagship fundraising event, the 16th Annual Conservation Gala was our most successful gala to date generating over \$260,000 in revenues. With over 250 guests in attendance and the support of more than 20 corporate sponsors, the Gala brought together the Foundation's corporate and community partners for an evening of connecting and contributing.

### Supporting the Crane Gathering Space

Our goal of reaching \$1 million dollars for the Crane Gathering Space at Island Lake Conservation Area was reached thanks to a non-repayable contribution of \$747,239 from the Government of Canada through the Federal Economic Development Agency of for Southern Ontario (FedDev Ontario). The funding was used to pay for

professional architectural and engineering services, geotechnical and survey work and site construction and fabrication of custom steel and wood features.

The Foundation's End of Year Giving campaign, which officially kicked-off on November 29, 2022 focused on securing funds for the Crane Gathering Space and was successful in bringing in just under \$20,000.

Construction began in September 2022 and is expected to be completed in late summer 2023.

A special thank you to the continued support of our Board of Directors, donors and partners and the residents of the Credit River Watershed, without their support we simply could not continue to support the great work of CVC within the watershed.

## Board of Directors

### Region of Peel

*All City of Mississauga councillors are also Region of Peel councillors*

#### **Stephen Dasko**

Councillor Ward 1, City of Mississauga

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#### **City of Mississauga**

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#### **Matt Mahoney**

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## Region of Halton

### **Tom Adams**

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*Joined the CVC Board September 2020*

## Senior Leadership Team

**Quentin Hanchard**

Chief Administrative Officer, CVC

**Andrew Kett**

Director, Corporate Services

**Josh Campbell**

Director, Planning and Development Services

**Aviva Patel**

Director, Watershed Knowledge

**Terri LeRoux Director**

Parks, Lands and Community Engagement

**John Sinnige**

Director, Watershed Management

## Connect with us

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