



2021 Annual Report on Section 28 Timelines

Reporting period of January 1 to December 31, 2021

Conservation Sudbury is committed to improving client services and increasing accountability, as per the Conservation Ontario Client Service and Streamlining Initiative. As part of this commitment, Conservation Sudbury will publish an annual report of the Section 28 permit applications and the timelines for approval.

Conservation Sudbury issues permits and permissions under Section 28 of the *Conservation Authorities Act*. Section 28 requires a conservation authority (CA) to regulate development activities in or adjacent to natural hazard areas. This includes river or stream valleys, along shorelines of inland lakes, watercourses, within and adjacent to wetlands and other hazardous areas (e.g., unstable soil, bedrock, and slopes). Development taking place on these lands require permission from the CA to confirm that the control of flooding, erosion, dynamic beaches, pollution or the conservation of land are not affected. The CA also regulates the straightening, changing, diverting or interfering in any way with the existing channel of a watercourse or for changing or interfering in any way with a wetland.

Conservation Sudbury assigns projects to one of four categories that take into account the size, scope and impacts of the proposal on natural hazards and the landscape. They are: Major, Large, Standard and Small Projects. Information about what sorts of projects fall into each of these categories can be found in the [2022 Section 28 Fee Schedule](#).

Service standards for Section 28 permit applications were specified by the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry (MNRF) in the "[Policies and Procedures for Conservation Authority Plan Review and Permitting Activities](#) (2010)".

As part of the commitment to improve client service and accountability and increase speed of approvals Conservation Ontario has created the [Client Service Standards for Conservation Authority Plan and Permit Review](#) guideline (endorsed by Conservation Ontario Council in June, 2019 and amended December, 2019(TBC)). The guideline recommends new service standards for S.28 approvals, initially focused on high-growth CAs.

As a best practice, Conservation Sudbury endeavours to be consistent with the timelines laid out by the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry and Conservation Ontario. Conservation Sudbury is in the midst of developing its own service standards document and this should be in place by the end of this year.

The table below shows the permits approved and how they met the two service standards discussed above.

Conservation Sudbury	Number of Permits Issued Within Policy and Procedure timeline ⁱ			Number of Permits Issued Outside of Policy and Procedure Timeline ⁱⁱ		
	Major		Minor	Major		Minor
	20		54	5		33
	Number of Permits Issued Within CO Guideline timeline			Number of Permits Issued Outside of CO Guideline timeline		
	Major	Minor	Routine	Major	Minor	Routine
	19	42	16	6	19	10

ⁱ Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry. *Policies and Procedures for Conservation Authority Plan Review and Permitting Activities*. 2010

ⁱⁱ Conservation Ontario. *Client Service Standards for Conservation Authority Plan and Permit Review guideline*. 2019

Conservation Sudbury has issued 90% more permits in 2021 compared to 2019. As the volume of applications increased rapidly, some permits were not issued within the best practices target periods. Conservation Sudbury put measures in place in order to address this increasing workload. This included hiring additional staff, and improving application forms and written guidance provided to applicants.