



**THE REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF NIAGARA
AGRICULTURAL POLICY & ACTION COMMITTEE
AGENDA**

APAC 3-2021

Friday, September 24, 2021

9:00 a.m.

Meeting will be held by electronic participation only

Due to efforts to contain the spread of COVID-19 and to protect all individuals, there is no public access to Niagara Region Headquarters. If you are interested in viewing this meeting or would like to speak to an item listed on the agenda please contact the Office of the Regional Clerk at clerk@niagararegion.ca at least 24 hours in advance of the meeting.

Pages

1. **CALL TO ORDER**
2. **DISCLOSURES OF PECUNIARY INTEREST**
3. **PRESENTATIONS**
4. **DELEGATIONS**
5. **ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION**
None.
6. **CONSENT ITEMS FOR INFORMATION**

6.1. **APAC-C 5-2021**

3 - 5

A letter to Councillor Witteveen from Frances Hallworth, Executive Director, United Way Niagara, and Tamara Coleman-Lawrie, Director - Community Impact, United Way Niagara, dated July 27, 2021, respecting Niagara Community Gardens Position Statement

6.2.	<u>APAC-C 6-2021</u>	6 - 15
	A memorandum from A.-M.Norio, Regional Clerk, respecting response from Hon. Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, regarding Niagara's Agriculture Sector and Temporary Foreign Workers.	
6.3.	<u>APAC-C 7-2021</u>	16 - 34
	Draft Agricultural System Policies	
6.4.	<u>APAC 2-2021</u>	35 - 38
	Agricultural Policy and Action Committee Meeting Minutes - April 30, 2021	

7. OTHER BUSINESS

7.1. Irrigation Update

8. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be held on Friday, November 26, 2021, at 9:00 a.m.

9. ADJOURNMENT

If you require any accommodations for a disability in order to attend or participate in meetings or events, please contact the Accessibility Advisor at 905-980-6000 ext. 3252 (office), 289-929-8376 (cellphone) or accessibility@niagararegion.ca (email).

July 27, 2021



Niagara Region
Agricultural Policy & Action Committee
Albert Witteveen
c/o albert.witteveen@niagararegion.ca

Dear Agricultural Policy & Action Committee members,

Food security is a basic human right yet almost 60,000 people in Niagara are food insecure, experiencing limited access to nutritious, affordable and culturally appropriate food. Food security is essential for healthy eating - without consistent economic access to sufficient nutritious food, healthy eating cannot be achieved, increasing the risk of poor health.

Community gardens act as a promising strategy to decrease food insecurity because of their ability to provide lower-income households with access to nutritious food. More than 1,200 community gardens across Niagara are significantly improving access to healthy and affordable food, often for the most marginalized populations. **Yet, Niagara's community gardens face consistent barriers. The enclosed position statement amplifies the need to address specific barriers that community gardens face in Niagara. It also calls to action the implementation of policies, bylaws and/or practices that improve food security through community gardens.**

Niagara's municipalities have a role in creating barrier free access. The Halton Food Council's Community Garden Policy Scan clearly states **"Local governments do have a significant role to play in the process: by removing policy barriers; enacting supportive policies; providing support related to water access, land tenure, and composting; by signaling their support of community gardens in government communications; and by dedicating staff time to interact with community gardening groups."**

We highly recommend Niagara's municipalities implement policies and best practices related to:

- Land Use for community gardens, urban agriculture and food security
- Waiving or reducing fees imposed by the municipality
- Provide options for holding certificates of insurance
- Commitment to the program with reasonable annual investment
- Ongoing program evaluation and development

We thank you in advance for your attention to the statement, the recommendations and for working in your community to advance the impact of community gardens. We look forward to working with you to address these barriers. Should you have any questions or wish to follow up, please contact Tamara Coleman-Lawrie at tamara@unitedwayniagara.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Frances Hallworth".

Frances Hallworth
Executive Director
United Way Niagara

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Tamara Coleman-Lawrie".

Tamara Coleman-Lawrie
Director, Community Impact, United Way Niagara
Facilitator, Niagara Food Security Network

Increasing Barrier Free Access to Food Security Through Community Gardens: The Role of Niagara Region Municipalities in Advancing Policy and Reducing Barriers

Food security is a basic human right yet almost 60,000 people in Niagara are food insecure, experiencing limited access to nutritious, affordable and culturally appropriate food*.¹ The Government of Canada states “income-related food security is an important public health issue in Canada and is a key social determinant of health. Food security is essential for healthy eating - without consistent economic access to sufficient nutritious food, healthy eating cannot be achieved, increasing the risk of poor health.”² We recognize the significant effect that food insecurity can have on one's mental, physical, social and overall health and wellbeing. For Niagara residents to be food secure, as defined by the United Nations Committee on World Food Security, everyone in Niagara, at all times, has physical, social, and economic access to sufficient, safe, and nutritious food that meets their food preferences and dietary needs for an active and healthy life.³

Community gardens act as a promising strategy to decrease food insecurity because of their ability to provide lower-income households with access to nutritious food.⁴ Community gardens are significantly improving access to healthy and affordable food at the more than 1,200 plots across Niagara, often for our most marginalized populations. Community gardens can affect an individual's skill development, employment and income, our economic landscape, the environment, and our social and community connectedness. The recent Case Study of the St. Catharines Centennial Community Garden highlights how “community gardens not only address food insecurity but also provide a safe space for all participants to form meaningful relationships; with one another, their community and the natural environment”.⁵ However, community gardens, while adding tremendous value to the community, **continue to be faced with barriers to success, including policies and protocols related to land access and use, access to water, associated fees and certificates of insurance.**

Best practices in other communities have easily addressed these barriers. Niagara's municipalities can play an important role in creating barrier free access to community gardens, thereby investing in viable solutions to food security. We are positioned well to advance community gardens best practices and policies that are in place in other regions and municipalities. Public Health Ontario's Evidence Brief *Municipal and Community-level Interventions to Promote Sustainable Food Systems* states “municipalities are positioned to intervene in their local food system, and can enact policies and programs that build a culture around local food initiatives.”⁶ We believe municipalities in the Niagara region are ready to implement best practices to strengthen our food security system through community gardens.

¹ PROOF Policy Research Study. May 2021. Retrieved from: [PROOF FACTSHEET Provincial-policies-052021.pdf](#)

² Government of Canada. Canadian Community Health Survey. 2004. Retrieved from [Canadian Community Health Survey, Cycle 2.2, Nutrition \(2004\): Income-Related Household Food Security in Canada - Canada.ca](#)

³ United Nations Committee on World Food Security. Global Strategic Framework for Food Security & Nutrition (GSF). 2017 Edition. Retrieved from [CFS: Online GSF \(fao.org\)](#)

⁴ The Blank Page. How Community Gardens Are Tackling Food Insecurity. Published By Dhruvika Angrish. Retrieved from [How community gardens are tackling food insecurity - The Blank Page \(blankpage.org\)](#)

⁵ Tamarack Institute. Vibrant Communities. Case Study | Harvesting Local Gifts and Assets at the Centennial Community Garden. May 2021 Retrieved from: [Harvesting Local Gifts & Assets at Centennials Community Garden.pdf](#)

⁶ Public Health Ontario. Municipal and Community-level Interventions to Promote Sustainable Food Systems. July 2020. Retrieved from [Municipal and Community-level Interventions to Promote Sustainable Food Systems \(publichealthontario.ca\)](#)

The Halton Food Council's *Community Garden Policy Scan* states "The role of local governments is fundamentally a supportive and enabling one. Community gardens are successful because local gardeners are committed to making them so. When local governments open their doors and invite the community in, there is a great deal of community expertise and experience to be shared. Local governments do have a significant role to play in the process: by removing policy barriers; enacting supportive policies; providing support related to water access, land tenure, and composting; by signaling their support of community gardens in government communications; and by dedicating staff time to interact with community gardening groups." ⁷

Now is the time to act. Municipalities can create policies that empower Niagara's citizens and provide them with barrier free access to food through community gardens. **The best practices and policies we encourage and recommend Niagara's municipalities to develop specifically relate to:**

1. Land Use for community gardens, urban agriculture and food security
2. Waiving or reducing fees imposed by the municipality
3. Provide options for holding certificates of insurance
4. Commitment to the program with reasonable annual investment
5. Ongoing program evaluation and development

There is no need to reinvent the wheel in Niagara when it comes to implementing best practices for community gardens. Many cities across Ontario have recognized the critical role community gardens play and have implemented the policies and mechanisms to reduce these barriers. These municipalities include, but are not limited to:

- | | | |
|-------------|------------|---------------|
| - Guelph | - Hamilton | - Kingston |
| - Kitchener | - London | - Mississauga |
| - Ottawa | - Toronto | - Windsor |
| - Waterloo | | |

Community gardens best practices and policies from across the province are readily available and can be found at sources including, but not limited to: [Sustain Ontario](#); [ChangeLab Solutions](#); [Toronto Food Policy Council](#); [Region of Waterloo](#); and local Public Health units including the [Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph Public Health](#). The Niagara Community Garden Network and United Way Niagara, in partnership with the Niagara Food Security Network, would be delighted to provide the recommended policies and work with municipalities to transition to inclusive and barrier free approaches.

We ask that Niagara government representatives, stakeholders and community partners take action to improve access to affordable, healthy and culturally appropriate food* by reducing the barriers imposed by current regional and/or municipal bylaws, policies or practices.

It is highly recommended that each of Niagara's municipalities conduct a review of current policies and practices, assigning the necessary staff and departments to assess and recommend a barrier free approach. We recommend a timely implementation of policies and practices that reduce barriers for community gardens and improve access to healthy, affordable and culturally appropriate food, thereby reducing food insecurity in Niagara.

⁷ Community Garden Policy Scan. Prepared by Dillon Consulting Limited for the Halton Food Council. November 2013. Retrieved from [May 20 2014 Health and Social Services MO1214 Halton Food Council Progress 20122014 MO1214 attachment 2pdf 173641.pdf](#) Source: Barbolet, 2009, p. 6

* Culturally Appropriate Food - As defined by [Food Secure Canada](#).

MEMORANDUM

APAC-C 6-2020

Subject: Response from The Honourable Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, respecting Chair Bradley's letter regarding Niagara's Agriculture Sector and Temporary Foreign Workers

Date: September 24, 2021

To: Agricultural Policy and Action Committee

From: Ann-Marie Norio, Regional Clerk

On April 22, 2021, Regional Council passed a resolution outlining the impact of COVID-19 on Niagara's agricultural community and requested the Regional Chair be directed to advocate to the Federal Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship for the federal government to:

- a. Oversee (and provide the necessary financial assistance) for the mandated quarantine of migrant workers upon arriving in Canada and in the event of an outbreak;
- b. Continue to make federal subsidy funding available for farms that employ temporary foreign workers so that the costs associated with protecting their health and safety not be an exceptional burden on Niagara's local farms; and
- c. Ensure that internet access to rural farm locations continues to be a high priority.

Further to Council direction, on May 21, 2021, Regional Chair Bradley sent a letter regarding Niagara's Agriculture Sector and Temporary Foreign Workers, to The Honourable Marco Mendicino, Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, attached as Appendix 1 to APAC-C 6-2021. Appendices 2 and 3 to APAC-C 6-2021 are the responses received to date.

Respectfully submitted and signed by,

Ann-Marie Norio, BA, Dipl. M.A., CMM III
Regional Clerk

Appendix 1 – Letter from Regional Chair Jim Bradley to The Honourable March Mendicino, May 21, 2021, respecting Niagara’s Agriculture Sector and Temporary Foreign Workers.

Appendix 2 – Response from Immigration, Refugee, and Citizenship Canada to Chair Bradley’s letter regarding Niagara’s Agriculture Sector and Temporary Foreign Workers. (CWCD 2021-147)

Appendix 3 - Response from The Honourable Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, respecting Chair Bradley’s letter regarding Niagara’s Agriculture Sector and Temporary Foreign Workers.



Office of the Regional Chair | Jim Bradley

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Email: jim.bradley@niagararegion.ca

www.niagararegion.ca

May 21, 2021

The Honourable Marco Mendicino
Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship
365 Laurier Avenue West
Ottawa, ON K1A 1L1

Sent by e-mail
Minister@cic.gc.ca

Dear Minister Mendicino,

Re: NIAGARA'S AGRICULTURE SECTOR AND TEMPORARY FOREIGN WORKERS

On April 22, 2021, Niagara Regional Council passed a resolution outlining the impact of COVID-19 on Niagara's agricultural community and requested the Regional Chair **BE DIRECTED** to advocate to the Federal Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship advocating for the federal government to:

- a. Oversee (and provide the necessary financial assistance) for the mandated quarantine of migrant workers upon arriving in Canada and in the event of an outbreak;
- b. Continue to make federal subsidy funding available for farms that employ temporary foreign workers so that the costs associated with protecting their health and safety not be an exceptional burden on Niagara's local farms; and
- c. Ensure that internet access to rural farm locations continues to be a high priority.

A copy of the full resolution is provided as an Appendix accompanying this letter.

Agriculture plays a crucial role in Niagara's economy, contributing over \$1.4 billion to the regional GDP and Niagara's 1,800+ farms provide over 20,000 jobs to residents and temporary foreign workers.

We are aware the Federal government is currently seeking input on the migrant farm-worker accommodation issue to strengthen its policies and to this end we ask for consideration that would assist Niagara farmers with costs in expanding, enhancing and/or constructing new living accommodations. Financial assistance will ensure the health and safety of our temporary foreign workers and help offset increased costs of construction materials, permitting and other related fees and charges.

I appreciate your consideration of this matter and would appreciate the opportunity to discuss this further at your earliest convenience

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jim Bradley".

Jim Bradley, Chair
Niagara Region

cc: Vance Badawey, MP, Niagara Centre
Chris Bittle, MP, St. Catharines
Ann-Marie Norio, Regional Clerk

Dean Allison, MP, Niagara West
Tony Baldinelli, MP, Niagara Falls

APPENDIX

COM-C 13-2021

Motion for consideration at Public Health and Social Services Committee:

NIAGARA'S AGRICULTURE SECTOR AND TEMPORARY FOREIGN WORKERS

MOVED BY Councillor Witteveen **SECONDED BY** Councillor Foster

WHEREAS agriculture plays a crucial role in Niagara's economy, contributing over \$1.4 billion to the Regional GDP;

WHEREAS Niagara's 1,800+ farms provide over 20,000 jobs to residents and temporary foreign workers;

WHEREAS Niagara's farms provide over 43% of the total agricultural economic impact of the Golden Horseshoe, despite only having 23% of the total farmland;

WHEREAS many of Niagara's farms play an important role in ensuring Ontario's food security;

WHEREAS the operations on many of these farms require the use of temporary foreign workers in order to meet processing demands;

WHEREAS the Federal Government requires farms that employ temporary foreign workers to complete a labour market screen in order to demonstrate that these positions to be filled cannot be done by domestic labourers;

WHEREAS the Federal Government protects temporary foreign workers under Canadian law, requiring farms who utilize temporary employees to ensure that they are paid for their work, the workplace is safe, they are provided with break time and days off and that the terms of their written contracts are respected;

WHEREAS since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, issues have been raised by numerous concerned groups regarding the living conditions of the temporary foreign workers and the potential impact of these conditions on the spread of the virus;

WHEREAS Regional Council acknowledges that many farmers in Niagara have made meaningful enhancements to their operations to address these concerns;

WHEREAS temporary foreign workers integrate into the Niagara community while they are in the country, including visiting retail and restaurant establishments;

WHEREAS a recent report published by the CBC found that temporary foreign workers are at least 10 per cent more likely to contract COVID-19 than compared to the general population;

WHEREAS since the beginning of that pandemic, over 1,600 temporary foreign workers have contracted the virus, meaning almost 1 in 5 of Niagara's cases was a temporary foreign worker;

WHEREAS temporary foreign workers have died of COVID-19 since the beginning of the pandemic;

WHEREAS ensuring the health and safety of temporary foreign workers is crucial to protect their lives, the operational continuity on the farms and the amount of COVID-19 in circulation in the Niagara community;

WHEREAS the costs associated with improving these living conditions may be economically detrimental to farm owners due to drastic increases in construction materials, permitting and other fees and charges; and

WHEREAS the Federal Government is currently seeking input on the migrant farm-worker accommodation issue to strengthen its policies.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

1. That the Regional Chair **BE DIRECTED** to advocate to the Federal Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship advocating for the federal government to:
 - a. Oversee (and provide the necessary financial assistance) for the mandated quarantine of migrant workers upon arriving in Canada and in the event of an outbreak;
 - b. Continue to make federal subsidy funding available for farms that employ temporary foreign workers so that the costs associated with protecting their health and safety not be an exceptional burden on Niagara's local farms; and
 - c. Ensure that internet access to rural farm locations continues to be a high priority;
2. That the Regional Chair **BE DIRECTED** to write a letter to the provincial Minister of Health and the Solicitor General advocating that temporary migrant workers be considered a priority group to receive the COVID-19 vaccine when made available; and
3. That Regional staff **BE DIRECTED** to explore, as part of the 2022 Development Charge By-law update, policy options that the Regional Municipality of Niagara, in partnership with the Local Area Municipalities, may consider pursuing that would be designed to provide financial relief (from local permitting, fees and development charges) for farm owners who are seeking to improve the living conditions of temporary foreign workers.

Girard, Caleb

From: Bradley, Jim <Jim.Bradley@niagararegion.ca>
Sent: Friday, July 2, 2021 11:21 AM
To: Ministerial Correspondence / Correspondance Ministérielle (IRCC)
Cc: Minister / Ministre (AAFC/AAC)
Subject: RE: Response from Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (Correspondence Ref. #: 2021-01180208)

Thank you! I appreciate you taking the time to review this item and forwarding it on to the appropriate Minister for response. I look forward to Minister Bibeau's consideration. Any assistance or guidance will be helpful.

Regards,
Jim Bradley, Chair
Niagara Region

From: Ministerial Correspondence / Correspondance Ministérielle (IRCC) <IRCC.MinisterialCorrespondence-CorrespondanceMinisterielle.IRCC@cic.gc.ca>
Sent: Wednesday, June 30, 2021 12:25 PM
To: Bradley, Jim <Jim.Bradley@niagararegion.ca>
Cc: 'aafc.minister-ministre.aac@canada.ca' <aafc.minister-ministre.aac@canada.ca>
Subject: Response from Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (Correspondence Ref. #: 2021-01180208)

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the Niagara Region email system. Use caution when clicking links or opening attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Jim Bradley
Chair, Niagara Region
Jim.bradley@niagararegion.ca; aafc.minister-ministre.aac@canada.ca

2021-01180208

Dear Jim Bradley:

Thank you for your correspondence of May 21, 2021, addressed to the Honourable Marco E.L. Mendicino, Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, regarding Niagara's agriculture sector and temporary foreign workers. I have been asked to respond to your concerns.

The Government of Canada recognizes the importance of supporting the agriculture and agri-food sector, maintaining Canada's food security, and ensuring the sector's competitiveness. Our Government continues to work hard to find ways to support Canadian employers in this sector who are facing ongoing labour challenges, which are exacerbated by the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) global pandemic.

In recognition of the needs of the agriculture and agri-food sector, Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada has prioritized the processing of work permit applications for temporary foreign workers in this sector throughout the pandemic.

The Government continues to facilitate the safe arrival of temporary workers from overseas and prioritize resources towards in-demand occupations like health care, agriculture, food, and seafood production.

Many of the concerns you raise in your correspondence fall under the responsibility of the Honourable Marie-Claude Bibeau, Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada. As such, I have taken the liberty of forwarding a copy of your correspondence to her office in order to provide a response on these issues.

Thank you for taking the time to write. I trust that this information is helpful to you.

Sincerely,

S. Charbonneau
Ministerial Enquiries Division

This electronic address is not available for reply.

cc: The Honourable Marie-Claude Bibeau
Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada

The Regional Municipality of Niagara Confidentiality Notice The information contained in this communication including any attachments may be confidential, is intended only for the use of the recipient(s) named above, and may be legally privileged. If the reader of this message is not the intended recipient, you are hereby notified that any dissemination, distribution, disclosure, or copying of this communication, or any of its contents, is strictly prohibited. If you have received this communication in error, please re-send this communication to the sender and permanently delete the original and any copy of it from your computer system. Thank you.

Minister
of Agriculture and
Agri-Food



Ministre
de l'Agriculture et de
l'Agroalimentaire

Ottawa, Canada K1A 0C5

Quote: 266397

August 11, 2021

Mr. Jim Bradley
Chair
Niagara Region
1815 Sir Isaac Brock Way
PO Box 1042
Thorold ON L2V 4T7

Dear Mr. Bradley:

I am writing in response to your letter to the Honourable Marco E.L. Mendicino regarding the continued financial support for employers of temporary foreign workers (TFWs) for quarantine-related costs, as well as other costs associated with implementing health and safety measures on farms, and the prioritization of rural internet access. As you know, the Minister's Office forwarded a copy of your correspondence to me for consideration. I appreciate having the opportunity to address your concerns.

The Government recognizes the vital role TFWs play in many sectors of the economy, including agriculture and agri-food, where they are instrumental in supporting Canada's food system. Agriculture and food processing workers, both domestic and foreign, are essential for the production of safe and reliable food in this country.

Since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, protecting the health of all those who are working hard to support the food system has been a top priority. The Government has worked diligently, and continues to do so, to ensure tailored measures are in place to support our agriculture and agri-food sector in mitigating the impacts of COVID-19 and protect workers across Canada.

To date, we have implemented a number of programs to assist producers and processors, including the one-time, short-term Mandatory Isolation Support For Temporary Foreign Workers Program, which helps support some of the incremental costs incurred by employers associated with the 14-day mandatory quarantine period for TFWs entering Canada. The 2020–21 program year ended with 4,823 applications, representing over \$82.32 million in federal funding. Between April 1 and July 9, 2021, 2,089 applications had been received, representing over \$35.6 million in federal funding. Additional support of up to \$2,000 per worker is also available through the 3-Day Hotel Quarantine Stream of the Program. This stream is intended to help offset a portion of costs associated with workers who are required to quarantine at a government-approved facility because they cannot travel by private means directly to their place of quarantine. As of July 9, 2021, 87 applications had been received, representing \$1.1 million in federal funding.

In accordance with Budget 2021, the Program will be gradually phased out and will stop accepting applications after August 31, 2021. The Government understands that the pandemic and the current travel environment continue to increase uncertainty and costs. The Program's intention has been to act as a temporary emergency support for employers during the most acute period of the COVID-19 crisis.

Our government has also announced a number of measures to provide support to the agriculture and agri-food sector since the beginning of the pandemic, including:

- the \$77.5-million Emergency Processing Fund, with a further \$10 million allocated from internal funds, which helped companies implement changes to safeguard the health and safety of workers;
- up to \$125 million to launch national AgriRecovery initiatives to help producers faced with extraordinary costs resulting from COVID-19, including set-aside programs for cattle and hogs to manage livestock backed up on farms due to the temporary closure of food processing plants;
- a stay of default under the Advance Payments Program to ensure that producers have the flexibility they need to manage their cash flow when facing lower prices or reduced marketing opportunities. As well, eligible producers who still have outstanding interest-free loans will have the opportunity to apply for an additional \$100,000 interest-free portion for 2020–21 if their total advances remain under the \$1-million cap. There is some flexibility for the Government to provide a stay of default for outstanding loans if the administrators make a request and a payment default is pending;
- a \$5-billion increase in Farm Credit Canada's (FCC) lending capacity to producers, agribusinesses and food processors, which will offer increased flexibility to producers who face cash flow issues and to processors who are impacted by lost sales, helping them remain financially solvent during this difficult time. FCC has approved more than \$850 million in loans to help alleviate short-term cash flow issues for producers in addition to supporting more than 4,700 producers and agri-food businesses who have used payment deferral options on FCC loans totalling \$5.4 billion; and
- \$60,000 interest-free loans available under the Canada Emergency Business Account, with up to \$20,000 forgivable. Based on the forgivable portions, these loans have the potential to provide \$1.7 billion in direct support to producers across the country.

Producers also have access to their AgriInvest accounts to manage cash flow issues. Across Canada, there is over \$2.45 billion in these accounts at the moment, which producers can use to help manage losses and invest in their farm operations.

Internet access to rural farm locations will continue to be a priority. The Government recognizes that improved rural connectivity could enable further adoption of precision agriculture and other technologies that can help drive productivity, growth and environmental sustainability in the Canadian agri-food sector. This is one of the reasons why the Government continues to invest in broadband connectivity and mobile networks in rural areas. Investments include the \$2.75-billion

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Universal Broadband Fund and the Connect to Innovate program delivered through Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada, as well as other initiatives from the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission, Infrastructure Canada, Indigenous Services Canada and the Canada Infrastructure Bank. Through these investments, the Government is committed to ensuring that 98 percent of Canadians have access to high-speed internet by 2026, and 100 percent of Canadians have access by 2030.

As you noted, on October 27, 2020, the Government of Canada launched consultations with the provinces and territories, workers, employers, worker support groups and other interested parties on a proposal to establish minimum requirements for employer-provided accommodations for the TFW Program across the country. This work is being led by Employment and Social Development Canada. A central objective of the consultations was to work with the provinces, territories and local officials to understand how requirements need to be aligned.

As part of the accommodation consultations, the Government proposed accommodation requirements for the purpose of discussion. These requirements will be revised and reworked in light of feedback from the consultations and are intended to complement existing standards at the provincial level. The requirements' goal is to provide clarity and consistency so that employers are able to judge whether they are in compliance. This measure aims to make sure that TFWs are consistently afforded accommodations that respect their right to live in reasonable comfort and dignity while they work to support Canada's agriculture industry.

Rest assured that your concerns regarding employer costs associated with meeting new requirements have been noted as part of this process. Any future changes will be made in collaboration with stakeholders, and sufficient notice will be provided to employers to ensure there is adequate time to implement any changes required as a result of the new federal minimum standard.

Protecting the well-being of agriculture workers continues to be a top priority for the Government of Canada. We will continue to work with the agriculture sector, as well as with our provincial and territorial counterparts, to explore additional steps we can take to protect this vital part of the workforce.

I trust that this information is of assistance to you. Thank you for writing on this matter.

Sincerely,



The Honourable Marie-Claude Bibeau, PC, MP

c.c. The Honourable Carla Qualtrough, PC, MP

MEMORANDUM

APAC-C 7-2021

Subject: Draft Agricultural System Policies

Date: September 24, 2021

To: Agricultural Policy and Action Committee

From: Erik Acs, Manager of Community Planning

At the February 26th, 2021 meeting of the Agricultural Policy and Action Committee (APAC), a presentation and memorandum (APAC-C 2-2021) was shared outlining the draft Agricultural System policies for the Region's new Official Plan.

Following APAC, the draft policies were shared with several stakeholder groups who had expressed interest in a presentation and discussion. On May 12th, 2021, the draft policies were shared more broadly at the Region's Planning and Economic Development Committee (PEDC 17-2021). The May 12th, 2021 meeting of PEDC bundled the agricultural policies with a larger draft policy package and requested feedback by July 2nd, 2021.

Feedback submissions were received from local municipalities, agricultural commodity groups, agricultural membership organizations and several other interest groups and parties. A summary of comments received was shared with the Region's Planning and Economic Committee on September 15th, 2021 (PEDC 36-2021). All written comments received are posted on the [Official Plan](https://www.niagararegion.ca/official-plan/) project website:
(<https://www.niagararegion.ca/official-plan/>)

- The goals and objectives for the Region's Agricultural System remain consistent with those shared earlier this year to protect and promote agriculture in Niagara.

Appendix I to this memorandum is a revised draft of the Agricultural System policies. The revised draft addresses comments received, corrections of errors and clarification of policy. Examples of edits to the draft policy set include:

- Clarification that an Agricultural Impact Assessment is not required for new or expanding agricultural uses;
- Clarification of minimum lot sizes with respect to private servicing requirements;

- Correction of terminology to better reflect Provincial conformity requirements (such as MDS criteria, and permitted uses in a Specialty Crop area); and
- Simplification of policy wording throughout the section.

In addition to the attached appendix, an updated [glossary of defined terms](https://pub-niagararegion.escibemeetings.com/filestream.ashx?DocumentId=17775) is located on the Official Plan project website: (<https://pub-niagararegion.escibemeetings.com/filestream.ashx?DocumentId=17775>)

There will continue to be opportunities for consultation on the policies as development of the Region's Official Plan progresses into 2022. Staff are open to and appreciative of any comments, questions or feedback on the attached draft policy set.

Respectfully submitted and signed by

Erik Acs, MCIP, RPP
Manager of Community Planning

Appendix I Draft Agricultural Policy Set

CHAPTER 4 – COMPETITIVE REGION

Section 4.1 The Agricultural System

This Chapter outlines the objectives and the policies for the Region's *Agricultural System*. The *Agricultural System* contains an agricultural land base and the *agri-food network* that enables the agri-food sector to thrive. There are natural heritage features located throughout the agricultural land base, and farm stewardship facilitates both environmental benefits and agricultural protection.

The agricultural land base is comprised of *prime agricultural areas*, including *specialty crop areas*, and *rural lands*. The *agri-food network* includes *infrastructure*, services and assets important to the viability of the agri-food sector.

Together, the Region's *Agricultural System* and *natural environment system*, provides a significant contribution to Niagara's resilience and our ability to adapt to climate change. The agricultural land base will be protected for the provision of healthy, local food for present and future generations. Farming will be productive, diverse, and sustainable.

Niagara's Agricultural Economy.

Niagara region is home to an active and vibrant farming sector, which includes a wide range of farming types including grape and tender fruit; greenhouse, nursery, floriculture operations; oilseeds and grain operations; livestock operations, and more. In Niagara, farmland generates over \$1.4 billion GDP from agriculture and has a high employment impact for the region.

4.1.1 Protect the region's agricultural land base.

4.1.1.1 The geographic continuity of the agricultural land base, as shown in Schedule E and the functional and economic connections to the *agri-food network* will be maintained and enhanced in accordance with the policies of this chapter.

4.1.1.2 *Prime agricultural areas* and *specialty crop areas* shall be protected for long-term use for agriculture.

Prime agricultural areas are areas where *prime agricultural lands* predominate. *Specialty crop areas* shall be given the highest priority for protection, followed by Canada Land Inventory Class 1, 2, and 3 lands, and any associated Class 4 through 7 lands within the *prime agricultural area*, in this order of priority.

- 4.1.1.3 *Settlement areas* are not permitted to expand into *specialty crop areas*.
- 4.1.1.4 An *agricultural system* has been identified in which all types, sizes, and intensities of *agricultural uses*, activities, and *normal farm practices* shall be promoted and protected in accordance with Provincial Standards. Removal of land from *prime agricultural areas* may only occur for expansions or identification of *settlement areas* through a *municipal comprehensive review*. Revisions to the *Greenbelt Plan* and *Niagara Escarpment Plan* boundaries and redesignation of *specialty crop areas* are prohibited.

4.1.2 Ensure agriculture is the predominant land use in *specialty crop areas* and *prime agricultural areas*.

- 4.1.2.1 *Specialty crop areas* shall not be redesignated in official plans for non-agricultural uses. Non agricultural uses may be permitted subject to the *Greenbelt Plan* and policy 4.1.3.1 of this chapter.
- 4.1.2.2 In *specialty crop areas*, all existing uses lawfully used for such purpose prior to December 16, 2004, (the date the *Greenbelt Plan* came into effect) are permitted. Also, in *specialty crop areas*, single detached dwellings and accessory structures are permitted on existing lots of record, provided they were zoned for such or permitted through other regulation as of December 16, 2004.
- 4.1.2.3 In the *specialty crop areas* and *prime agricultural areas*, the predominant use of land will be for *agricultural uses* and *normal farm practices* of all types, such as:
- i. *Agriculture-related uses*;
 - ii. *On-farm diversified uses*; and

4.1.3 Restrict and control non-farm uses to minimize potential conflicts.

4.1.3.1 Non-agricultural uses should not be located in *specialty crop areas* and *prime agricultural areas*. The introduction of new non-agricultural uses of all types into these areas has a potential adverse impact on *agricultural uses* and the natural environment. Permissions for limited non-agricultural uses may be considered through an amendment to this plan, subject to the following conditions:

- a) The completion of an *agricultural impact assessment* by a qualified professional;
- b) New non-agricultural uses are not permitted in *specialty crop areas*;
- c) The proposed use complies with the *minimum distance separation formulae*;
- d) There are no reasonable alternatives on *rural lands* or in *settlement areas*;
- e) There are no reasonable alternative locations in other *prime agricultural areas* with lower priority agricultural land;
- f) Impacts from new or expanding non-agricultural uses on surrounding agricultural operations and lands should be mitigated to the extent feasible;
- g) Applications must be supported by adequate technical assessments to ensure that private water supply and private sewage services can be provided in accordance with Section 5.2 {Infrastructure Policies}; and

Mitigating impacts from new or expanding non-agricultural uses.

This would depend on the size and nature of the proposed use, the existing *agricultural uses*, and on any buffering factors between them. For example, creeks, roadways and other prominent features would be helpful in defining and screening a non-agricultural use from surrounding agricultural operations. Mitigation measures should be incorporated as part of a proposed non-agricultural use, as appropriate, within the area being developed.

- h) Compliance with policies contained in the Niagara Official Plan, including those in Section 3.1 {Natural Environment System} and Section 4.3 {Mineral Aggregate Resources}.

4.1.3.2 Where *agricultural uses* and non-agricultural uses interface, land use compatibility shall be achieved by avoiding or, where avoidance is not possible, minimizing and mitigating adverse impacts on the *Agricultural System*, by incorporating measures as part of new or expanding non-agricultural uses, as appropriate, within the area being developed.

4.1.4 Ensure the long-term sustainability and function of uses within the *Agricultural System*.

4.1.4.1 Within the prime agricultural area, including the Protected Countryside of the *Greenbelt Plan*, lot creation is discouraged and may only be permitted in accordance with the policies below.

4.1.4.2 Proposed residential lots being considered under sections 4.1.5 and 4.1.6 for a consent within the agricultural land base must meet the following conditions:

- a) Any new lot is of sufficient size and has suitable soil and site conditions for the installation and long-term operation of a private sewage disposal system in compliance with Provincial and Regional requirements;
- b) Any new lot has an adequate groundwater or other water supply, in compliance with Provincial requirements;
- c) Any new lot has sufficient frontage on an existing publicly-maintained road;
- d) Where possible, joint use should be made of the existing road access to the farm operation;
- e) Road access to any new lot does not create a traffic hazard because of limited sight lines on curves or grades or proximity to intersections;
- f) The size of any new lot shall be an area of 0.4 hectares except to the extent of any additional area deemed necessary to support a well and private sewage disposal

system as determined by Provincial and Regional requirements; and

- g) Proposed lots should be located to minimize impacts on surrounding farming operations.

- 4.1.4.3 All proposed *development* and uses will include sustainable on-site private water supply and private sewage disposal systems subject to applicable Provincial and Regional regulations and associated approvals.

4.1.5 Protect *specialty crop* areas from fragmentation.

- 4.1.5.1 In the *specialty crop areas*, consents to convey may be permitted only in accordance with the following provisions and the general consent provisions in Section 4.1.4.2. Within the *Niagara Escarpment Plan Area*, the policies of the *Niagara Escarpment Plan*, as amended from time to time, shall prevail unless the following policies are more restrictive, then the more restrictive policies shall prevail. Policies for lot creation in Local Official Plans can be more restrictive than the following policies and still conform to this Plan.

- a) The consent is supported through a planning justification report;
- b) The consent is for an *agricultural use* where the severed and retained lots are intended for *agricultural uses* and provided the minimum lot size is 16 hectares for each;
- c) The consent is for an *agriculture-related use*, provided that any new lot shall be limited to the minimum size needed to accommodate the use and appropriate sewage and water services;
- d) The consent is for acquiring land for *infrastructure* purposes, where the facility or corridor cannot be accommodated through the use of easements or rights of way, provided that:
 - i. The need has been demonstrated and it has been established that there is no reasonable alternative; and
 - ii. An *agricultural impact assessment* has been completed by a qualified professional.

- e) The consent is for facilitating conveyances to public bodies or non-profit entities for natural heritage conservation, provided it does not create a separate lot for a residential dwelling;
- f) The consent is for *legal or technical reasons* as determined by local municipalities, provided they do not create a separate lot for a residential dwelling, there is no increased fragmentation of a *key natural heritage feature* or *key hydrologic feature*, and complies with other policies in this Plan; and
- g) The consent is for a *residence surplus to a farming operation* as outlined in policy 4.1.5.2.

4.1.5.2 The severance of a *residence surplus to a farming operation* may be permitted under the following circumstances:

- a) The proposed lot contains a habitable residence, which existed as of December 16, 2004, that is rendered surplus as a result of farm consolidation;
- b) The severance shall be an area of 0.4 hectares except to accommodate the use and appropriate sewage and water services to a maximum of 1 hectare;
 - i. Proposals that exceed 1 hectare may be considered subject to an amendment to this plan
- c) To reduce fragmentation of the agricultural land base, the retained lot shall be merged with an abutting parcel. Where merging of two lots is not possible, the retained farm parcel shall be zoned to preclude its use for residential purposes.

4.1.6 **Protect *prime agricultural areas* from fragmentation.**

4.1.6.1 In *prime agricultural areas*, consents to convey may be permitted only in those circumstances set out in the following provisions and the general consent provisions of Section 4.1.4.2. Policies for lot creation in Local Official Plans can be more restrictive and still conform to this Plan.

- a) The consent is for *agricultural uses*, subject to the following criteria:

- I. supported through a planning justification report;
- II. provided that the resulting parcels are both for *agricultural uses*;
- III. the size of the resulting parcels meet the Local Official Plan and agriculture zoning provisions, and:
 - i. is appropriate for the farming activities proposed;
 - ii. is suited to the particular location and common in the area; and
 - iii. provides some flexibility for changes in the agricultural operation.
- b) The consent is for *agriculture-related uses* subject to the following:
 - i. any new lot shall be limited to a minimum size needed to accommodate the proposed use and appropriate sewage and water services; and
 - ii. any new lot shall be zoned to preclude residential uses in perpetuity
- c) The consent is for a *residence surplus to a farming operation* as outlined in policy 4.1.6.2
- d) The consent is for a lot adjustment for *legal or technical reasons*
- e) The consent is for *infrastructure*, where the facility or corridor cannot be accommodated through the use of easements or rights-of-way

Legal or Technical Reasons

Legal or technical reasons means severances for purposes such as easements, corrections of deeds, quit claims, and minor boundary adjustments, which do not result in the creation of a new lot (PPS).

4.1.6.2 The severance of a *residence surplus to a farming operation* may be permitted under the following circumstances:

- a) The lot contains a habitable residence, which existed as of June 16, 2006, that is rendered surplus as a result of farm consolidation;

- b) The severance shall be an area of 0.4 hectares except to accommodate the use and appropriate sewage and water services to a maximum of 1 hectare;
 - i. Proposals that exceed 1 hectare may be considered subject to an amendment to this plan
- c) To reduce fragmentation of the agricultural land base, the retained lot shall be merged with an abutting parcel. Where merging of two lots is not possible, the retained farm parcel shall be zoned to preclude its use for residential purposes.

4.1.7 Facilitate a strong, diverse, and resilient agricultural economy.

4.1.7.1 The Region encourages the continued operation and expansion of agricultural infrastructure including irrigation systems.

4.1.7.2 Temporary accommodation for seasonal or full-time farm labour may be permitted without severance in perpetuity where:

- a) the size and/or nature of the agricultural operations makes the employment of such help necessary; and
- b) where such temporary accommodation does not have a significant effect on the tillable area of the agricultural operation or its viability.

4.1.7.3 *Agricultural uses, agriculture-related uses and on-farm diversified uses* are permitted in the following areas:

- a) *specialty crop areas*;
- b) *prime agricultural areas*; and
- c) *rural lands*

Regional Agriculture Committee and Agri-Food Strategy

Niagara Region has a long standing Agricultural Policy and Action Committee (APAC) with a mandate to advise Regional Council on issues that impact the agricultural industry by initiating, developing, implementing and participating in actions and strategies needed to advance the agricultural industry and preserve the agricultural land base throughout Niagara.

Type of Use	Agricultural Uses	Agriculture-Related Uses	On-Farm Diversified Uses
Definition	Growing of crops or raising of animals; includes associated on-farm buildings and structures; all types, sizes and intensities; <i>normal farm practices</i> are promoted and protected	May or may not be on a farm; farm-related commercial or industrial use; compatible with surrounding agricultural operations; directly related to farms in the area; supports agriculture, provides products or services to farms; benefits from proximity to farms	On a farm; secondary use; limited in area; includes, but is not limited to, home occupations, home industries, <i>agri-tourism uses</i> and value-added uses; compatible with surrounding agricultural operations
Examples include, but are not limited to	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Cropland b) Pastureland c) Barns and other associated buildings and structures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Local processing b) Farm equipment repair shop c) Agriculture research centre 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) <i>Agri-tourism uses</i> b) Small restaurant c) Home occupations

4.1.7.4 Proposed *agriculture-related uses* and *on-farm diversified uses* shall be compatible with, and shall not hinder, surrounding agricultural operations.

4.1.7.5 *Agriculture-related uses* and *on-farm diversified uses* shall be consistent with the provisions of the *Provincial Policy Statement*, and conform to *A Place to Grow: Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe*, *Greenbelt Plan*, and *Niagara Escarpment Plan*.

4.1.7.6 *On-farm diversified uses* are secondary to the principal *agricultural use* of the property, and are limited in area. The appropriate scale for *on-farm diversified uses* may vary depending on the type of use and whether the activities are located in the *specialty crop area* or in other *prime agricultural areas*.

4.1.7.7 The following criteria shall be considered when reviewing applications for proposed *agriculture-related uses* and *on-farm diversified uses*:

- a) Whether the proposed activity is more appropriately located in a nearby *settlement area* or on *rural lands*;
- b) Whether the use is required for or in close proximity to the agricultural operation for it to support and complement the agricultural activity;
- c) The extent to which the use is compatible with the existing farming operation and surrounding farming operations;
- d) Whether the scale of the activity is appropriate to the site and farming operation;
- e) Whether the use is consistent with and maintains the character of the agricultural area;
- f) The use does not generate potentially conflicting off-site impacts;
- g) The activity does not include a new residential use;
- h) The use is limited to low water and low effluent producing uses and the site is capable of accommodating the use on private water and private sewage treatment systems;
- i) The use does not require significant improvements to *infrastructure*; and
- j) The use complies with all other applicable provisions of the Niagara Official Plan.

4.1.7.8 Within the *Niagara Escarpment Plan Area*, the policies contained in the *Niagara Escarpment Plan* apply. *Agriculture-related uses* and *on-farm diversified uses* must meet the permitted uses, Development Criteria and policies of the *Niagara Escarpment Plan*.

4.1.8 Protect and recognize *rural lands* as part of the *Agricultural System*.

4.1.8.1 The predominant use of lands in *rural lands* will continue to be agriculture, but some non-agricultural related *development*

may be permitted subject to the policies in Sections 4.1.8 and 4.1.9.

4.1.8.2 Permitted uses on *rural lands* include:

- a) The management or use of resources in accordance with all other applicable provisions of the Niagara Official Plan;
- b) Limited residential *development* in accordance with Section 4.1.9;
- c) *Agricultural uses, agriculture-related uses, on-farm diversified uses, normal farm practices*, in accordance with this chapter;
- d) Home occupations and home industries in accordance with Local Official Plan and Zoning By-law provisions;
- e) Cemeteries; and
- f) Other uses not described in this chapter may be permitted, subject to an amendment to this Plan.

4.1.8.3 The *rural lands* along the Lake Erie shoreline contain historic patterns of seasonal and permanent residential *development*. These uses and expansions thereof continue to be permitted in accordance with Local Official Plans and Zoning By-law provisions.

4.1.9 Provide for a limited amount of non-farm residential *development* on *rural lands*.

4.1.9.1 Limited non-farm residential *development* may be permitted on *rural lands* in accordance with the policies of this section.

4.1.9.2 Proposals for non-farm residential *development* on *rural lands* must meet the following criteria and the general consent provisions in Section 4.1.4.2, in addition to the other requirements of this Official Plan, the *Niagara Escarpment Plan* and the Local Official Plan:

- a) A maximum of three new lots (in addition to the retained lot) may be permitted;
- b) The minimum size of the proposed and retained lots shall each be 1 hectare unless it is determined through a

hydrogeological study, that considers potential cumulative impacts, that a smaller size lot will adequately accommodate private water and sewage treatment facilities for long term operation but not be less than 0.4 ha;

- c) The development will be at a scale and density suitable to the physical characteristics of the site;
- d) Soil and drainage conditions are suitable and permit the proper siting of buildings, the supply of potable water and the installation and long-term operation of an adequate means of waste disposal;
- e) The proposed *development* will be consistent with Section 3.1 {Natural Environment System}; and
- f) Proposed *developments* must be suitably distant and protected from:
 - i. incompatible land uses such as existing pits and quarries;
 - ii. *mineral aggregate resources* recognized in this Plan;
 - iii. livestock operations and anaerobic digesters, in accordance with the *minimum distance separation formulae*;
 - iv. existing and former solid waste sites;
 - v. major existing and proposed transportation facilities; and
 - vi. employment uses.

4.1.10 Recognize and control changes to existing uses to ensure a viable *Agricultural System*.

- 4.1.10.1 This Plan shall not prohibit the continued operation of legally established uses, such as residential, commercial, employment, agricultural, and institutional uses.
- 4.1.10.2 In the Protected Countryside of the *Greenbelt Plan*, expansions of legally established structures and accessory structures which bring the use more into conformity with this Plan, are permitted subject to a demonstration of the following:

- a) New municipal services are not required; and
- b) The use does not expand into *key natural heritage features* and *key hydrological features*, unless there is no other alternative in which case any expansion shall be limited in scope and kept within close geographical proximity to the existing structure.

4.1.10.3 In the *specialty crop area*, conversions or *redevelopment* of legally established uses, structures, accessory structures are permitted subject to a demonstration of the following:

- a) The proposed use must be in accordance with the *Specialty Crop Guidelines*, as amended from time to time;
- b) The use does not expand into *key natural heritage features* and *key hydrological features* unless there is no other alternative in which case any expansion shall be limited in scope and kept within close geographical proximity to the existing structure;
- c) The completion of an *agricultural impact assessment* by a qualified professional; and
- d) The proposed use is in accordance with the *minimum distance separation formulae*.

4.1.10.4 This Plan shall not prohibit the reasonable expansion or change in the use of such legally established uses provided the following:

- a) *Settlement area* boundaries are not superseded;
- b) The use is brought more into conformity with this Plan;
- c) The expansion is in accordance with Section 3.1 {Natural Environment System};
- d) Result in the intrusion of new incompatible uses; and
- e) Subject to an *agricultural impact assessment* by a qualified professional.

4.1.10.5 Within the *Niagara Escarpment Plan* area, the *Niagara Escarpment Plan* Policies also apply to existing uses.

4.1.10.6 In accordance with the developed shoreline area policies of the *Greenbelt Plan* and *Growth Plan*, notwithstanding Sections 4.1.1, 4.1.2, 4.1.5, 4.1.6, 4.1.8, and 4.1.9 of this Plan, infill *development, redevelopment, and resort development* is permitted in developed shoreline areas of Lake Ontario, Lake Erie, and the Niagara River that are designated or zoned for concentrations of *development* as of July 1, 2017, subject to the following requirements. The *development* will:

- a) Enhance or be integrated with existing or proposed parks and trails, such as the Great Lakes Waterfront Trail, and will enhance ongoing or planned stewardship and remediation efforts;
- b) Restore, to the maximum extent possible, the ecological features and functions in development shoreline areas; and
- c) In the case of *redevelopment* and resort *development*:
 - i. Establish, or increase the extent and width of, a *vegetation protection zone* along the shoreline to a minimum of 30 metres;
 - ii. Increase the extent of *fish habitat* in the littoral zone;
 - iii. Be planned, designed, and constructed to protect *hydrologic functions*, minimize erosion, and avoid or mitigate sedimentation and the introduction of nutrient or other pollutants into the lake;
 - iv. Exclude shoreline structures that will impede the natural flow of water or exacerbate algae concerns along the shoreline;
 - v. Enhance the ability of native plants and animals to use the shoreline as both *wildlife habitat* and a movement corridor;
 - vi. Use lot-level stormwater controls to reduce stormwater runoff volumes and pollutant loadings;
 - vii. Use natural shoreline treatments, where practical, for shoreline stabilization, erosion control, or protection;

- viii. Meet other criteria and direction set out in applicable *watershed planning* and *subwatershed plans*;
- ix. Be serviced by *sewage works* which reduce nutrient inputs to groundwater and the receiving water body from baseline levels; and
- x. Demonstrate available capacity in the receiving water body based on inputs from existing and approved *development*.

4.1.11 Provide direction to local municipalities.

- 4.1.11.1 The removal of topsoil and the placement of fill in *specialty crop areas, prime agricultural areas, and rural lands* is discouraged. Local municipalities are encouraged to enact by-laws to regulate the placement of fill in accordance with Section 3.7 {Excess Soil}.
- 4.1.11.2 Local municipalities shall formulate policies and schedules for inclusion in their Official Plans to protect the agricultural land base consistent with the policies of the Niagara Official Plan.
- 4.1.11.3 Local Official Plans and Zoning By-laws shall use the *minimum distance separation formulae* for assessing proximity to existing or proposed new livestock operations and anaerobic digesters. Other non-agricultural uses shall comply with the *minimum distance separation formulae*.
- 4.1.11.4 Local Official Plan policies for non-agricultural *development* shall provide direction on the following issues:
 - a) The future pattern and character of *development*;
 - b) The extent of protection for agricultural activities;
 - c) Considerations for the proposed use or *development* to be sustained by rural service levels and meet access and servicing requirements;
 - d) Impacts from new or expanding non-agricultural uses on surrounding agricultural operations and lands should be mitigated to the extent feasible:

- i. Mitigation measures should be incorporated as part of the non-agricultural use, as appropriate, within the area being developed;
 - ii. Non-agricultural uses shall comply with the *minimum distance separation formulae*
 - e) The extent of protection to natural resources and the *natural environment system*; and
 - f) Compatibility with adjoining agricultural areas, surrounding rural landscape, and local land uses.
- 4.1.11.5 Local Official Plans should include additional policies guiding the continued operation and possible expansion of existing uses.
- 4.1.11.6 Local Official Plans and Zoning By-laws should define, categorize, and provide specific performance criteria for *agriculture-related uses* and *on-farm diversified uses*, in accordance with the provisions of the Niagara Official Plan. Local Official Plans can be more restrictive regarding their *agriculture-related uses* and *on-farm diversified uses* policies and still conform to the Niagara Official Plan.
- 4.1.11.7 Local municipalities may limit the number of *agriculture-related uses* and *on-farm diversified uses* permitted in association with the farm operation.
- 4.1.11.8 Local municipalities are encouraged to utilize site plan control to regulate the impact of *agriculture-related uses* and *on-farm diversified uses*, in relation to entrances, parking and loading facilities, signage, grading and storm water drainage, buffering and landscaping, and landscape protection.
- 4.1.11.9 Local Official Plans may provide for the implementation of *agriculture-related uses* and *on-farm diversified uses* through the establishment of a development permit system, based on the degree of compatibility of specific uses in relation to the principal agricultural operation.
- 4.1.11.12 Local municipalities may recognize and regulate *agri-tourism uses*. The activities shall be subject to the following criteria:

- a) The scale of the operation is limited and appropriate to the site and the surrounding area;
- b) The use has minimal impact on, does not interfere with and is compatible with the surrounding agricultural and rural land uses;
- c) The use is limited to low water and low effluent producing uses and the site is capable of accommodating the use on private water and private sewage treatment systems;
- d) The use does not cause off site impacts related to infrastructure or transportation/traffic;
- e) The use does not generate potentially conflicting off-site impacts;
- f) Short-term accommodations shall not exceed 6 bedrooms;
- g) For special events, the use represents an occasional activity and is not a regular recurring activity;
- h) The timing and duration of such uses does not hinder the agricultural operation on the site or on surrounding lands; and
- i) The use complies with all other applicable provisions of the Niagara Official Plan.

Short-Term Accommodations

Short-term accommodations may include uses such as bed and breakfast facilities, farm stays, etc. Short-term accommodations are different from temporary accommodation for seasonal and full-time farm labour, as detailed in Policy 4.1.7.2.

**THE REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF NIAGARA
AGRICULTURAL POLICY & ACTION COMMITTEE
MINUTES**

**APAC 2-2021
Friday, April 30, 2021
Committee Room 4 / Video Conference
Niagara Region Headquarters, Campbell West
1815 Sir Isaac Brock Way, Thorold, ON**

Committee Members Present in Committee Room 4:	Councillor Witteveen (Committee Chair)
Committee Members Present via Video Conference:	Councillors Disero, Easton, Steele; G. Janes, J. Kikkert, C. Mullet Koop, B. Schenck (Committee Vice Chair), J. Schonberger, L. Troup
Absent/Regrets:	Bradley (Regional Chair), Councillor Jordan; A. Vaughn, K. Wiens
Staff Present in Committee Room 4:	K. Lotimer, Legislative Coordinator, L. Sicoli, Economic Development Officer
Staff Present via Video Conference:	E. Acs, Policy Planner, K Costantini, Senior Planner, G. Spezza, Director, Economic Development, K. Young, Planner
Others Present via Video Conference:	P. Bootsma, Christian Farmers Federation of Ontario, Sarah Caster-Kielek, Rural Planner for Niagara, Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, Helma Geerts, Policy Advisor, Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, J. Janiec, Ontario Federation of Agriculture, Nick Kinkel, Agriculture and Rural Economic Development Advisor, Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, K. MacPhearson, Greenbelt Foundation, S. Marshall, Ontario Tender Fruit Growers

1. CALL TO ORDER

Committee Chair Witteveen called the meeting to order at 9:04 a.m.

2. DISCLOSURES OF PECUNIARY INTEREST

There were no disclosures of pecuniary interest.

3. PRESENTATIONS

3.1 Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA) Greater Golden Horseshoe Agricultural System

Helma Geerts, Policy Advisory, and Nick Kinkel, Agriculture and Rural Economic Development Advisor, Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA), provided information respecting Implementing the Greater Golden Horseshoe Agricultural System. Topics of the presentation included:

- Significance of the agri-food sector and rationale for the Agricultural System approach
- Provincial Agricultural System policy
 - Greenbelt Plan, A Place to Grow, Niagara Escarpment Plan
- Agricultural Land Base mapping
- Economic development
 - Approach and resources
 - Examples
- Future steps

3.2 Food Security and Expanding Access to Nutritional Food Throughout the Niagara Region

Renee Delaney, resident, Town of Allanburg, and Steven Soos, resident, City of Welland, provided information respecting Food Security and Expanding Access to Nutritional Food Throughout the Niagara Region. Topics of the presentation included:

- The need for community supported agriculture to help address the issue of lack of nutritional food
- Petitioning the Minister of Agriculture to increase purchasing power around access to nutritional food
- The need for improved identification of local products in existing supply chains
- Encouraging the development of new markets for local food

4. DELEGATIONS

There were no delegations.

5. ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION

There were no items for consideration.

6. CONSENT ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

Moved by Councillor Steele
Seconded by Councillor Disero

That the following items **BE RECEIVED** for information:

PDS 13-2021

Municipal By-law Enforcement Appointments - Woodland Conservation By-law

CWCD 2021-92

Correspondence from The Honourable Ernie Hardeman, Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, to Regional Chair Bradley, dated April 14, 2021, respecting \$10 Million Investment to Extend Funding for a Re-designed Enhanced Agri-food Workplace Protection Program

APAC 1-2021

Agricultural Policy and Action Committee Meeting Minutes - February 26, 2021

Carried

7. OTHER BUSINESS

7.1 Irrigation Update

Committee members reviewed a draft motion respecting Niagara's Agriculture Sector and Access to Untreated Water for Irrigation. Councillor Witteveen, Committee Chair, advised that he would be providing notice to the Regional Clerk, to include this motion on the agenda for the Regional Council meeting being held on May 20, 2021.

Moved by Councillor Disero
Seconded by Councillor Easton

That the Agricultural Policy and Action Committee **ENDORSE** the draft resolution respecting Niagara's Agricultural Sector and Access to Untreated Water for Irrigation.

Carried

7.2 Farm Help Housing Update

Sarah Marshall, Ontario Tender Fruit, requested an update respecting the request for relief from Regional Development Charges for farm help houses. Councillor Witteveen, Committee Chair, advised that he has requested that staff explore the possibility of a grant type program, using restart funds received from the province, to provide some relief from these charges and will provide an update at a future meeting.

7.3 Migrant Farm Worker Vaccinations

Linda Sicoli, Economic Development Officer, advised Committee members that a total of 3,019 migrant workers, from 171 farms across the region, were vaccinated over the past weekend. This is in addition to the 316 workers from 5 farms that had been vaccinated in early April as part of a pilot project.

7.4 Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority (NPCA) Update

Joe Schonberger, Committee member, advised that the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority Public Advisory Committee met virtually on April 29, 2021 and discussed the NPCA Strategic Plan. He noted that the Strategic Plan survey is available online until May 6, 2021, and encouraged Committee members to complete the survey or consider sending a formal submission to the NPCA. He also advised that NPCA Public Advisory Committee meetings are available to view on the NPCA website.

8. **NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting will be held on Friday, September 24, 2021 at 9:00 a.m.

9. **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 10:43 a.m.

Councillor Witteveen
Committee Chair

Kelly Lotimer
Legislative Coordinator

Ann-Marie Norio
Regional Clerk