

Aggregated Stakeholder Consultation Report

January 31, 2019

DRAFT

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Introduction

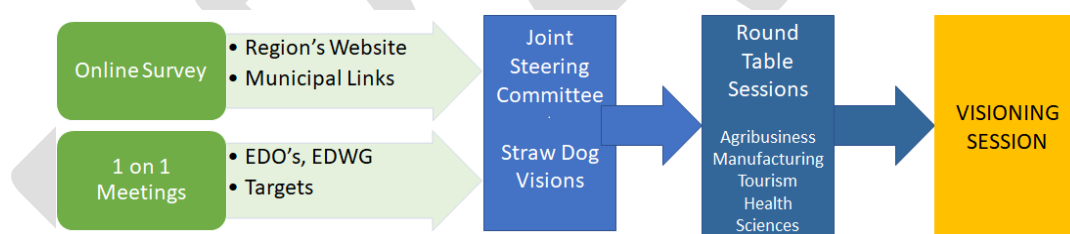
The economic development process influences the economic well-being of communities and regions, including job and wealth creation and the general quality of life. Due to the number of Stakeholders engagement, collaboration and partnerships are an important part of the undertaking.

As a component of the Niagara Region Economic Development Master Plan, it was crucial to involve representative organizations and business engaged in the local economy. Collaboration and meaningful consultation help create tangible buy-in from those who have been engaged and see their perspectives and contributions reflected in the Master Plan.

Stakeholder consultations were designed to provide primary research, building upon the secondary research conducted in the Economic Base Analysis and the resulting Situational Analysis. Capturing this real-world experience helps validate the Phase 1 background review, research and analysis as well as statistical analysis.

The Stakeholder Consultation Plan included:

- Working Group (who were responsible for day to day project management and were part of Joint Steering Committee, see - Addendum 2) session for orientation and feedback
- A public online survey listed on Region's website and links from municipalities and associations
- Facilitated "Straw Dog"¹ session with the Joint Steering Committee (Addendum 2)
- Sector Roundtable Sessions for Agriculture, Tourism, Manufacturing and Health & Wellness
- One on one meetings with selected stakeholders including the Economic Development Working Group (Addendum 1)



Global Investment Action Group (GIAG) provided three background discussion papers; Economic Analysis and Forecasting, Comparison of Niagara Region Municipal Economic Development and A Vision of Niagara Region in 2041. These discussion papers were shared with stakeholders prior to engagement.

After consultation with the Working Group, stakeholders in the below categories were solicited for interviews:

Ag Production	Business Associations
CAO / EDO of Niagara Region municipalities	Economic Development Working Group
Food & Beverage	Health and Wellness
Innovation and Entrepreneurship	Joint Steering Committee
Manufacturing	Niagara Region Senior Management Team
Ontario Ministries – Economic Development / Ag	Post Secondary Education
Real Estate and Development	Tourism

¹ A brainstorming roundtable that generated discussion of relevant economic topics meant to provoke the generation of new and better ideas, visions and actions for the future.

A total of sixty-four (64) interviews were completed, following a preplanned Interview Guide (Addendum 3) which was developed in collaboration with the Working Group. The guide was adapted as required for each group / sector to target specific areas of relevance to the stakeholder relating to their presence in Niagara Region. Confidentiality was offered to each in return for candid feedback.

We have aggregated key feedback and themes from our interviews under the most common comment areas.

Agriculture, Food and Beverage

- ☐ Irrigation needs to be resolved
- ☐ Cannabis can be a threat
- ☐ Need natural gas
- ☐ Increase markets
- ☐ Development of environmental packaging an opportunity
- ☐ Climate change will provide challenges and opportunities
- ☐ Manufacturing / grapes / flowers / cannabis need to be leaders – not crop producers, need automation, software, more value above primary
- ☐ VRIC a leader in automation, artificial intelligence – need funding to expand core operations, not capital projects
- ☐ Opportunity to build the technology base – make the sector bigger
- ☐ Associations don't play a role – staffing not experienced enough
- ☐ Individuals are successful, not the industry; need to start investing as an industry
- ☐ Economic development needs a representative with knowledge and skill in the industry
- ☐ Crush pad – shared space for cider / wine; sell out of one storefront start to incubate – lots of wealthy retirees in the region, what kind of capital is needed
- ☐ No net in-migration, only farm workers – need to target big immigration
- ☐ Need food processing and food processing technology
- ☐ Big data / climate change – all in downtown Toronto
- ☐ Need for a bio control company. Several living at MaRS as post seed start ups. Get them to come to Niagara (another MaRS Landing)
- ☐ Opportunity for micro-processing food incubator

Cannabis

- ◆ Development of associated technologies
- ◆ Most entities in the region are reactive rather than proactive; wait and see attitude
- ◆ Build the technology base - technology for cannabis doesn't exist, no genetics etc., complete whitespace
- ◆ Growing cannabis is low value – what are the products / inputs up the value chain
- ◆ Opportunity in genomics services. Cannabis seed business \$1 billion – Cargill / Monsanto can't do it due to US regulations

Tourism

- ☐ Tourism is a large revenue generator for Niagara region
- ☐ Safety for Visitors is a plus
- ☐ Proximity to the US market
- ☐ Canada has an exchange rate advantage

- ☐ Proximity to the GTA, including its multi-ethnic population
- ☐ Boomers are moving to Niagara
- ☐ Opportunity to be a destination for sports tourism (e.g. Canada Summer Games 2021)
- ☐ Niagara has international reach
- ☐ International students are being used as 'welcomers' by Gateway Tourism in Grimsby
- ☐ Transportation choices are a plus, including Niagara District Airport, GO Rail and Buffalo International
- ☐ Transportation challenges include intra-regional public transit, getting employees of tourism establishments to and from work, the need for a new Niagara – Hamilton Airport Highway (formerly known as Mid-Peninsula), and facilitating people (in addition to goods) movement over the bridges on the border
- ☐ Growth of the local population only adds to the pressure on transportation
- ☐ Urgency to improve the infrastructure situation
 - ◆ Skyway expansion will create notable disruption and leave negative impressions
 - ◆ Track record for completion of major public projects not good, in part because of governmental layers
- ☐ Survey following a national Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) convention in Niagara indicated that the #1 issue for attendees was getting to and from Niagara – over 50% were not satisfied
- ☐ Toronto Pearson International Airport is important to Niagara, as it is second only to JFK in New York for international passenger traffic among North American airports
- ☐ External perceptions about ease of access are the problem
- ☐ There is more to do beyond the historic Niagara image – The Falls:
 - ◆ Need to work together to present a bigger message
 - ◆ Raise standards of service and encourage over-night and long term stays
 - ◆ Expand the narrative about Niagara
 - ◆ Expose options
- ☐ Employees – lack of connectivity by public transportation
- ☐ Tourism industry in Niagara needs more international thinking – e.g. acceptance of Chinese payment cards (Alipay and WeChat Pay), meeting expectations of international guests
- ☐ Niagara post-secondary institutions have linkages with the local tourism needs:
 - ◆ Craft beverages/wineries
 - ◆ Courses, research and co-ops
 - ◆ Hospitality programs and gaming
 - ◆ Business cases, including marketing
 - ◆ Heritage projects
- ☐ No post-secondary hotel degree program; Niagara industry draws on Ryerson and Guelph for grads
- ☐ Professors could promote holding conferences in Niagara to the principal academic organizations to which they belong (e.g. IEEE)
- ☐ Potential for post-secondary extension programs
- ☐ Staff from tourism business (e.g. chefs) often are instructors in post-secondary institutions
- ☐ Attitudes of the local population and councils in Niagara are not always helpful
- ☐ Leadership is needed in the industry
- ☐ Major challenges with availability, retention and training of the workforce, along with public transport to and from work
- ☐ Need greater awareness of product away from The Falls

- ☐ Significant investments and gains have been made in off-season promotions, including casinos, wineries and Shaw Festival, so that the major low traffic period to remedy is now Monday to Thursday
- ☐ Sport tourism is a major opportunity, but requires a bid fund; students can be a resource; need more hockey ice pads in order to attract tournaments
- ☐ Commitment by the Region is required

Manufacturing

- ☐ Location/Access to Markets is a competitive advantage
- ☐ Supply chain: Can find a source of almost anything needed within 100 miles; Aids competitiveness
- ☐ Transportation
- ☐ Training and Trades (Mohawk and Niagara College)
- ☐ Seaway access, though it could be better
- ☐ "Niagara discount"
 - ◆ Cost of living and homes cheaper
 - ◆ An attraction to mid to 'C' level employees; not such a strong drawing card for entry level employees
 - ◆ Canada-US Border provides proximity to the US but some tariff challenges
- ☐ Niagara has a "workplace mindset" founded on tradition and trades such as welding, forging, heat treatment, etc.
- ☐ Cross-border funnel
- ☐ Post-secondary educational institutions
- ☐ Manufacturing has left environmental damage that often must be remedied
- ☐ Water available for processing from Welland Canal, though a fee has been introduced by the Seaway Corporation
- ☐ Fermentation skills and relevant graduates available
- ☐ A major gap is the shortage of machinists
- ☐ Reinvention
 - ◆ Niche markets
 - ◆ Innovations
 - ◆ Move quickly
 - ◆ Be different
 - ◆ Many under 50 employees
 - ◆ Success or find gaps to exploit
 - ◆ Upward pressure on wages coming from Toronto ("The Toronto Effect")
 - ◆ "China price" survivors
- ☐ What advantages can be delivered in Niagara
 - ◆ Lower land costs
 - ◆ Incentives
 - ◆ Post-secondary education institutions
 - ◆ Lifestyle
- ☐ Economic Development in Niagara – What's Needed
 - ◆ One Stop
 - ◆ Learn from losses – act on what needs fixing
 - ◆ Regional transportation

- ☐ Require retraining – does not count for funding; need to get change to programs
- ☐ One company developed its own program with Brock's Goodman School of Business
- ☐ Lobby Ontario government on apprentice program
- ☐ Retraining needs to be individually centred
- ☐ Secondary schools should return to offering more exposure to trades
- ☐ How to repeat GE
 - ◆ Welland was one of 27 sites considered
 - ◆ Talent/Legacy of trades
 - ◆ Water
 - ◆ Supply chain
 - ◆ Need to market region more aggressively/effectively
- ☐ SME breakthrough growth
- ☐ Access IRAP, SR&ED and FedDev programs
- ☐ Business retention activity helps attract investment
- ☐ Protect industrial land (Welland example)
- ☐ Regulatory threats
- ☐ Expectations are now shorter-term
- ☐ Need assurances of continuity
- ☐ In the past when Niagara had larger companies, today's manufacturers were their supply chain partners (95%). With departure of large firms, things have shifted and companies who have stayed and survived have expanded their customer base more widely
- ☐ Make Niagara's manufacturers collectively North America's machine "Shop," "local" suppliers to North America, offering X lathes, etc.
- ☐ Unionization: Perception become reality
- ☐ High electricity costs
- ☐ Put best foot forward, with NIA as the voice
- ☐ Get Niagara College back on side with trades
- ☐ Are Germany's Mittelstand companies an example for Niagara's SME manufacturers?

Health and Wellness

- ☐ The Niagara Peninsula (Niagara Health System) owns its own health care
- ☐ Niagara is building a system of care, including the St. Catharines General Hospital and the new South Niagara hospital (to be expected in 6 to 8 years)
- ☐ The system is integrated – moving from silos to partnership
- ☐ Collaboration on the talent front is strong with Brock and Niagara College
- ☐ Brock
 - ◆ Health and wellness is important to a community
 - ◆ Comprehensive programs
 - ◆ Nursing program
 - ◆ Public Health
 - ◆ Partnership in condos for seniors
 - ◆ Masters in gerontology expected next year
 - ◆ Centre for Health and Wellness
 - ◆ I-EQUIP
 - ◆ Conference on the "Future of Health" being developed for June 2019
- ☐ New LINC at Brock
 - ◆ Experiential

- ◆ Profit, Place and People
- ◆ Social innovation
- Niagara College
 - ◆ Course-based research
 - ◆ Continuing education
 - ◆ Career ready
 - ◆ Rehab clinic
 - ◆ Health care thought leadership, including from alumni
 - ◆ Social innovation and cross-training (e.g. dementia)
 - ◆ Age-friendly network
 - ◆ Program Advisory Committees (PACs) ensure “world ready” focus
- Hotel Dieu Shaver
 - ◆ Parkinsons Rehab
 - ◆ Cancer Rehab
- Pain Points in system
 - ◆ Security of data and information
 - ◆ Data silos
 - ◆ Mobility
 - ◆ AI
 - ◆ EMS (Niagara is a leader)
- A strong health care system is a plus in attracting the talent that will then lead to investment – Power of Place
- Commercialization
 - ◆ Ecosystems
 - ◆ Partnerships
 - ◆ Forums
 - ◆ Link systems
 - ◆ Calculated risk taking
 - ◆ Hack events
 - ◆ Medical maker
- Governance model needed to bring people together – e.g. integrated health record (WiFi)
- Engage Region and municipalities
- Communication
- Digital is an opportunity
- Pro-active model
- Need for Public Transit/Active transport

Challenges

- Succession planning
- Parochialism
- Sense of entitlement / resistance to change
- Not investment ready / investment hesitant
- Companies are risk adverse, conservative
- No dreamers, only dabblers

Education

- ☐ More skills development
- ☐ Skilled trades responding to industry needs
- ☐ Encouragement of STEM participation
- ☐ Experiential learning
- ☐ Better industry / education collaboration

External linkages

- ☐ Focus on exports, value add
- ☐ Mobilize supply chain
- ☐ Hamilton Niagara Seaway
- ☐ Binational collaboration with WNY

Governance

- ☐ “One stop shop”, eliminate red tape
- ☐ Equal promotion across all areas of the region
- ☐ Advocacy for streamlined governance & regulations by outside agencies and senior levels of government
- ☐ Amalgamation of the region needed

Growth opportunities

- ☐ Bi- national cooperation
- ☐ Cannabis
- ☐ Healthcare
- ☐ Aging and related health / wellness
- ☐ Retirement community
- ☐ Tourism growth across the region
- ☐ Sports & Recreation
- ☐ Identify and grow local supply chains
- ☐ Unique, craft orientated manufacturing
- ☐ Value added agriculture in all areas
- ☐ Very active SME's with development of diversified entrepreneurial small business, need more offices

Immigration

- ☐ Foreign student post secondary grad retention
- ☐ Immigrant attraction program
- ☐ Increase multiculturalism

Infrastructure

- ☐ Mid Peninsula Highway

- ☐ GO Train
- ☐ Multi - modal (water, road, rail, air) including Seaway / Canal
- ☐ Inter-regional transit
- ☐ First mile / last mile
- ☐ Natural gas
- ☐ 5G broadband
- ☐ Seaway / Canal development
- ☐ Reduce electrical costs
- ☐ Infrastructure backlog needs to be identified and qualified

Leadership

- ☐ A need for collaboration
- ☐ Initiate and promote “open for business”
- ☐ Need a better culture of innovation
- ☐ More rapid adoption of technology
- ☐ Develop Centres of Excellence
- ☐ Business mentorship and support at all levels, not just start ups
- ☐ Overhaul of political structure and leadership
- ☐ Demand political accountability
- ☐ Stronger linkage between business and economic development
- ☐ Need to achieve the opportunities and potential long exposed in Niagara region
- ☐ Need Top 10 point plan
- ☐ No trust

Real Estate & Development

- ☐ Balance growth
- ☐ Equalize incentives across the region
- ☐ Develop effective zoning
- ☐ Increase shovel ready lands
- ☐ Remove DCs
- ☐ Expedite planning approval process

Talent & Workforce

- ☐ Youth retention
- ☐ Post secondary grad retention
- ☐ Better workforce development a must
- ☐ Workforce retention
- ☐ Talent attraction
- ☐ More support for entrepreneurship
- ☐ Post secondary must respond to industry needs
- ☐ Recognize Gray Power an asset

Addendum 1 – Economic Development Working Group

<i>Economic Development Working Group Committee</i>		
Name	Sector Represented	Company/Organization
Dominic Ursini	Economic Development	Director, Niagara Region Economic Development
David O’Kane	One Business Representative of the Finance Sector	Commercial Banker, Scotiabank
Gervan Fearon	Two representatives of the post-secondary education sector	President and Vice Chancellor, Brock University
Dan Patterson		President, Niagara College
Tom Beach	One business representative within the industrial sector	President, Handling Specialty
Greg Chew	One business representative of the real estate sector	Real Estate Salesman, Colliers International Niagara Ltd
Tim Nohara	One business representative within the innovation sector	President and CEO, Accipiter Radar
Mark Cherney	One labour representative	Business Manager and Financial Secretary, I.B.E.W.
Kevin Jacobi	One representative with business experience in international trade	Executive Director, CanadaBW Logistics Inc.
Euan McKendrick	One representative of the transportation/logistics sector	Claire’s Delivery and Transportation
Ian Hamilton	One business representative of the marine transportation sector	President and CEO, Port of Hamilton
Anthony Annunziata	One representative of the regional tourism sector	President, Niagara Tourism Partnership
Dwayne Charette	Two business owners (manufacturing, tourism, and agribusiness)	Director, Global Supply Chain and Manufacturing, Airbus
Serge Paquin		CEO, Sky Comp

Addendum 2 – Joint Steering Committee

<i>Joint Steering Committee</i>		
Name	Title	Organization
Gervan Fearon	President and Vice-Chancellor	Brock University
Tim Kenyon	Vice President Research	Brock University
Dan Patterson	President	Niagara College
Fiona Allan	Dean, Academic and Liberal Studies	Niagara College
Greg Medulun	Vice President, External Relations	Niagara College
Jim Thibert	General Manager	Ft. Erie Economic Development and Tourism
Dwayne Charette	COO	Airbus
Domenic Ursini	Director	NED
Valerie Kuhns *	Manager, Strategic Economic Initiatives	NED
Lyndon Ashton *	Innovation Centre Manager, Canadian Food and Wine Institute	Niagara College
Charles Conteh *	Associate Professor, Director - Niagara Community Observatory	Brock University

* Working Group Committee Member

Addendum 3 - Stakeholder Discussion Guide - Niagara Region

Current conditions

- What was the genesis of the establishment of your business in Niagara Region?
- What is attractive about the Niagara Region as a destination for businesses to locate?
- What is the nature, strength and prospects of your business sector in Niagara? Are your supply chain interests well served by a Niagara location? Are there supply chain partners that have invested or might invest in Niagara or elsewhere in Ontario or Canada?
- What medium to long-term changes do you anticipate for your business over five, ten or even twenty years?
 - Size and nature of the physical space your business occupies in Niagara?
 - Talent and workforce implications and needs?
 - How will these changes, if any, impact the evolution of your strategies and the company in the coming years
- What are the advantages and disadvantages associated with a Niagara business presence?
 - Are utilities readily available and cost competitive to meet your needs – hydro, water/wastewater/natural gas, and telecommunications? Are there adequate and affordable broadband services in Niagara to meet your requirements? How important will access to 5G networks be?
 - Is there a suitable supply of land and buildings for business retention, expansion and attraction?
 - How big a role does transportation and warehousing play, if at all, in your business? [If has a role] Is the existing supply adequate with room to grow if required?
- Have the Regional and local governments been helpful to businesses like your own? Why do you have that opinion? What meaningful roles can the Regional government and regional / local organizations play in future years that will contribute to your company's success?
- Are you aware of incentive programs at the local, regional and federal level that can enhance your business and assist with growth?
- Are you a member of an association for your sector? If so, what programs, initiatives are offered that are beneficial to your business? Do you have recommendations for initiating programs that would be beneficial to the sector?
- What major infrastructure investments will be required in Niagara over the next two decades to help enable more prosperity in the Region?
- Does Niagara afford lifestyle requirements for your workforce? (Housing, recreation, entertainment etc.)? What role can the Regional government play in attracting and retaining talent, including immigrants?
- How do you see a Niagara location in the context of the Greater Toronto Hamilton Area (GTHA), the Great Golden Horseshoe (GGH), and the broader North American context? Is it more attractive or less attractive as a place to do business...? Than the GTHA.... than the GGH? Why do you have that opinion?
- Are there external geographic / corporate (ON, Canada, NA, Global) linkages that you see as beneficial to growing your business?
- Is proximity to the U.S. border a strategic advantage for your business? If so, how?
- If you are a foreign owned company, can you tell us more about where the Niagara operations fit in the broader corporate strategies and the challenges and opportunities in sustaining and growing the Niagara presence?
- What are the main obstacles to growth and expansion for your business?

- How would you rate the overall business cost competitiveness in Niagara?

Education, training, research and development

- What is the availability and quality of regional university and college graduates? Skilled labour? Semi-skilled labour?
- Are there adequate training and educational opportunities? How can universities and colleges adapt to meet future talent and workforce requirements?
- To what extent do Brock University and Niagara College provide you with some of the talent and skills you need to run your business?
- As your business grows over the next 25 years and adjusts to changes in technology and markets, what kinds of new talent and skills will you likely need to run and grow your business?
- To what extent do Brock University and Niagara College permit you to access the research and development assistance you need to run your business?
- Are you aware of the education, training, research and development incentives available to assist your company and help with growth?
- As your business grows over the next 25 years and adjusts to changes in technology and markets, what kinds of research and development assistance will you likely need to run your business?
- What other meaningful roles can the university and college play in future years that will contribute to your company's success?

Economy and Future Trends

- Has your company/organization been affected by recent changes in the economy or the workforce? For example, hiring or retaining skilled talent, younger versus older workers, the Internet of Things, automation, digitization, remote working opportunities, currency fluctuations etc.
 - How has your company/organization adapted to these changes? Internal HR changes, new technological investments, etc.?
- Between now and 2041, what are the changes that will most impact your business/organization? For example, currency fluctuation, growing Chinese middle-class, Brexit, Trade Agreements, US protectionism, Manufacturing 4.0, electric self-driving vehicles, workforce development, data analytics, artificial intelligence, etc.
 - What plans do you have for adapting to these changes?
- Some economists believe that we are heading into "the most transformational times in history." How do you think these global changes will affect the Niagara economy? What steps/actions, if any, should be taken or considered? (This could be from the private or public sector. Municipal, Provincial, or Federal level of government)
 - What are some of the positive changes that the Niagara region could benefit from?
 - What are some of the negative changes that should be an area of concern?
- The Niagara economy has changed dramatically over the past 25 years, however, its geographic location and proximity to the US border has continued to be an economic strength. Do you believe this will remain one of Niagara's competitive advantages?
 - If so, how does Niagara leverage its proximity to the border in the future?
 - If not, what should it focus on?
- What areas of the economy do you believe provide Niagara Region distinct advantages or opportunity for "Centres of Excellence"?
 - Will these be relevant moving forward?
 - Are there current nascent opportunities to be planned and developed?

- Does Niagara's population and cultural diversity provide opportunity as the economy continues to develop and change?
- What do you believe to be the number one challenge or issue facing the Niagara region in the next 25 years?
- What could Niagara do to attract more prosperity to the region?
- What is your vision for Niagara in 2041?

Stakeholder Questionnaire

1. What is the economic development related competitive strengths you associate with Town/City/Region?
2. What is Town/City/Region's greatest weaknesses and challenges related to economic development?
3. What are the greatest external threats to future economic growth in Town/City/Region?
4. Are there global linkages that provide international leverage for Town/City/Region and its businesses to exploit?
5. What future opportunities do you see for Town/City/Region in growing its economic base and its businesses?
 - a. What sectors do you think will drive future economic growth and why?
6. Is Town/City/Region's workforce and talent aligned with the future requirements of businesses?
 - a. If not, what improvements are needed?
7. How do you perceive Town/City/Region as a location for new businesses and investment?
 - a. How does this vary by type of investment/sector?
8. What is your vision for Town/City/Region?

Addendum 4 – Roundtable Discussion Guide

1. What is your sector's unique competitive advantage?
 - a. Sustainable compelling advantages
 - b. Disadvantages of concern
2. Where will your sector fit into the regional, national and global prosperity chain?
3. What are the key opportunities / threats in your sector for Niagara looking forward to 2041?
4. What is Brock University's and Niagara College's involvement and impact in Niagara Region?
 - a. Talent
 - b. Training
 - c. Research, Development, Commercialization
 - d. Thought leadership

5. What does 2041 look like?
 - a. Technological change
 - b. Political change
 - c. Workplace change
 - d. What drives prosperity
 - e. Sector opportunities
 - f. Global economy
6. What should the key takeaways / actions be from today's session?

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