



SHAPE NIAGARA

SETTING THE STAGE
FOR STRATEGY



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	1	<i>Setting the Stage for Strategy.....</i>	31
Objective of Shape Niagara?	2	Moving Niagara Forward	32
Shape Niagara – <i>Setting the Stage for Strategy</i>	3	Vision for Niagara	33
Methodology	3	SWOT Analysis.....	34
What Comes Next?.....	4	Tying the Organization's Initiatives with Community Priorities	35
Recap of First Shape Niagara Report " <i>What We've Heard</i> "	5	Current Niagara Region Departmental Makeup	36
Reach	6	Community Services	37
		Enterprise Resource Management Services (ERMS)	39
What's Happening Outside Niagara .	7	Office of the CAO	43
Global Trends	8	Planning and Development Services.....	47
Global Priorities and Trends	9	Public Health	49
What's Happening in the United States	11	Public Works	51
National Trends	12		
Federal Government Priorities.....	13	Summary	55
Canada at a Glance	14	Next Steps	56
Provincial Trends.....	15		
Provincial Government Priorities.....	16		
What's Happening in Niagara.....	17		
Local Area Municipal Priorities.....	19		
Population Growth	20		
Physical Environment	22		
Employment and Jobs.....	25		
Community Wellbeing	28		



OBJECTIVE OF SHAPE NIAGARA

Shape Niagara will serve to provide background information combined with stakeholder feedback to inform the development of the 2019-2022 Regional Council strategic plan.

This report is the second of the two Shape Niagara reports, and presents background information collected through an environmental scan, and provides a review of upcoming departmental initiatives as they relate to the priorities as identified by Niagara's community through the first Shape Niagara report *What We've Heard*.

Shape Niagara – *Setting the Stage for Strategy*

The second of two Shape Niagara reports, *Setting the Stage for Strategy* presents background information collected through an environmental scan and data such as Global, Federal and Provincial trends. It provides a review of departmental objectives and initiatives linked to the 17 community priorities captured in the first report, *What We've Heard*.

The combination of the two Shape Niagara reports will act simply to inform Niagara Regional Council as they embark on the development of their own priorities and goals.

The release of this second report captures PHASE 3 of the process outlined below:



Methodology

As part of this background report, an environmental scan was conducted, including but not limited to a review of the items outlined below:

- Discussions with senior leaders across the organization
- Key internal corporate priorities, plans and documents
- Key documents released by local, national and global agencies, organizations, post-secondary educators (Including, Chambers of Commerce, Niagara Workforce Planning Board, Living in Niagara)
- Strategic plans of Niagara's local area municipalities (where available)
- Discussions and document reviews of other Ontario municipal strategies
- Provincial activity and discussions with local Members of Provincial Parliament (MPP)
- Federal government documents and policy briefs

What Comes Next?

Armed with the information from the two Shape Niagara reports, Regional Council will work through the process of developing their 2019-2022 strategic plan in the first quarter of 2019, and a resulting implementation plan.



Re-Cap of First Shape Niagara Report – What We’ve Heard

The first of the two Shape Niagara reports, *What We’ve Heard*, focused on input as heard from Niagara's residents and organizations through an extensive community engagement initiative, which began in March of 2018 and concluded in August of 2018. The initiative utilized online and in-person methods to collect information from a diverse range of community stakeholders including:

- Residents
- Community Partners
- Organizations and
- Businesses

We spoke directly with all 12 of Niagara's local area municipalities through:

- Area Economic Development Officers meeting (Team Niagara)
- Area Planners meeting
- Area Treasurers meeting
- Workshop with local Chief Administrative Officers (CAOs) / General Managers (GMs)
- A Partner Organization facilitated workshop (businesses, non-profits and organizations, post secondary institutions, local area CAO's)

Reach



ONLINE SURVEY
1002 Survey Responses



1523
Total Participants



COMMUNITY EVENTS



28
Community Events



85
Unique Quotes

Approximately
1500
in-person interactions



PUBLIC OPEN HOUSES

5 OPEN HOUSES
70 PARTICIPANTS
173 UNIQUE QUOTES



PARTNER SESSION

70 PARTICIPANTS

60 PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS

16 TOPIC AREAS

25 EDUCATION SECTOR

8 LOCAL MUNICIPALITIES

19 BUSINESS SECTOR

10 EDUCATION SECTOR

8 HEALTH SECTOR

Staff collected information from over 1500 members of the community, including input from non-profit organizations representing the broader voice of their clients. The *What We've Heard* report identified 17 community priorities, ranked in order of frequency (Priority 1 being the most frequently identified). A full summary of the 17 community priorities can be found in the *What We've Heard* report, which can be downloaded at niagararegion.ca/priorities.

Residents were asked to provide three words that best describe Niagara:





GLOBAL TRENDS



Municipalities are easily influenced by opportunities or changes that are happening at a global level. Particularly with Niagara's location, global activities such as trade corridors, or the changes currently happening in the United States can have an impact.

Global Priorities and Trends

A comprehensive summary of current global themes were recently presented at the 2018 Niagara Economic Summit. Relevant themes include opportunities in technology advances, SWIFT broadband, innovations in policy and services, and a review of how communities are evolving across the globe.

Digital Economy

The “digital or gig economy” is a term for economic transactions, interactions and activities that are based on digital technologies. With the rise of companies like Uber and Airbnb, there has been an increasing shift towards these temporary employment opportunities. While the gig economy allows workers to easily obtain jobs, it also creates a decline in traditional jobs, moving towards more precarious employment lacking permanency, consistency or health care benefits.



Increased Quality of Life

Quality of life is defined as the degree to which an individual is healthy, comfortable, and able to participate in or enjoy life events. Residents are more often looking for ways to feel connected to their communities and strive for a high quality of life.



Emerging Anti-Social Society

Social media has brought a new-found level of connectivity, while simultaneously creating an anti-social society. It is changing the way people interact with each other and gives people a brush to paint themselves as they wish to be seen.



Contamination Of The Natural Environment and Climate Change

With increased recognition of the effects of climate change including drought, severe weather, and extreme heat, there is a movement to mitigate the effects. Mitigation techniques can range combinations of land use and technological change, reforestation and carbon capture efforts. Resiliency planning is emerging with weather changes as they affect municipal services.



Shifting Dynamics in Privilege and Marginalization

Supporting marginalized populations, building an inclusive society that empowers and supports marginalized groups and individuals is something that is becoming an emerging priority globally.



Erosion Of Culture And History

With globalization comes a blending of cultures and dilution of traditional history. Remolding has positives and negatives, and stems from the intent of improving living standards of all citizens.



What's Happening in the United States

Recent trade negotiations between Canada and the United States have led to a replacement of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) agreement, leading to the negotiation of the United States–Mexico–Canada Agreement (USMCA). The close proximity of the Niagara Region to the United States means that trade has a profound impact on our Region. The new trade agreement affects multiple sectors:

Manufacturing

Changes have been made to provisions in manufacturing to discourage the outsourcing of work to areas with more affordable labour costs, changes to the minimum part requirements made within a region, and minimum wage requirements.



Agriculture

The USMCA grants American dairy farmers a percentage of Canada's market; these concessions will have negative impacts on the Niagara Region's dairy farmers.



Retail

The USMCA raises duty-free shopping limits when entering Canada from the United States. This increase in allowance may have impacts for local Niagara Region businesses, as it promotes cross-boarder shopping.




Steel and Aluminum Suppliers

The imposing of tariffs on steel and aluminum imports into the United States from Canada are an area of which the Federal government aims to re-negotiate. These tariffs will affect Niagara by increasing supply costs for local construction projects, and could negatively affect local businesses producing these materials.



NATIONAL TRENDS



Niagara can mimic or be influenced by national trends, just as any local community across Canada. The following section provides a summary of what is happening at the federal government level, as well as some Canadian economic trends.

Federal Government Priorities

The current Federal Government has identified their top priorities for Canada, and a summary of relevant priorities are outlined below:

Economic Growth

Encourage innovation, trade and the growth of Canadian businesses, focus on research-based decision making for agricultural and traditional fields. Promote global trade and investment by strengthening the Canadian brand.



Supporting Canadians

Support Canadians by making post-secondary education more affordable and increasing the number of good paying, high quality jobs for young workers. Enhancement of federal income support programs for parents and families, and in support of affordable housing.



Fighting Climate Change

Work to protect our natural assets including our freshwater, oceans, coastal areas, marine life, national parks, and endangered species. Work collectively to make Canada a leader of international efforts to combat climate change.



In addition to these major priorities, the federal government is focusing on:

- Improving the sustainability of infrastructure
- Ensuring a diverse and inclusive Canada
- Supporting the mental and physical health of Canadians
- Improving government services and operations with a fair and open lens
- Ensuring Canada's support of human rights and equality worldwide

Canada at a Glance

The Canadian Chamber of Commerce released a report that outlines ten ways to boost Canada's economy, many of which align with Niagara's strengths or opportunities. Relevant goals include:

Ways to Build a Canada that Wins (2018)

Make Canada a magnet for business investment

Ensure a globally competitive North America, make Canada a global innovator

Make Canada an agri-food powerhouse

Develop agile workforce strategies

Make all of Canada an Export Gateway

Ensure the unrestricted movement of goods and people across Canada

Help Small-Medium-Enterprises trade and grow

Canadian Chamber of Commerce, "Ten Ways to Build a Canada that Wins" (2018)



U.S. News and World Report, Best Countries Report (2019)



PROVINCIAL TRENDS



The Provincial government has a clear focus on reducing the budgetary deficit that currently exists in Ontario. However, this government has not yet made clear the exact programs, funding streams and initiatives that may be cut to achieve this reduction. These changes will have direct impacts on the Region's services and will be identified as more information is rolled out.

Provincial Government Priorities

A preliminary detailing of the PC provincial government's platform and an action plan entitled The Ontario Economic Outlook and Fiscal Review 2018 was reviewed, and the identified priorities and actions that may be relevant are outlined below:

Repeal of the Green Energy Act, cancellation of renewable energy projects

Cancellation of the cap-and-trade carbon tax, and a commitment by the province to join a coalition of provinces opposing the Federal carbon tax framework

Repeal of Bill 148 on minimum wage, and shutting down the Ontario College of Trades

Creation of 6,000 new long-term care beds across Ontario, promise of 9,000 additional beds

Development and implementation of a Housing Supply Action Plan to address barriers in home ownership and rental housing

Reduction of red tape for businesses

Expansion of natural gas and broadband networks to rural and remote communities

As more details of the decisions and impacts made at the Provincial level are released, affected departments will discuss these impacts with Council directly.

Comments from Niagara's MPP's

Regional staff spoke with three out of four of Niagara's Members of Provincial Parliament (MPP), all provincial parties recognize a need for a renewed focus on job creation and economic development. Niagara's MPPs have suggested that Regional Council work collaboratively with them to advocate for Niagara's unique needs. Opportunities where collaboration with MPPs would benefit Niagara include increasing long term care funding, finding solutions for Niagara's affordable housing needs, and ensuring adequate environmental protection for Niagara's unique biosphere. MPP's welcomed the idea of increased collaboration efforts through regular local meetings, improved data sharing, more frequent joint meetings with Ministers, press conferences or letters of support. They drive home the message that by working together with a Niagara-first mindset, elected officials can best serve all constituents.

Comments Received From: Jeff Burch, Wayne Gates, Sam Oosterhoff

Ontario at a Glance

According to the Ontario Chamber of Commerce, expected movement in the Ontario economy include increases in business investment, industrial and commercial activity, machinery and equipment spending. The labour force skill gap still exists, and companies are unable to find the right people to do the jobs. This issue is not expected to change in the near future, and it is a priority for many organizations and levels of government.





NIAGARA AT A GLANCE

This section provides an overview of Niagara's current state through an environmental scan, and provides a review of relevant Niagara-specific information.





Local Area Municipal Priorities

With Niagara's 12 local area municipalities (LAMs), there are a diverse range of community needs and expectations. Throughout the Shape Niagara initiative, it has been heard that the Region needs to work collaboratively, and Niagara's LAMs are significant partners.

Key priorities of senior leaders at the LAMs include:

- Alignment between upper and lower tier priorities
- Cooperation and support across levels of government in Niagara
- One voice and a collective focus

In addition to speaking directly with local municipal staff, the most current LAM strategic plans were reviewed (as available at the time research was conducted). Ten out of 12 LAM strategic plans were available for review, and although local municipalities have different mandates and services than the Region, there is alignment in key areas between the two levels of local government. The following alignments between local and regional government were identified:

Strategic Priority	Number of LAMs that have Priorities Aligned with Region
 Economy	10/10
 Resident Life	10/10
 Service Delivery	10/10
 Transit Active Transportation	7/10

Local Area Municipal Strategic Plans (2018)

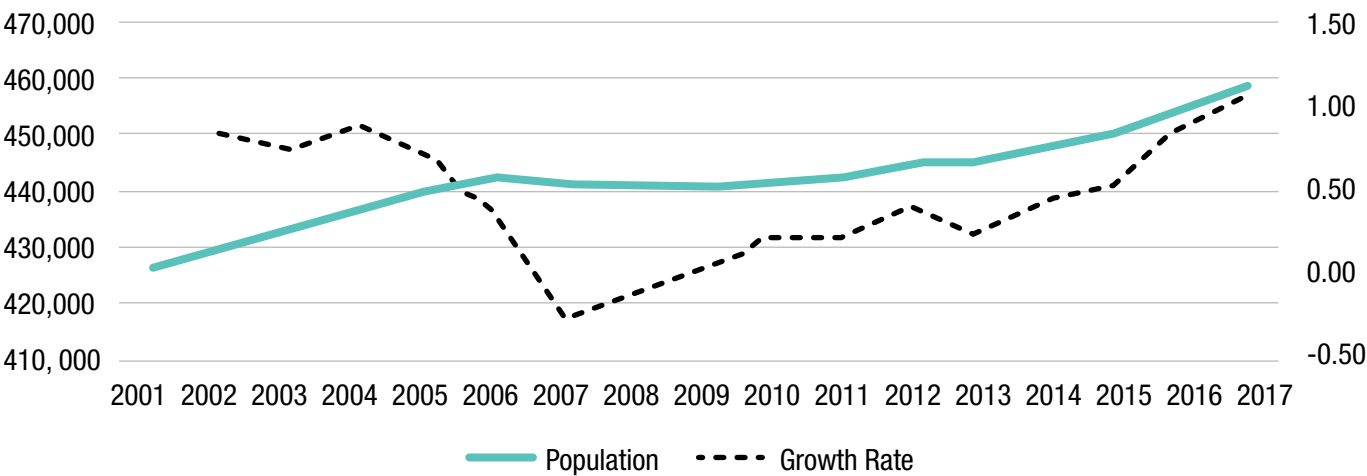
“We need to ensure we are using a unified approach between the Region and municipalities, building on our prior successes. A multi-level approach will lead to a stronger voice for Niagara.”

Population Growth

Niagara saw more population growth than it has seen in over a decade as it increased by 4,829 people (1.06%) to 458,986 residents between 2016 and 2017 (Niagara Region End of Year 2017 Growth Monitoring Report, May 2018). While Niagara is seeing progressively better growth over the last several years, it is happening at a rate much slower than the province (4.6%) and country (5.1%). Niagara's immigrant population has decreased from 18.1% to 16.6% between 1996 and 2016; between those two time periods, Niagara has only attracted 700 immigrants to the region (Statistics Canada, Niagara Region Census, 2016).

Growth in Niagara over the next 25 years is projected to be an additional 150,000 people (from 447,000 (2016) to 597,000 (2041), (Municipal Comprehensive Review Phase 4 forecast, 2018). Niagara will need to identify a sustainable path forward that will ensure affordability to residents while being prepared for the growth ahead.

Population and Growth Rate



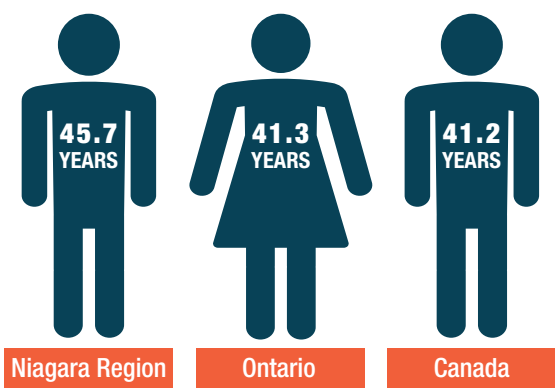
Statistics Canada, Annual Population Estimates (2001-2017)



Aging Population

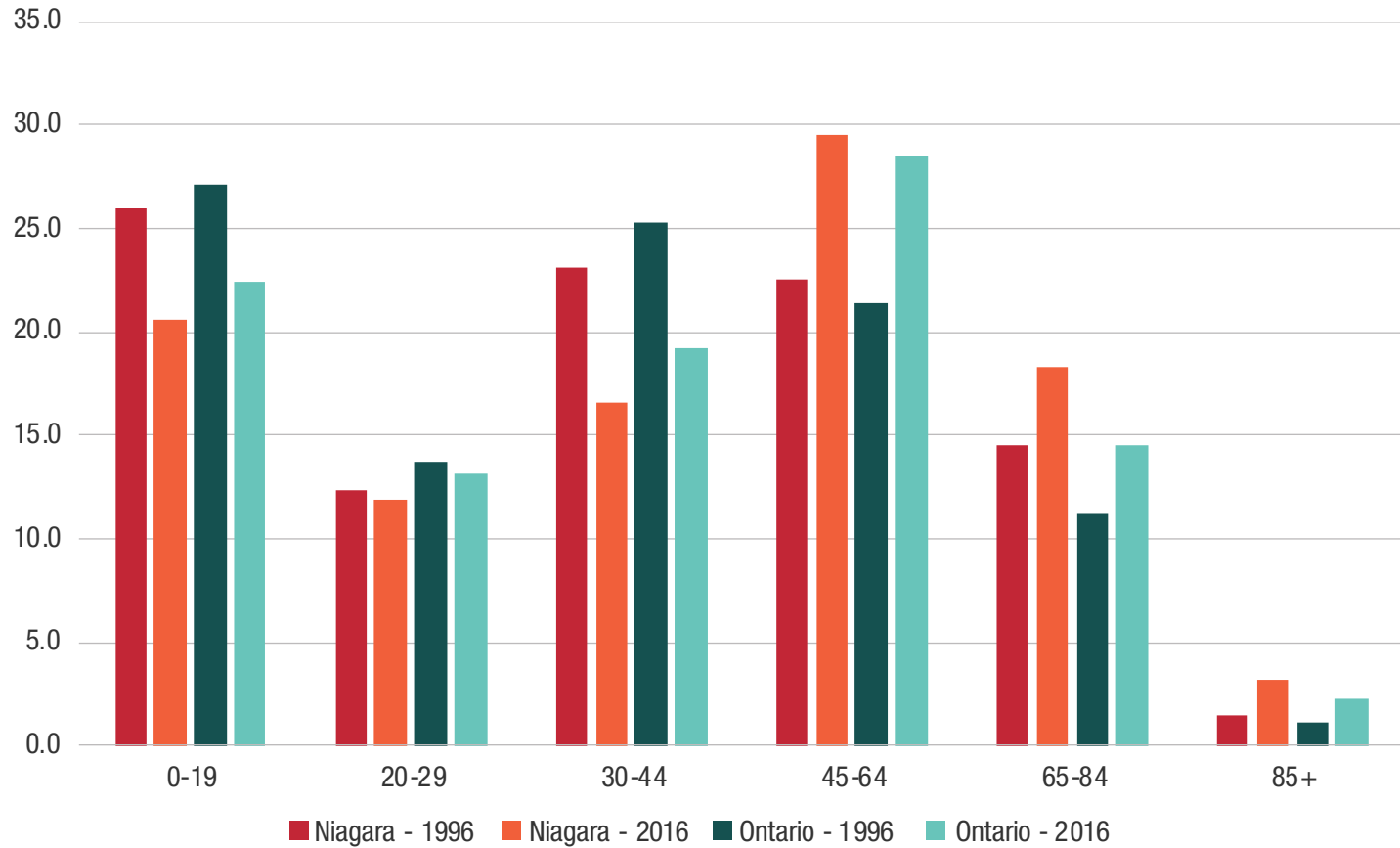
Niagara’s population of seniors is expected to more than double by 2041 (Niagara’s Transportation Master Plan, 2017). Niagara has one of the oldest populations in Canada with more elderly than youth (Statistics Canada, Niagara Census Profile 2016) and is noticeably higher than the province overall. Over the last twenty years, the 30-44 and under age cohort has decreased significantly while the 45-64 and 65+ age cohorts have increased across Niagara and the province. There will be a need to focus on increasing Niagara’s working age population, particularly the 30-44 cohort. Niagara will also need to continue to adapt to the needs of the aging population through services offered at the Regional level.

Population’s Median Age



Statistics Canada, Median Age (2016)

Then and Now, Niagara vs. Ontario



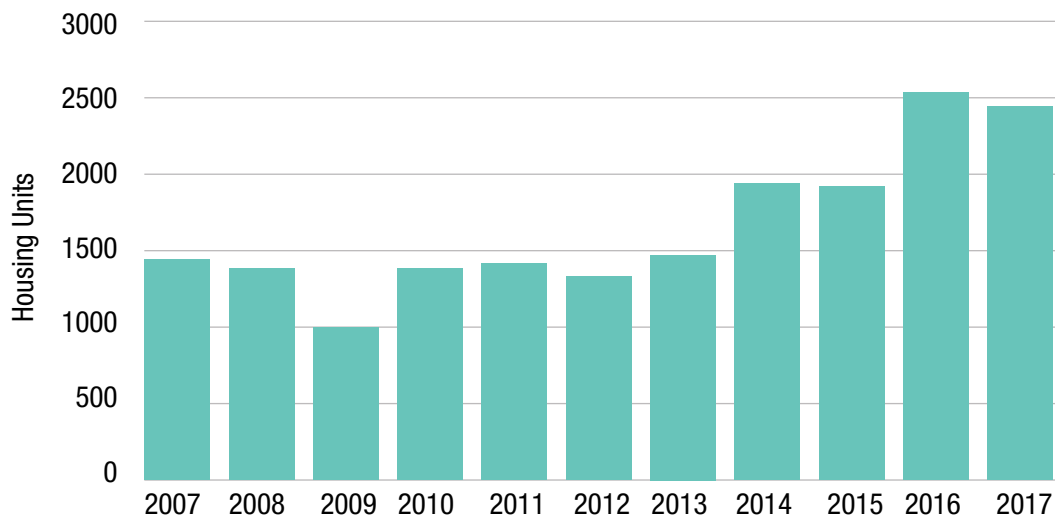
Statistics Canada, Niagara Census Profile (1996, 2016)

Physical Environment

Housing Starts

Similar to trends in population, housing starts have been rising since 2009, reaching a 26 year high in 2016 of 2,530 units. While 2017 was slightly lower than 2016, housing starts have been occurring at much higher rates when compared to just five to ten years ago. Housing starts will need to increase to meet Provincial forecasts and average out to over 2,600 units per year (Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, 2018).

Housing Starts



Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, Housing Now Tables (2018)

Land Supply

Quantifying vacant developable land is a core component of growth management and ensures that Niagara's municipalities have an adequate supply of designated urban land to develop. As of the end of 2017, Niagara Region had 2,002 hectares of vacant and developable residential land and 1,553 hectares of employment land. The vast majority of developable land is in municipalities outside of the Greenbelt (Niagara Region Planning and Development Services, 2017).

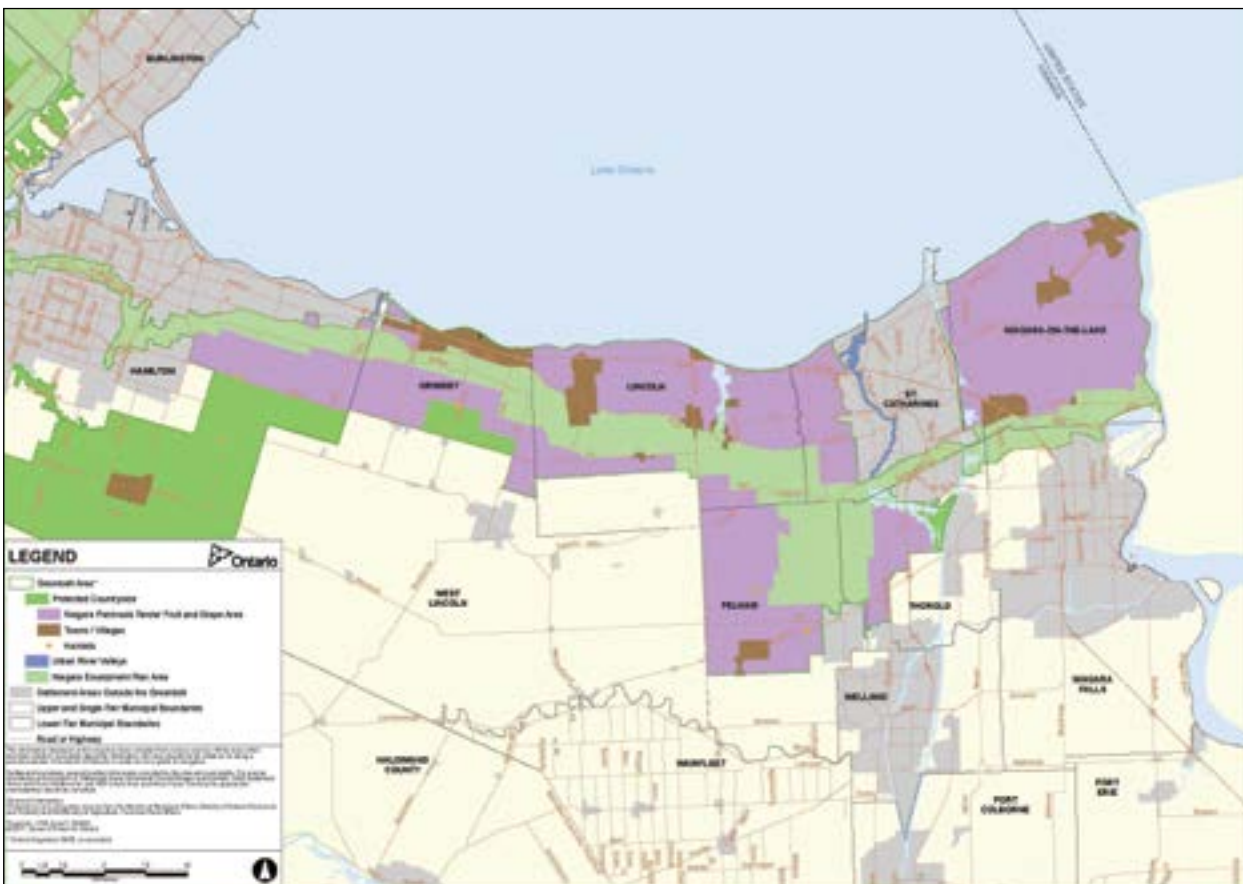


Greenbelt

The Niagara Escarpment is part of the Greater Golden Horseshoe's most ecologically significant natural environments. The Greenbelt Plan is an overarching strategy to provide clarity regarding urban structure, where and how future growth should be accommodated, and what land must be protected. The Greenbelt Plan protects land and provides guidelines for the following purposes:

- Agricultural viability and protection
- Environmental protection
- Culture, recreation and tourism
- Settlement areas
- Infrastructure and natural resources

Greenbelt Plan



Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, Greenbelt Plan (2017)

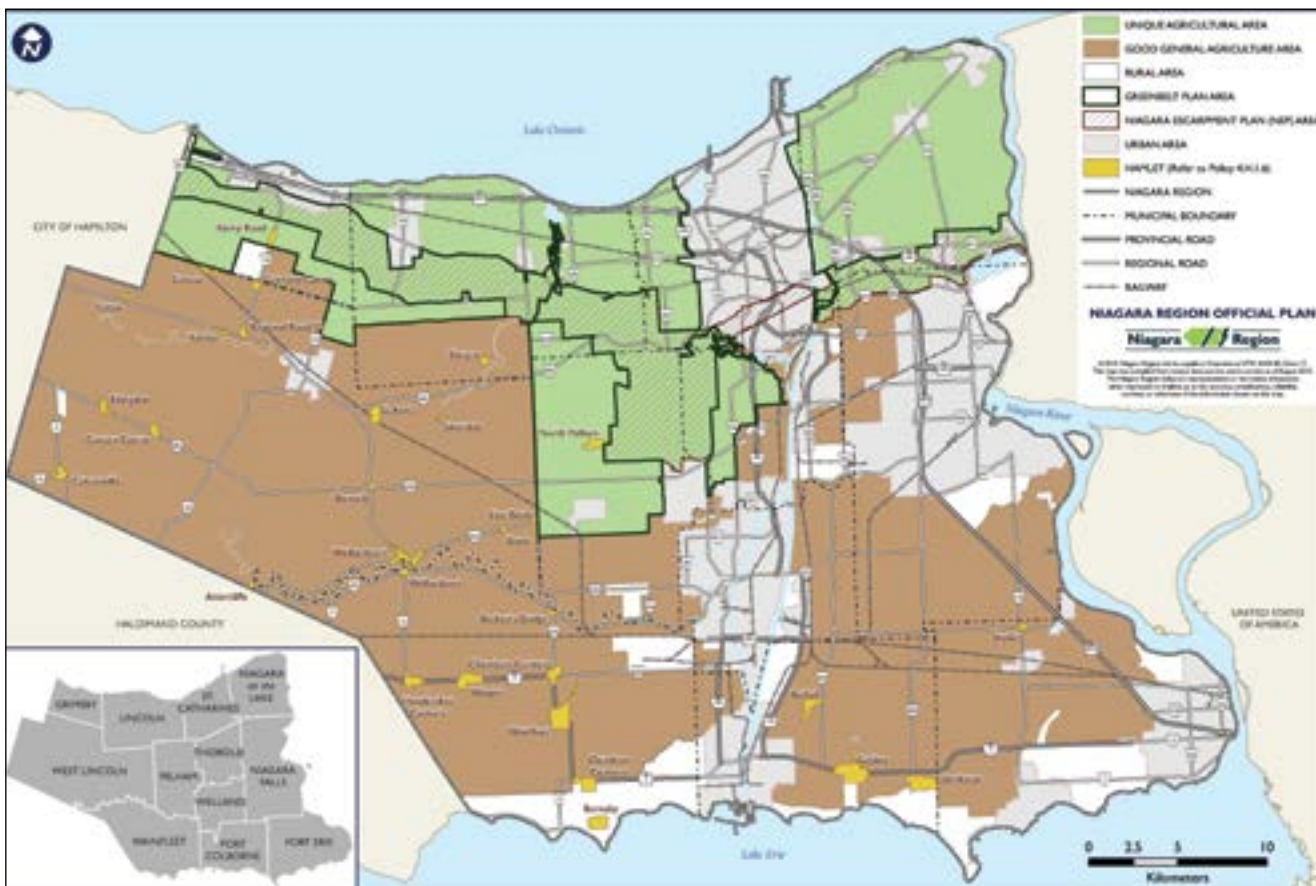
Brownfields

Brownfields are vacant or abandoned lands within an urban area where past industrial or commercial activity occurred, and that have potential for redevelopment. Redevelopment or restoration is complicated by real or potential environmental contamination, building deterioration or inadequate infrastructure. Encouraging brownfield development has been an ongoing priority for Niagara.

Agriculture

Agriculture is a fundamental pillar of Niagara's economy due to climate, land and soil makeup, experienced operators and research capability. In 2016, agriculture in Niagara contributed 19,900 jobs, and is home to over 1,800 farms and agricultural operations. Niagara is responsible for 90% of grape production in Ontario, and is the largest wine producing region in Canada. Between 2011 and 2016, average farm revenues have increased by 47%. (Statistics Canada, 2016)

Agricultural Land Base



Niagara Region, Official Plan (2014)

Employment and Jobs

Workforce Participation

As Niagara's working age population continues to increase, the number of residents actively participating in the workforce has changed very little. In 2014, Niagara had a 62% employment participation rate and within four years it currently sits at 61.1%. Perhaps this could be explained by a growth in part-time or precarious job opportunities.

Top Job Sectors

The top job sectors in Niagara have changed over the past 20 years quite significantly. The following table describes the percentage of jobs in the region by employment sector from 1996 to 2016, 20 years later.



209,890

people employed in the labour force



80,000

projected new people employed by 2041

Municipal Comprehensive Review, Phase 4 Forecast (2018)

Job Sector Changes in Niagara

Top 3 in 1996			Top 3 in 2016		
Manufacturing	19.8%		1		29.1% Sales and Service (included retail)
Retail Trade	13.6%		2		14.9% Trades, Transport and Equipment Operators
Health and Social Science	10.0%		3		13.1% Business, Finance and Administrative

Statistics Canada, Niagara Census Profile (1996, 2016)
Note: Industry classification code description for job sectors have changed slightly from 1996 to 2016



Tourism in Niagara


There are many unique traits that Niagara can boast of in the tourism industry, including, Niagara Falls, Shaw Festival, Niagara Wine Route, Casinos. Niagara's tourist attractions, festivals and special events make Niagara an attractive destination for tourists from all over the world.

Tourism in Niagara




13,000,000
VISITORS TO NIAGARA

\$2.4
BILLION
Generated by tourism



33% Of Visitors are from outside of Canada



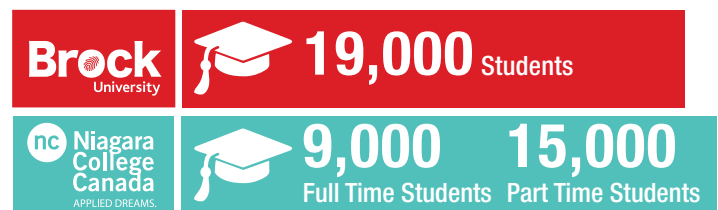
40,000
People work in hospitality and tourism industry

Ontario Ministry of Tourism (2016)

Post-Secondary Institutions

Niagara's post-secondary institutions are key contributors to our local economy and provide opportunity for talent retention and for growth of young professionals in the region. Niagara's post-secondary institutions also provide a significant opportunity for partnerships and strategic alignment with Niagara Region. Brock University and Niagara College have provided opportunities for collaboration in supporting the development of Niagara's labour force, working to support the labour skill gap, economic development and research in Niagara. Continuing partnership opportunities with these institutions and other community organizations in Niagara to leverage their strengths will serve to benefit Niagara as a whole.

Post-Secondary Institution Enrollment

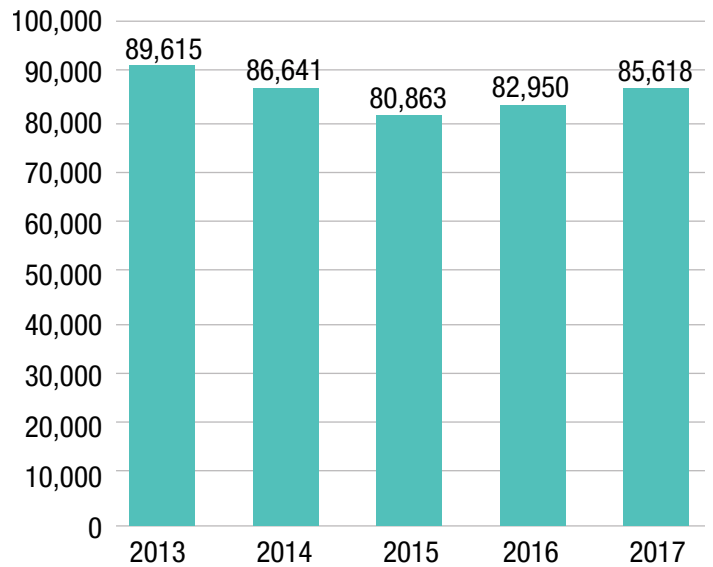


Cost of Living

Household income is a measure of a community's ability to pay for services. While a higher relative household income is a positive indicator of the overall local economy, it may lead to a greater expectation for quality programs and additional challenges in balancing desired levels of service with a willingness to pay for programs and services.

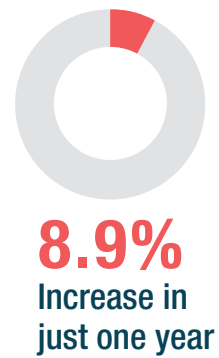
In 2017, Niagara's average household income was reported as \$85,618 (Weighted BMA Study, 2017). Over the course of the last five years, nominal differences were seen. The BMA study also provides an average household income across the province, which can be used as a proxy for an average household income for Ontario. In 2017, the provincial average household income was reported as \$101,143, significantly higher than Niagara.

Average Household Income in Niagara



Municipal Tax Study, BMA Management Consulting Inc. (2013-2017)

Cost of Living

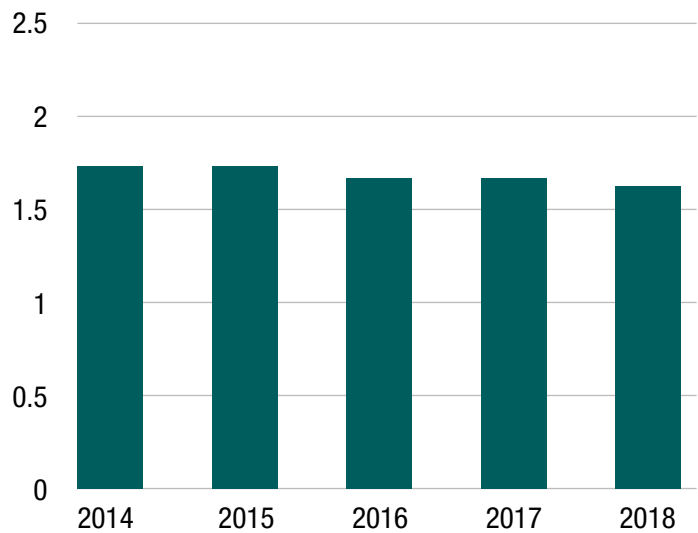


Niagara Poverty Reduction Network (2017)

Niagara's reliance on residential tax base continues to be a consideration for affordability planning. Niagara's employment related tax assessment has not seen any significant change over the last decade. With the anticipated growth outlined in the previous section, Niagara will have to identify sustainable ways of providing services to the residents of Niagara, while meeting the growth needs. The percentage of household income that goes to Niagara Region's residential taxes has changed very little over the last four years. In 2014, the value was 1.74% compared to the 2018 value of 1.64% (Municipal Tax Study, BMA Management Consulting Inc.).

Housing prices continue to increase with an average list price of \$391,030 in 2017. The residential sale price in Niagara has increased by 21.7% in just one year from 2016 (Niagara Realtor News and Statistics, 2017).

Percentage of household income that goes to Niagara Region's residential taxes



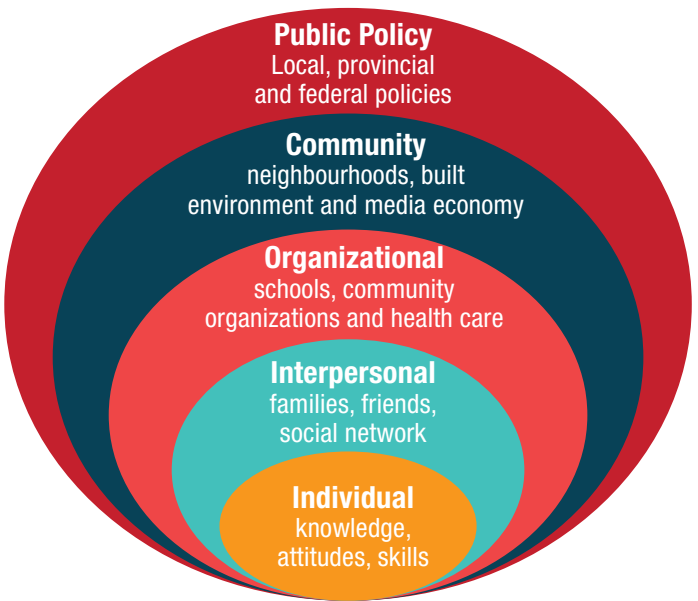
Municipal Tax Study, BMA Management Consulting Inc. (2013-2017)

Community Wellbeing

The term wellbeing is used interchangeably with quality of life, and typically refers to a person's satisfaction with community-level factors such as living environment, economy, education, health, as well as the level of social connectedness and community belonging.

People do not act in isolation, which is why it is important to understand how they interact with their community and the environment around them. One way of visualizing these interactions is through the socio ecological model.

Socio Ecological Model



Social Determinants of Health

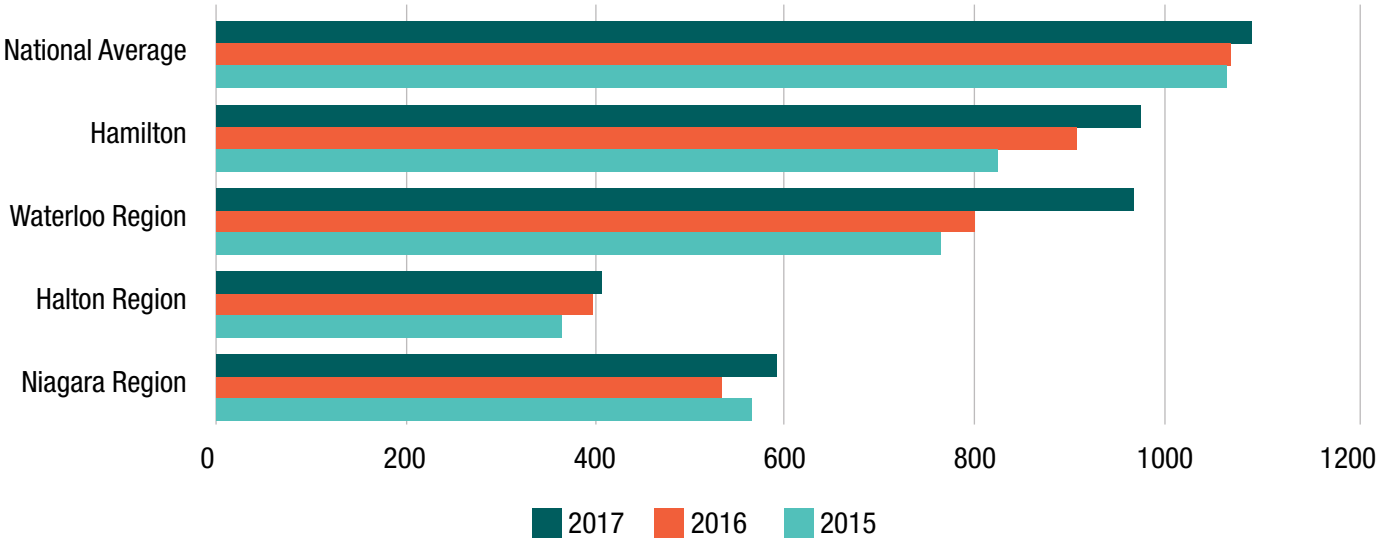
Health is a natural extension of wellbeing, and Social Determinants of Health is a term used to represent a range of personal, social, economic and environmental factors that determine individual and population health. Reducing social inequalities translates to giving everyone the same opportunities to be healthy. The table below provides a summary of how the Region's services may have an impact on our population's health.

Category	Regional Service Description	Impact on Wellbeing
Infrastructure	Transportation (active, public transit, automobile, commercial), roads and bridges, waste management, water, wastewater, buildings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safe and affordable housing • Water and sanitation • Access to services through safe and maintained transportation infrastructure
Access to Services	Senior services, child and family services, housing and homelessness, transportation and walkability (enabling mobility and access to services) Public health services, bike lanes and pathways, ambulances and emergency services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equitable access to health programs and services • Healthy child development • Physical and social environment • Social inclusion
Physical Environment	Environmental protection, sustainable development, land use planning policy, urban design, active transportation infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to greenspace • Food security through access to nutritious food, agriculture and food production
Economy	Supports for jobs and skilled labour, investment attraction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employment and job security • Equitable income distribution • Addressing precarious employment and working conditions
Governance and Advocacy	Proactive leadership, fiscal responsibility, open government, advocacy for Niagara	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring active participation and engagement of communities in decision making • Equitable access to services
Community Wellbeing	Safety, police presence, community planning, walkability, engagement, newcomer supports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social inclusion • Built environment conducive to physical activity, recreation and walkability for all ages • Sense of belonging promoting social cohesion

Safety

Niagara has a good level of public safety and has been maintaining low violent criminal code incidents in comparison to similar or neighbouring municipalities. A feeling of safety has a positive impact on an individual and community's wellbeing, and it contributes to the attractiveness of a place to live in.

Reported Number of Violent Criminal Code Incidents per 100,000 Population




Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics (2015-2017)





MOVING NIAGARA FORWARD



In order to be successful for the next term of Council, with only four years to make a meaningful impact, the Region needs to effectively identify a plan that is focused and clear in its direction forward.

Vision For Niagara

Typically a strategic planning process begins with a vision setting exercise, and the new Council will be given the opportunity to review the current vision if they so choose. To inform a vision setting process, the community was asked what they hoped Niagara would be known for in 10 years, summarized below. A full overview of what the community said can be found in the *What We've Heard* report.

The community would like Niagara to:

Be a thriving economic hub



Maintain unique traits and natural features



Have a high level of community engagement



Have inclusive services



Be a vibrant community



SWOT Analysis

Through a combination of information collected through community engagement and staff input, the following strengths and weaknesses for Niagara Region have been identified. It is important to note that some are statements of the community and that many of these strengths and weaknesses are not unique to Niagara.



Organizational Strengths

- Ability to leverage global brand recognition: Niagara Falls, Niagara Wine Industry, Welland Canal and all surrounding attractions
- Collaboration with local community organizations, post-secondary institutions
- Partnerships with local area municipalities to better serve residents such as development and customer service
- Economic designations and incentives to drive growth
- Ongoing work to build connective transportation network
- Building organizational maturity around data driven decisions, project management and asset management



Organizational Weaknesses

- Coordination with local area municipalities and Region to bring a singular voice to higher levels of government and customer service
- Ability to handle future increases in service demand. Including, factors such as growth from Greater Toronto Area and aging population.
- Sustainable funding for Regional services such as infrastructure projects and social services
- Widespread densely populated areas, service delivery reach can be challenging
- Customer service including opportunities to increase hours of operation or access to services



External Opportunities

- Geographic location, access to Greater Toronto Area and Buffalo, natural assets and greenspace
- Potential provincial or federal funding opportunities
- Emerging economic sectors, such as sports tourism and cannabis
- Explore broadband opportunities for rural areas
- Opportunities to align services to emerging higher level government priorities. Such as federal requirements for coordinated of services
- Enhance organization's reputation including transparency, trust and accountability



External Threats

- Provincial and federal unknowns in policy and funding
- Workforce pressures such as the inability to retain and recruit skilled workforce
- Lack of succession planning in local businesses
- Dependency on seasonal and precarious employment
- Youth and young family retention
- Increasing housing prices
- Impact of aging population on regional services and economy, however these could present as potential opportunities

Tying the Organization's Initiatives with Community Priorities

Niagara Region has made significant progress in moving towards a better Niagara including momentous progress on the GO transit initiative, on "Bending the Curve" of the Ontario Works caseload, and on the Niagara's Foreign Trade Zone designation, among many others. There is an opportunity to build on this momentum, to set the focus for Niagara's success through this strategic planning process.

This section of the report outlines some Past, Upcoming and Potential Initiatives, (as applicable) of Regional departments, matched to the 17 community priorities from the *What We've Heard* report. As this report serves as an informational document, it will then be up to Regional Council to utilize the relevant components of the Shape Niagara reports, and determine which strategic areas of focus the Region will set. Past initiatives of the Region can be found in the Term in Review report, and can be downloaded at niagararegion.ca/priorities.

Priorities from the community are available in full within the *What We've Heard* report, and are identified in rank ordered by frequency (how often a priority was identified). The report can be found at niagararegion.ca/priorities.



Current Niagara Region Departmental Makeup

At the time of writing this report, the divisional service areas by department are as follows:



Community Services

- Children's Services
- Homelessness Services
- Seniors Services
- Social Assistance and Employment Opportunities



Enterprise Resource Management Services

- Business Licensing
- Finance
- Facilities
- Information Technology
- Internal Control and Organizational Performance
- Legal
- Procurement



Office of the CAO

- Clerks
- Economic Development
- Human Resources
- Strategic Communications and Public Affairs



Planning and Development

- Community and Long Range Planning
- Infrastructure and Development Engineering
- Development Approvals



Public Health

- Public Health Services
- Emergency Medical Services (EMS)



Public Works

- GO Implementation Office
- Transportation Services
- Waste Management Services
- Water / Wastewater



Community Services

Services Supporting Niagara's Residents

Aligning to Niagara's Community Priorities:

Niagara's community identified the need to support residents in a way that makes Niagara a place where everyone can thrive. An importance was placed around supporting populations in need by ensuring necessary services are provided including senior services, affordable housing, services for young families and vulnerable populations.

The Region's Community Services initiatives align with the following community-identified priorities:

- | | |
|---|----------------------------------|
| 3. Supporting populations in need through employment, affordable housing and transit..... | What We've Heard Report, page 41 |
| 9. Affordable Housing..... | What We've Heard Report, page 43 |
| 10. Quality of Life and Public Safety | What We've Heard Report, page 43 |
| 11. Equitable Access to Regional Services | What We've Heard Report, page 43 |
| 15. Youth and Young Family Retention..... | What We've Heard Report, page 45 |

Past Organizational Initiative

"Bend the Curve" on the Ontario Works Caseload

Goal was to increase the number of Ontario Works and Ontario Disability Support Program clients with employment. The BENN (Building Employment Networks Niagara) system launched in November of 2017. The shift from a manual tracking to system automation has resulted in an increase in the quantity of referrals and efficiency (real-time) of matches to training programs and employment opportunities. The long term goal is to further reduce the Ontario Works caseload.

Upcoming Organizational Initiatives

Long Term Care Home Redevelopment Projects

The redevelopment of two Long Term Care (LTC) homes has been undertaken to meet provincial compliance and fire code requirements. The new homes will be designed to enhance efficiencies and will be situated on campuses with co-located services to support long-term care residents and the local community.

Affordable Housing

To fulfill Niagara Region's provincially legislated responsibility, staff are preparing an updated 10-year Housing and Homelessness Action Plan (HHAP) to be presented to Council for approval in the spring of 2019. The revised HHAP will be integrated with the work on the new Regional Official Plan now in development, further contributing to an overarching regional Affordable Housing Strategy. This strategy will include a Regional Housing Statement, a review of and recommendations for Regional policies and financial incentives with the aim of increasing the availability of affordable housing in Niagara.



Early ON Transformation

In 2016, the Ministry of Education announced all Family Resource Programs, Ontario Early Years Centres, and Parenting and Family Literacy Centres move toward an increasingly integrated, cohesive system of services and supports for children ages 0-6 years and their parents/caregivers known as EarlyON Child and Family Centres (EarlyON Centres). The EarlyON Centres are open to all families across Niagara region, to provide support, advice, personal connections and a network of resources as well as play and inquiry based programs for young children and their families.

Niagara Region Children's Services, in the role of Consolidated Municipal Service Manager (CMSM), is required by the Province to engage with community and implement this transformation locally as part of their responsibility for the planning and administration of the early learning and child care system. The 2018 year was a transition year, and the new EarlyON programs, locations and services informed through local consultation and needs assessment, will be awarded through a competitive bidding process in 2019.

Potential Organizational Initiatives

Social Procurement – An Organizational Opportunity

Seeking a community benefit through the purchase of goods and services can have a strategic benefit to objectives such as reduction of poverty, increasing employment for youth, or inclusion/engagement of marginalized populations, without requiring additional investment. Social procurement processes have already been developed that meet procurement requirements of transparency, competitiveness and fairness, while still allowing for a social benefit. Many municipalities across Ontario are implementing this approach as part of their poverty reduction initiatives.

Potential Opportunities

- Improvements in service delivery to provide higher value to clients, for example, BENN
- Potential opportunity to address affordable housing gap through strategy alignment and co-investment with Provincial and Federal government housing initiatives
- Opportunities to align services/work/projects with new provincial government as priorities are identified

Potential Obstacles

- Provincial uncertainty around funding and policy changes. Effects could be to core services, such as social assistance, childcare, homelessness/housing and senior's care
- Historical challenges with funding allocation model for homelessness services as Niagara enters into new contracts for this sector



Enterprise Resource Management Services (ERMS)

Corporate Services Supporting the Organization

Aligning to Niagara's Community Priorities:

Community members identified a desire to stay informed about where their tax dollars are spent through transparency in government spending, and decision-making.

Fostering “organizational excellence” is a generic term, which encapsulates the goal of improving the way the Niagara Region as an organization functions. The focus of the community comments received identified a desire to build on collaboration, customer service and opportunities to foster informed decisions as an organization.

The Region's ERMS initiatives align with the following community priorities around accountability and organizational excellence:

8. Infrastructure in Support of Growth.....	What We've Heard Report, page 42
11. Equitable Access to Regional Services	What We've Heard Report, page 43
14. Communication and Engagement with the Community.....	What We've Heard Report, page 44
16. Responsible Spending.....	What We've Heard Report, page 45

Past Organizational Initiative

Enhanced Financial Management Service

The implementation of an integrated enterprise solution to provide system functionality that improves efficiency and effectiveness, reduces risk, enables effective internal controls, ensures better management of the organization, and improves the client experience.

Value for Money Audits

Determining if Regional programs, including the execution of policies and procedures, are delivered in an efficient, effective and economical manner. Over 13 recommendations were compiled to address corporate project management methodology, asset management, cost estimation, document management, performance measurement and other issues.

Southwestern Integrated Fibre Technology (SWIFT)

Looking to secure federal and provincial funding to improve Niagara's information infrastructure and to provide better connections for residents and businesses in rural communities. Through the project, Niagara is now a key partner in a larger buying group to attract broadband providers.

Upcoming Organizational Initiatives

Asset Management

Addressing provincial requirements, an Asset Management (AM) program and governance model was developed implement leading AM principles and practices. Next steps include an implementation plan which will assess the impacts on the organization, and address change management, communications and training plans. The AM governance model will ensure that the Region complies with the requirements set out by the Province.

Project Management Office

Deliver and assess the organization's project management maturity. Strengthen the link between capital project planning and execution so that the project outcomes are predictable, and consistent, with risk management considerations. Recommend proven practices to support implementation of organizational strategy through successful projects including organizational change and business readiness assessment and preparation.

Debt and Financial Sustainability Review

In support of responsible spending, the Region is looking strategically at what it spends money on. To answer the question of whether there are there more cost effective ways of doing our business, a review of the services provided and the associated costs will be conducted. The intended outcome of this project is to repurpose dollars to support the significant infrastructure budget gap.

Regional Development Charges (RDC) By-Law

The next RDC By-law is an opportunity to re-align incentives for development, to Council's strategic focus, and to be viewed as the revenue-generation tool it is intended to be, supporting responsible government spending with purpose. It ties directly into the grants and incentives review that is being led by the Planning and Development department to re-align grants and incentives provided by the Region with Council's strategic focus.

Debt Risk Strategy

The finance team has been tasked with working on debt and a long term strategy in how it is handled at the Region. How the Region finances all assets cannot change each year, a set plan must be in place in order to manage and plan against it. This will include the development of debt policies and a risk management strategy.

Safe Drinking Water Act

The Safe Water Drinking act requires municipalities to prepare financial plans in the sustainability of water and waste water systems. Finance staff will be working with Public Works to build a plan that focuses on building a strategic plan for the Region to address funding of major infrastructure of wastewater over the next 10 years. This long range financial planning will be integrated with the master servicing plan and has opportunities to connect to the sustainability review and revenue generation.



Internal Audit

Reporting directly to Council and designed to drive accountability, identifying opportunities for improvement across organization, the Internal Control and Organizational Performance division prepares an annual Audit Plan, providing independent assurance and consulting services to improve Niagara Region's operations and brings a disciplined approach to the evaluation of risk management activities, internal controls, and governance processes.

Supporting Council's Strategic Planning and Reporting

Supporting Council in the development, implementation and monitoring of their term Strategic Plan through the Shape Niagara work. Re-alignment of the public facing dashboard and progress reporting with Council's new strategic priorities to ensure accountability and transparency on the work of the Region.

Business Improvement and Performance Measurement

Driving continuous improvement through business improvement and lean methodology, performance measures and operational dashboards. Leveraging data to inform business decisions focusing on measurable outcomes to drive organizational accountability and transparency.

Customer Service Implementation

The Customer Service team is working with the organization to leverage information and communication technology to modernize how government delivers services and interacts with clients and residents. The initiative requires collaboration across government levels and partners to integrate and enhance opportunities across the region as a whole.

Enterprise Content Management

This initiative looks to address gaps in our records management activities and policies to ensure the organization has the documentation it requires and to support transparency.

IT Data Centre

Through collaboration with multiple public sector partners (such as: LAMs, school boards), there are opportunities to share data and costs associated with storing data as well as increased security measures.

Facilities

Led by Facilities and supported by Finance staff, finding sustainable ways of funding new construction projects while ensuring infrastructure is aligned with growth and development needs in Niagara. Upcoming projects include the Police One District in St Catharines, Long-Term Care facilities, EMS hub, Niagara Regional Civic Park.



Potential Future Organizational Initiatives

Council Strategic and Implementation Plan

The Internal Control and Organizational Performance (ICOP) division will work directly with Council as they identify their strategic priorities. Informed by the Shape Niagara work, and by their collective knowledge, Council will identify the organizational priorities for the next four years.

SWIFT Broadband Internet

Niagara Region secured the opportunity to participate in the Southwestern Integrated Fibre Technology (SWIFT) program to bring high speed internet to underserved communities in Southwestern Ontario. The opportunity is to support the growth of small businesses in rural areas by expanding access to online and e-commerce tools. These federal and provincial programs are currently under review.

Potential Opportunities

- Integration of partnerships: working with Province for additional funds beyond short term financial plans
- Funding of the service enhancement and integration of Niagara Regional Transit; integrate with local municipalities and advocate for funding to expand transit
- Potential for provincial and federal funding for South Niagara water and wastewater treatment plant
- Customer service modernization
- Explore Niagara Regional Broadband Network partnership
- Driving continuous improvement and organizational maturity, using data for decision making

Potential Obstacles

- Provincial interest in municipal restructuring (amalgamation) – would be a large financial project
- Regional budget pressures
- Unknowns at provincial level
- Continued growth in the region
- Cost and availability of infrastructure for broadband expansion





Office of the CAO

Economic Development

Aligning to Niagara's Community Priorities:

Through the *What We've Heard* report, community members identified the need to develop Niagara's economy based on its strengths. The community would like to see a focus on supporting small business, secure employment opportunities and ensuring the necessary supports are in place to foster economic prosperity.

The Region's initiatives in Economic Development align with the following community-identified priorities:

- | | |
|---|----------------------------------|
| 1. Fostering Jobs and Economic Prosperity | What We've Heard Report, page 40 |
| 5. Accountable and Collaborative Government | What We've Heard Report, page 41 |
| 13. Tourism as an Economic Driver | What We've Heard Report, page 44 |
| 15. Youth and Young Family Retention..... | What We've Heard Report, page 45 |

Past Organizational Initiatives

Federal Commitment to Foreign Trade Zone in Niagara

Raising global and national business awareness, supporting export-focused business operations; Niagara's Foreign Trade Zone storefront opened in Fort Erie in May of 2018.

Strategy to Improve Niagara's Global Attractiveness

A Global Attractiveness Strategy has been created that provides direction to increase Niagara's readiness for being a welcoming community. Key outcomes include strengthened relationships between Regional staff and the Local Immigration Partnership, the re-development of Niagara's Immigration Portal and improved access to local information.

Upcoming Organizational Initiatives

Economic Development Strategy

Following research and extensive stakeholder consultations, a number of key themes have been identified to inform the economic development work plan. The new Economic Development Strategy will be presented to Regional Council early in 2019.

Team Niagara

The Team Niagara memorandum of understanding is currently being revised to update the signatories. This initiative is a collaborative effort bringing together representatives from all 12 local area municipalities and the Region quarterly to network and collaborate on economic development initiatives across Niagara.

Employment Land Strategy

Planning and Economic Development staff working on an Employment Land Strategy and Lands Needs Assessment, as part of the Official Plan work, to protect Niagara's employment lands. In addition, there are efforts underway with the St. Lawrence Seaway and Hamilton Port Authority to investigate land acquisition as part of a Niagara Port Strategy.

Skilled Labour Shortage

The Economic Development department is collaborating with organizations such as Niagara Workforce Planning Board, Niagara Industrial Association, Niagara's post-secondary institutions and School Boards to tackle the mismatch between labour skills and jobs across the Region.

East-West Transportation Corridor

Economic Development will support Public Works to develop an application to secure infrastructure funding from Transport Canada's National Trade Corridors Fund. The funding would construct a portion of the East-West Transportation Corridor, which would run roughly from Fort Erie to Hamilton Airport in support of goods movement. It would tackle the congestion issue on the Queen Elizabeth Way (QEW) which is a significant risk for the tourism, agriculture and manufacturing sectors in Niagara.

St. Lawrence Seaway Management Review

Elected officials have presented a joint submission with five Niagara area municipalities along the Seaway corridor to the federal government regarding a consultative review of the St. Lawrence Seaway conducted by Transport Canada in 2018. The recommendation to Transport Canada is a new management model for marine-strategic lands and an analysis of non-strategic land. Niagara has recommended that Transport Canada, with support from the Ontario Ministry of Transportation, consider a partnership with the Hamilton Port Authority with respect to the management of marine-adjacent strategic parcels of the St. Lawrence Seaway through Niagara.

Strategic Marketing

Conducting targeted marketing activities to position Niagara as a competitive location for business investment.

Trade and Investment

Promoting the Niagara Region through investment attraction and lead generation activities (investment missions) to strategically targeted sectors and within specific geographies.

Potential Opportunities

- Increased market interest and growth coming from the Greater Toronto Area
- Economic Trade Corridor designation award which would support infrastructure-funding applications and create unique marketing opportunities
- Niagara Foreign Trade Zone role in export diversification for Niagara companies
- Creation of a provincially significant employment zone with the Niagara Gateway Economic Zone and Centre

Potential Obstacles

- Meeting current and future labour needs for skilled trades and professional occupations
- Shortage of employment land that is shovel-ready and development pressures on land zoned for employment
- Infrastructure pressures, for example, congestion on the QEW
- Scheduling of public transit needs to align with employment needs
- Lack of succession planning in Niagara businesses





Office of the CAO

Clerks | Human Resources | Strategic Communications and Public Affairs

Aligning to Niagara's Community Priorities:

Niagara's community identified a need to be informed and have their voices heard through increased transparency in government spending and decision-making.

The Region's CAO Office initiatives align with the following community priorities around communication, accountability, organizational excellence and transparency:

- 2. Transportation Connecting People to Jobs and Services..... What We've Heard Report, page 40
- 5. Accountable and Collaborative Government..... What We've Heard Report, page 41
- 14. Communication and engagement with the community..... What We've Heard Report, page 44

Past Organizational Initiative

People Strategy

The people strategy focused on delivering an interrelated, measured approach to driving employee engagement. Through development and retention and by utilizing best in class people practices at the Niagara Region.

Niagara Week is Every Week

Focusing on fostering strong relationships between the Region and its senior government partners, collaboration with Niagara's local area municipalities to advance Niagara's economic prosperity. Key announcements through this initiative included the Daily GO Train Service, the first Ontario Foreign Trade Zone designation, 2021 Canada Summer Games.

Upcoming Organizational Initiatives

Special Projects

Niagara District Airport

Based on the work of an external consultant, there is an on-going requirement for an airport located within the region to serve the business and general aviation needs of residents and visitors within Niagara. Aligning with the Region's Transportation Strategy, an airport study and governance strategy is underway. These studies will focus on the governance and funding opportunities for each the Niagara District Airport (NDA) and Niagara Central Dorothy Rungeling Airport (NCDRA). There has also been support for a potential Regional role in the operation of the airport(s) to support the larger scale connected transportation strategies of the Region around moving people and goods.

2021 Summer Games

Niagara Region has been selected as the Host Community for the 2021 Canada Summer Games. The prior term of Council committed \$10.35M in funding to support infrastructure projects related to hosting the Games. Each community in Niagara will host events or practice events in 2021. The Games are administered by the 2021 Canada Summer Games Host Society, and Regional staff will support as required.

Potential Organizational Initiatives

Communications Master Plan

The Strategic Communications and Public Affairs division will be undertaking the development of a Communications Master Plan (CMP) which will set out a defined mission and vision as well as identify objectives, key actions and a framework for the organization. The CMP will bring together resident feedback and best practice research with input from staff and Council to act as a framework to provide guidance to how Niagara Region will communicate and interact with residents, employees and stakeholders.

Human Resources Information Systems (HRIS) Software Review

Niagara Region's largest and most important expense is its people. A review of current software will be initiated to ensure the technical tools being used to manage this expense are providing value, are fully leveraged, and will help drive engagement and productivity into the future.

Employee Engagement and Leadership Development through People Strategy Update

Driving productivity, employee commitment and attraction through a new People Strategy for 2019 and the coming years.

Mental Health Promotion Strategy and Implementation

Managing workplace factors for employee well-being, the emerging regulatory requirements and the urgency of escalating related costs.

Total Rewards and Labour Relations Strategies

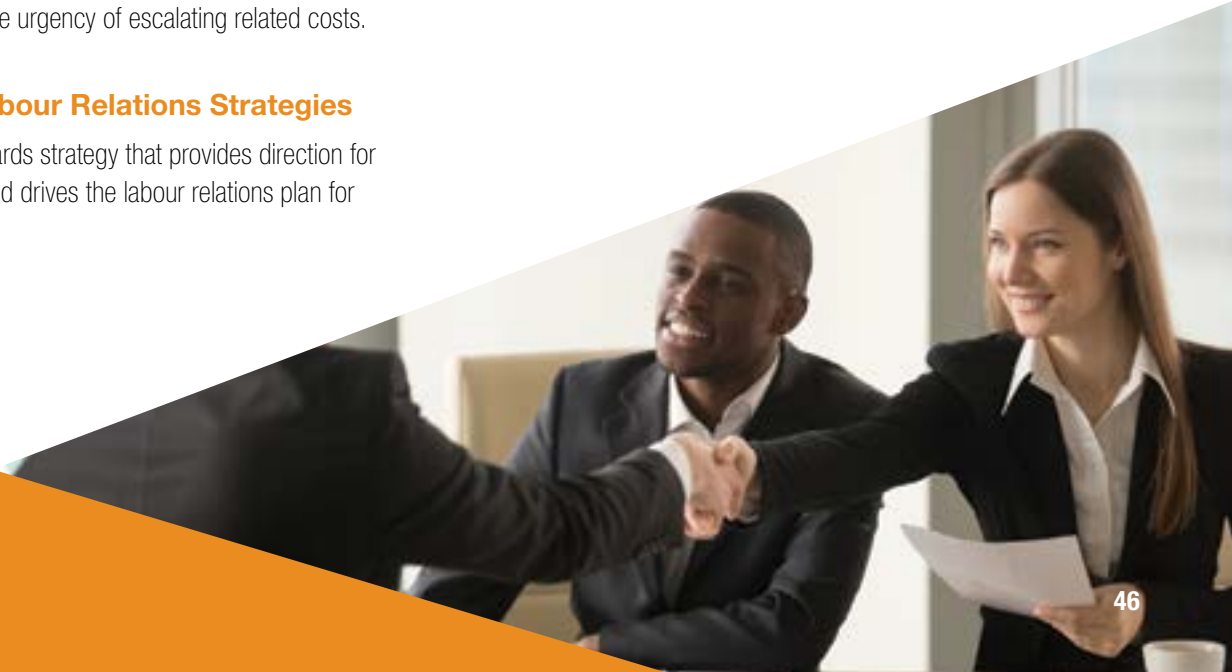
Building a comprehensive rewards strategy that provides direction for compensation and benefits, and drives the labour relations plan for future bargaining.

Potential Opportunities

- Improve organizations reputation
- Improve relationships with local media and more consistent transparent communication with residents

Potential Obstacles

- Regional budget pressures
- Local shortage of skilled labour and workforce talent
- Changing municipal act legislation requirements. Including conflict of interest, integrity commissioner





Planning and Development Services

How Niagara Grows

Aligning to Niagara's Community Priorities:

Niagara's community would like to see sustainable and thoughtful growth that is aligned with diverse community needs and transparency in spending. The community also identified the importance of protecting and maintaining a resilient natural environment, as well as protecting the rural character of the Region, key natural assets and agricultural land.

The Region's Planning and Development Services initiatives align with the following priorities around growth, sustainable development and environmental protection:

- 4. Environmental Responsibility and Sustainable Development.....What We've Heard Report, page 41
- 5. Accountable and Collaborative Government What We've Heard Report, page 41
- 7. Preserving Niagara's Natural Assets What We've Heard Report, page 42
- 16. Responsible Spending..... What We've Heard Report, page 45

Past Organizational Initiative

Expedited Process for Development

An expedited planning approvals process was developed to increase approval certainty and accelerate the review period for development initiatives. The project created an evidenced-based evaluation procedure to evaluate sites and created the ability to showcase "shovel-ready" sites as part of Niagara's competitive advantage in attracting new investment.

Upcoming Organizational Initiatives

Official Plan

Growth Management including a housing strategy, employment land strategy, urban structure and land needs assessment.

Natural Systems including agriculture, natural heritage system, aggregates and climate change.

Employment Land Strategy

Planning and Economic Development will be working on an Employment Land Strategy, as part of the Official Plan work to identify strategies to protect Niagara's employment lands. As part of this, there are efforts underway with the St. Lawrence Seaway and Hamilton Port Authority to investigate land acquisition as part of a Niagara Port Strategy.

Grants and Incentives Programs

A review of the Regional grants and incentives programs will be conducted to address misalignment in the grants and incentives provided by the Region with Council's strategic focus. Additionally, having more streamlined offerings will reduce confusion, reduce red tape and improve administration. By working closely with stakeholders, the Region can ensure that grants and incentives are directed to where incentives provide the best return on investment, while ensuring transparency in spending.

Memorandum of Understanding with Developers

Currently our Planning and Development department meets regularly in collaboration with local area municipal staff with developers at pre-consultation meetings. These meetings are designed to eliminate red tape by ensure the correct documentation and requirements are submitted upfront with a development application. This process has worked well in the past, and there is an opportunity to review what has been learned from holding these meetings to update, improve service and further build relationships.

Environmental Planning

With the addition of a new environmental planning team within the Planning and Development department, there is a greater ability to balance Niagara's drive to be open for business with good environmental policies and planning.

Urban Design

Ensuring development projects include functional and attractive urban areas creates a sense of place within the community. The Niagara Regional Civic Park is an example of the core principles of urban design to improve the public environment. The project provides the Region the ability to lead by example, particularly if developers are expected to incorporate urban design into their own projects.

Potential Opportunities

- Work with local municipalities to identify growth nodes that will accommodate future population growth
- Work with local municipalities to increase housing supply to meet future housing and affordable housing targets
- Build on the strength of the agriculture sector through supportive land use policies, including on-farm diversified use
- Develop new natural systems, policies, and mapping that are reflective of the needs and priorities in Niagara, which better implement Provincial direction, while reducing uncertainty in the development process
- Establish a relevant critical mass of employment land that will meet the requirements business and establish Niagara's position within the regional Greater Golden Horseshoe market and builds on access to the US market
- Incorporate climate change throughout urban and rural land use policies

Potential Obstacles

- Population forecasts evolve over time and are assumed by some to be static
- Urban planning regulations and policies are limited in their ability to resolve challenges that are not land use based, for example affordable housing



Public Health and Emergency Medical Services

Building a Healthier Niagara

Aligning to Niagara's Community Priorities:

Niagara's community spoke of the value of fostering a feeling of safety, community inclusiveness and equitable access to health services, which aligns with the department's movement towards greater focus on health equity and the social determinants of health.

The Region's Public Health initiatives align with the following priorities around quality of life, and access to health care services:

10. Quality of Life and Public Safety	What We've Heard Report, page 43
15. Youth and Young Family Retention.....	What We've Heard Report, page 45
17. Mental Health Services	What We've Heard Report, page 45

Past Organizational Initiative

Top Ten Health Issues in Niagara

Public Health has identified the top ten overall Niagara-specific health issues for each of 11 different age groups across the life course for both males and females. These top ten health issues in Niagara are the basis for decisions around services and programs, leading towards an outcome-focused service delivery model.

Upcoming Organizational Initiatives

Top Ten Health Issues in Niagara

Public Health has identified the top ten overall Niagara-specific health issues for each of 11 different age groups across the life course for both males and females. These top ten health issues in Niagara are the basis for decisions around services and programs, leading towards an outcome-focused service delivery model.

Health Equity Strategic Plan

Health Equity is defined as "all people having the opportunity to achieve their full health potential and being free from social, economic, demographic, or geographic barriers to health". The strategic plan (2018-2022) operationalizes this concept within the scope of our local public health agency to maximize the community's opportunities for health and wellbeing.



Mental Health Promotion Strategy (MHP)

Mental health, as part of Niagara's Top Ten was identified as one of the top burdens of disease in Niagara. The goal of the MHP strategy is to build mental health literacy and reduce stigma, ensuring that MHP is embedded into all initiatives within Public Health by making "every contact count".

Parenting Strategy

A framework to guide decision-making about how we support and engage with parents and families in Niagara. By using a Social Determinants of Health lens, this strategy is aligned with the Health Equity Strategic Plan and Mental Health Promotion Strategy to support populations in need. The strategy will equip parents in Niagara with the knowledge, skills, and resources necessary for their children and family to thrive, and ultimately make Niagara the best place to raise a family.

Potential Organizational Initiatives

Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Transformation

EMS call volume has been steadily increasing over the last few years and is projected to continue according to this trend. Paired with hospital offload delay issues, this has prompted a review of how ambulances and paramedics are dispatched. EMS is identifying new ways of doing business to better handle this volume by providing tailored care to make services available, accessible and affordable. EMS transformation is in progress as a pilot and has dedicated resources around project coordination. A complimentary restructuring of the physical footprint of ambulance bases, the hub model has been deferred to 2020.

Potential Opportunities

- A corporate and public health movement towards outcome focus with supporting data and dashboards, utilizing business intelligence software
- Transforming the way Niagara Emergency Services (EMS) deliver service, through the EMS transformation and hub projects
- Customer service changes to bring multi-modal opportunities for clients to access services
- Connective transportation to connect people to needed services

Potential Obstacles

- Potential provincial funding and policy changes with the new Provincial government
- Emerging issues in health, for example, opioid crisis, and legalization of cannabis
- Climate change impacts on environment and health status in Niagara
- Provincial government plans to restructure the health sector, and review Regional governments





Public Works

Transportation

Aligning to Niagara's Community Priorities:

Niagara's community identified the need to continue on the path towards interconnected systems for mobility. The importance of a connected transportation network for Niagara is that it connects people to necessary services such as health care, employment, and social services. The improvement of connective corridors to mitigate increasing levels of traffic and support upcoming growth was also identified.

The Region's Public Works initiatives align with the following priorities around connective transportation:

- 2. Transportation Connecting People to Jobs and Services What We've Heard Report, page 40
- 6. Active Transportation What We've Heard Report, page 42
- 8. Infrastructure and Growth What We've Heard Report, page 42

Past Organizational Initiative

Hub and Transit Station Study

Planning for transit-supportive development around Niagara's GO station sites in Grimsby, St. Catharines, and Niagara Falls; as well as the future Beamsville site. Outcomes of the project included a comprehensive 20-year vision for the surrounding lands, streetscape and public realm elements, and improved connections between GO stations, active transportation networks and municipal transit systems.

Upcoming Organizational Initiatives

GO Train Service

The GO Implementation Office has been working on the acceleration of daily GO Rail Service, in advance of 2021 - 2023 timelines to align with Canada Summer Games. Work is underway around getting stations constructed and online, and determining Region's role in station ownership and ongoing operation.

Inter Municipal Transit

Transit routes have been expanded to mirror local area municipal level. Fleet acquisition and replacement is underway and a governance model for conventional transit and specialized transit will be developed to support this significant community initiative.



East-West Transportation Corridor

A corridor from Fort Erie to Hamilton Airport in support of goods movement, and tackling the congestion issue on the QEW, which is a significant risk for the tourism, agriculture and manufacturing sectors in Niagara.

Active Transportation

The Region's Transportation Master Plan focuses on the creation of a safe, connective network of active transportation facilities that is accessible to visitors and residents of all ages and abilities. Moreover, including infrastructure for active modes of travel that is designed, developed and maintained is necessary to ensure active transportation is a competitive option within Niagara. Work is also underway in Public Health through the Students on the Move project, looking at how post-secondary students in Niagara utilize active transportation to get to school, work, social activities and necessities.

Potential Opportunities

- Transit to increase mobility supporting access to senior care, post secondary schools, tourist destinations and access to jobs and services
- Development Charge by-law update to include transit, as an additional funding source
- East-West Transportation Corridor to relieve traffic congestion, truck traffic on local roads and Greater Toronto Area pressures

Potential Obstacles

- Consolidated Niagara Transit System – significant net new financial consideration
- Provincial and federal funding and policy unknowns
- Active transportation changes to product, increase maintenance costs
- Health care centre of excellence model puts strain on specialized transit budget





Public Works

Infrastructure and Service Delivery

Aligning to Niagara's Community Priorities:

Niagara's community identified the importance of infrastructure as it supports growth and development, ensuring adequate maintenance for safety and the need to incorporate new technologies and quality products to ensure long lasting infrastructure. The community also identified the need to protect the environment through efficiencies in these areas such as new technologies in recycling and water conservation.

The Region's Public Works initiatives align with the following priorities around infrastructure services:

- 8. Infrastructure in Support of Growth What We've Heard Report, page 42
- 12. Water and Waste Management What We've Heard Report, page 44

Past Organizational Initiative

Transportation Master Plan

The Transportation Master Plan (TMP) will provide Niagara with a strategic transportation vision for the next 25 years to enhance quality of life through pedestrian and cycling facilities, responsive and conventional transit and the creation of an integrated network of roads and highways.

Upcoming Organizational Initiatives

Water/Wastewater (W/WW) Master Servicing Plan Implementation

Implementation of the servicing plan over the next 10 year forecast will be a priority going forward with a significant increase in capital investment required for critical infrastructure in support of growth.

Waste Management Strategy

Over the next 25 year period, a strategy is required to ensure sustainable waste management systems and services are available for the Niagara Region over the long term.

Waste Management Service Level Review

For next waste collection contract, efficiencies and sustainability efforts are being sought to positively influence Niagara's overall waste diversion rate and the associated costs required to deliver waste management services.



Transportation Services, Master Plan Implementation

Implement strategic investments in all modes of transportation to support growth and create a balance of community expectations for active transportation and complete streets such as capacity improvement, East-West Transportation Corridor, escarpment crossing.

W/WW Financial Sustainability and Asset Management

Meeting legislative requirements (Safe Drinking Water Act) to implement and demonstrate a rigorous asset management program in the sustainability of W/WW systems. Tying in with asset management efforts, doing the right work, on the right asset, at the right time, for the right cost while minimizing risk.

Enhancement of Management Cycle of Pavements

Improving how the cycle of pavement maintenance is managed, including crack sealing, patching and resurfacing.

Leveraging New Technologies in W/WW

In an effort to improve service delivery, W/WW will leverage new technologies to pursue Automated Systems, Advanced Reporting Systems, event-based preventative maintenance, GIS improvements, workforce mobilization.

GO Train-Enabling of Capital Investments

Ambitious and aggressive project plans for key transportation projects adjacent and supportive of GO station locations. Upcoming or potential projects include Casablanca Blvd, St. Paul W Canadian National Railway Bridge, Louth Street / Ridley Road, Thorold Stone Rd Extension, and Bridge Street.

New Waste Collections Contract

To be developed with input through a service level review. Includes a social marketing and outreach campaign to support implementation of new service.

Potential Opportunities

- East-West Transportation Corridor to relieve traffic congestion
- Innovations in service and funding opportunities
- Material recycling opportunities for road construction
- Potential for smaller funding opportunities through Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) for capital projects

Potential Obstacles

- Cap and Trade and Provincial Gas Tax, leading to higher energy costs, funding impacts
- Increasing construction costs (trade tariffs)
- Climate change impacts (more severe or wet weather)
- Provincial legislation and regulation, for example, divertible material service standards, Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks surplus soil policies, MPAC restrictions on data use
- Provincial and federal policy changes
- Funding uncertainty from all government levels (provincial, federal, regional, local)





Summary

Armed with the information from the two Shape Niagara reports, Regional Council will work through the process of developing their 2019-2022 strategic plan in the first quarter of 2019, and a resulting implementation plan. The implementation plan will provide detailed direction for the organization over the next four years, and will focus on the actions required to make Council's commitments a reality. Expected timing is to have the implementation plan identified by the second quarter of 2019 to meet the 2020 budget planning process.

Where We Go Next

PHASE 1
Gather Data

PHASE 2
Stakeholder
Engagement

PHASE 3
Inform New
Council

PHASE 4
Develop
Strategic Plan

PHASE 5
Approve and
Implement

Next Steps

Staff will work with Council to develop their strategic plan, and will utilize a variety of tools and techniques including workshops. Once Council has determined their strategic objectives, a project-based implementation plan is recommended for development to drive actionable outcomes for the four year term. Following these priority setting exercises, staff will refresh the public facing corporate dashboard with updated relevant metrics that align with the strategic direction of Council. Over the course of the next four years, staff will provide ongoing progress reports on the progress of the implementation plan in support of public transparency and accountability.

Following the development of the new Council strategic plan, an implementation plan will be developed in conjunction with staff to determine the course of action to meet the objectives set out in the strategy.

Finalized strategy and implementation plans will be made available along with progress reports throughout the term of Council at:
niagararegion.ca/priorities



“

However beautiful the
strategy, you should
occasionally look at
the results

”

— Sir Winston Churchill