



THE REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF NIAGARA
PLANNING & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
FINAL AGENDA

PEDC 5-2024

Wednesday, May 8, 2024

1:00 p.m.

Council Chamber - In Person and Electronic Meeting

Niagara Region Headquarters, Campbell West

1815 Sir Isaac Brock Way, Thorold, ON

To view live stream meeting proceedings, visit: niagararegion.ca/government/council

	Pages
1. <u>CALL TO ORDER</u>	
2. <u>LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT STATEMENT</u>	
3. <u>DISCLOSURES OF PECUNIARY INTEREST</u>	
4. <u>PRESENTATIONS</u>	
5. <u>DELEGATIONS</u>	
6. <u>ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION</u>	
6.1 <u>PDS 15-2024</u> Combined Sewer Overflow Control Program – 2024 Funding Recommendations	3 - 14
7. <u>CONSENT ITEMS FOR INFORMATION</u>	
7.1 <u>ED 4-2024</u> Economic Development Strategic Marketing Update A presentation will precede the discussion of this item.	15 - 34
7.2 <u>ED 7-2024</u> Niagara Economic Update A presentation will precede the discussion of this item.	35 - 55

7.3 PDS 16-2024 56 - 67
2023 Reserve Water and Wastewater Treatment Capacities (and **BE CIRCULATED** to the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks, and Local Area Municipalities)

7.4 PDS 18-2024 68 - 97
Staff Comments on Proposed Provincial Planning Statement (2024) (and **BE CIRCULATED** to Local Area Municipalities and the Niagara Peninsula Conversation Authority (NPCA))

8. OTHER BUSINESS

9. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, June 12, 2024, at 1:00 p.m. in the Council Chamber, Regional Headquarters.

10. ADJOURNMENT

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

Subject: Combined Sewer Overflow Control Program – 2024 Funding Recommendations

Report To: Planning and Economic Development Committee

Report date: Wednesday, May 8, 2024

Recommendations

1. That staff **PREPARE AND EXECUTE** the respective partnership funding agreements with the Local Area Municipalities for qualifying projects to reflect the terms and conditions set out in Appendix 2 and Appendix 3 of Report PDS 15-2024; and
2. That Local Area Municipalities **BE ADVISED** of the results of Regional funding support, as outlined in Appendix 1 of PDS 15-2024.

Key Facts

- The purpose of this report is to provide background information for the 2024 Local Area Municipality (LAM) projects included in the Combined Sewer Overflow (CSO) Control Program;
- The CSO Control Cost Share Program has been in place since 2007 and is intended to facilitate shared funding with the LAMs to help mitigate the impacts of wet weather events on the Region-wide sanitary system and the environment. As a result, the Region benefits from this program by gaining capacity at regionally owned trunks, sewage pump stations, and wastewater treatment plants, which in return, could be used for growth without oversizing Regional infrastructure;
- Representatives of the CSO Working Group, including representatives from all Municipalities, developed administrative procedures and criteria to support and evaluate project submissions by LAMs in accordance with the guiding principles;
- The Region supports this approach and has included funding annually in its budget. For 2024, an amount of \$2,000,000 was budgeted in the Region's Wastewater Operating Budget;
- Eighteen (18) applications with a total of 19 eligible projects were submitted by LAMs for 2024; however, the total requested funding is more than the approved program budget of \$2,000,000 by \$1,663,538 for 2024 and demonstrates high demand to address wet weather issues in sanitary collection systems.

-
- Nine (9) municipal projects are recommended for funding in full, three (3) municipal projects are recommended for partial funding and seven (7) projects are not recommended for funding (Appendix 1 to Report PDS 15-2024).

Financial Considerations

A gross budget of \$2,000,000 has been approved as part of the 2024 Wastewater Operating Budget for the CSO Control Cost Share program. Funding for this program is partially provided through Development Charges (DC) at 50%.

The eighteen (18) applications were received and separated into twenty-two (22) individual projects. As per the program policy PW4.S06.0, September 2, 2014, nineteen (19) of the projects were eligible for funding while three (3) of them were not. Apportioning of the received applications into twenty-two (22) individual projects was based on project types, as specified in the Appendix 2 to Report PDS 15-2024 - Funding Options. For example, an eligible application included a study and a sewer separation component, which created two different projects to be evaluated individually. This enhanced evaluation methodology offered a better distribution of limited funds across all eligible applications and a more fitting fairness of funding dissemination across Municipalities. The number of applications will hereinafter be referred to by the number of projects.

The nineteen (19) eligible projects for funding under the 2024 CSO Control Program totaled \$3,663,538. As the total requested amount is more than the approved program budget of \$2,000,000 by \$1,663,538, seven (7) projects will have to be declined for funding, and three (3) projects will receive partial funding.

In summary, Appendix 1 to Report PDS 15-2024 presents nine (9) municipal projects recommended for funding in full, three (3) municipal projects recommended for partial funding and seven (7) unfunded projects. Prior to awarding the 2024 budget, the Region had \$10.0 million in outstanding commitments to eleven (11) municipalities for approved, but unspent, CSO projects as per 2023 Year-End shown in Appendix 4 to Report PDS 15-2024.

As an update to PDS-C 1-2024 (Combined Sewer Overflow Control Program Update), staff closed 35 projects equating to \$1,586,382 during 2023. This resulted in \$809,367 of the encumbrances being returned to the wastewater reserve and \$777,015 of the DC portion being returned to the DC reserve in accordance with reserve policy.

Analysis

The CSO Control Working Group adjusted the funding options structure and evaluation matrix for the eligible CSO cost share projects in 2018 and 2019. This adjustment incorporated a weighted approach of a growth component into the evaluation matrix and a change of funding priorities for different types of work. The Working Group reviews annually the evaluation matrix for enhancements. Appendix 2 to Report PDS 15-2024 shows the funding options.

The twenty-two (22) projects were received for cost-share funding from six (6) LAMs. Five (5) projects from Fort Erie, one (1) from St. Catharines, six (6) from Niagara Falls, two (2) from Lincoln, five (5) from Port Colborne, and three (3) from Welland.

Regional staff reviewed all twenty-two (22) projects and evaluated nineteen (19) eligible projects for cost-share funding. Twelve (12) projects were incorporated into the final recommendation list presented in Appendix 1 to Report PDS 15-2024. Projects were awarded based on the program evaluation matrix following the CSO Control and Wet Weather Management Policy as approved by Council.

The requested funding for all eligible projects totaled \$3,663,538. The total requested funding is \$1,663,538 more than the 2024 approved budget of \$2,000,000.

Like other jurisdictions across Ontario, wet weather flows continue to negatively impact sanitary infrastructure resulting in potential basement flooding, overflows to the environment, and reduced capacity for future growth. The removal of wet weather flow and inflow and infiltration reduction is important work that needs on-going focus and support over the long term to be successful.

Alternatives Reviewed

No alternatives were reviewed as the approved budget was fully utilized.

Relationship to Council Strategic Priorities

This report supports the Council Strategic Priority of Effective Region through innovative service delivery and collaboration with Municipal partners.

It also assists in establishing objectives of Green and Resilient Region to adopt to climate change impacts to help the current and future infrastructure be more resilient.

Other Pertinent Reports

- PW4.S06.0, September 2, 2014 – Combined Sewer Overflow Control & Wet Weather Management Policy
- PDS-C 1-2024, January 10, 2024 – Combined Sewer Overflow Control Program Update

Prepared by:

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Growth Strategy and Economic
Development

Recommended by:

Michelle Sergi, MCIP, RPP
Commissioner
Growth Strategy and Economic
Development

Submitted by:

Ron Tripp, P.Eng.
Chief Administrative Officer

This report was prepared in consultation with Phill Lambert, Acting Director, W-WW Services, Susan Dunsmore, Acting Director, Infrastructure Planning and Development Engineering, Susan White, Program Financial Specialist, and reviewed by Renee Muzzell, Manager, Program Financial Support.

Appendices

Appendix 1	Recommended 2024 CSO Control Program Funding Requests
Appendix 2	Funding Options
Appendix 3	CSO Control Policy Funding Conditions
Appendix 4	Summary of CSO Project Remaining Budget Encumbrance by Municipality by 2023 Year-End

Appendix 1: Recommended 2024 CSO Control Program Funding Requests
Eligible Recommended Projects with Funding

Municipality	Project Description	Category	% ¹	Project Cost	Regional Share	Recommended Regional Funding
Projects Receiving Full Funding:						
Fort Erie	2024 Wastewater Trenchless Repairs (WWTR24) (Sewer Separation portion)	1	50%	\$332,370	\$166,185	\$166,000
Fort Erie	2024 Wastewater Trenchless Repairs (WWTR24) (Study portion)	2	50%	\$120,000	\$60,000	\$60,000
Fort Erie	2024 Sanitary Sewer CCTV Inspection (SANCTV24)	2	50%	\$205,000	\$102,500	\$102,500
Lincoln	Targeted I/I Friesen Area, Ontario St Catchment Study	2	50%	\$ 315,000	\$157,500	\$157,500
Niagara Falls	Armoury Street Sewer Separation - Phase 2	1	40%	\$1,022,777	\$409,111	\$409,000
Niagara Falls	Elm Street Sewer Separation Construction	1	40%	\$405,000	\$162,000	\$162,000
Port Colborne	Innovative Stormwater Management Implementation Strategy (Study)	2	50%	\$50,000	\$25,000	\$25,000
St. Catharines	Forest Hill / Hillcrest / Rockcliffe Sewer Separation Project	1	40%	\$1,200,000	\$480,000	\$480,000
Welland	Plymouth Area I/I Reduction Program (Study)	2	50%	\$75,000	\$37,500	\$37,500
Projects Receiving Partial Funding²:						
Lincoln	Targeted I/I Friesen Area, Ontario St Catchment Rehabilitation	5	30%	\$1,453,500	\$436,050	\$308,000
Niagara Falls	Maple Street Sewer Separation Construction	1	40%	\$659,250	\$263,700	\$13,500
Welland	2024 Flow Monitoring	2	750%	\$249,600	\$124,800	\$79,000

Municipality	Project Description	Category	% ¹	Project Cost	Regional Share	Recommended Regional Funding
	Project					
Recommended Eligible Projects Total				\$6,087,497	\$2,424,346	\$2,000,000
Total Available Funding						\$ 2,000,000

Eligible Unfunded Projects

Municipality	Project Description	Category	%	Project Cost	Regional Share
Fort Erie	Flow Monitoring Program, Pre/Post (FLOMON)	2	60%	\$60,000	\$36,000
Fort Erie	2024 Wastewater Trenchless Repairs WWTR24 (RRR portion)	5	30%	\$787,840	\$236,352
Niagara Falls	Homewood Avenue Sewer Separation Construction	1	40%	\$449,100	\$179,640
Niagara Falls	Valley Way Sewer Separation Design - Phase 1	1	40%	\$340,000	\$136,000
Niagara Falls	Corwin Avenue Sewer Separation Design - Phase 1	1	40%	\$350,000	\$140,000
Port Colborne	Omer Area - Sanitary Sewer Mainline, Maintenance Hole and Lateral (RRR portion)	5	30%	\$784,000	\$235,200
Port Colborne	Clarke Area - Sanitary Sewer Mainline, Maintenance Hole and Lateral Repair (RRR portion)	5	30%	\$920,000	\$276,000
Eligible Unfunded Projects Total				\$3,690,940	\$1,239,192

	Total Project Cost	Total Regional Share
Total of All Eligible Projects	\$9,778,437	\$3,663,538

Note 1: Funding % share is dependent on specific project component and related work.

Appendix 2 has project cost share split details

Note 2: Project received partial funding up to the limit of the 2024 budget amount.

Appendix 2: Funding Options
CSO Control Funding Options

Project Category No.	Project Types	100% Funding Amount Priorities	Region %	Municipality %
1.	Sewer Separation	40%		
Work Examples	Disconnection of road drainage		40	60
	Disconnection of private		60	40
	Disconnection of road, previous disconnection of private or opposite		50	50
2.	Studies	15%		
Work Examples	PPCP as per the PPCP guide		50	50
	I&I and Extraneous Flow Investigation including CCTV/Smoke Dye Testing ¹		50	50
	Mandatory Flow Monitoring - Pre and Post		60	40
	Investigative work on municipal/private side		50	50
	Public education/water conservation and efficiency measures		50	50
	Sewer use by-law development/update and municipal activities		50	50
3.	Source Control - Private Side	20%		
Disconnection of roof leaders to be done by homeowners/municipalities as a prerequisite for other works on the private side.				
Work Examples	Disconnection of roof leaders		60	40
	Disconnection of weeping tiles from sanitary including application works		60	40
	Disconnection of private sump pumps		60	40
	Backflow preventer installation on sanitary		40	60
4.	Conveyance and Flow Control/Storage	15%		
Work Examples	Real-time control for detention		60	40
	In-line flow controllers design and construction (i.e. weirs)		60	40
	Off-line conveyance and pumping design and construction		60	40
	In-line/off-line storage		40	60
5.	Repair/ Rehabilitation/ Replacement of Sewers	10%		
Estimated ≥50% flow reduction during WW events 10				

Project Category No.	Project Types	100% Funding Amount Priorities	Region %	Municipality %
Work Examples	Repair of sanitary/ manholes - gel sealing, spot repairs		30	70
	Spot repair lining		30	70
	Full length liner		30	70

Note 1: CCTV inspection - only site/project specific. Regular city-wide inspections should be part of municipal O&M.

Appendix 3: Terms and Conditions

CSO Control Programs Terms and Funding Conditions

The terms and conditions under which funding will be offered to the successful applications, including the following:	
1	Amount of Funding, Studies - The Region shall contribute 50% of total study costs for the PPCP and I&I studies, and 60% for the Pre and Post Flow monitoring projects provided the Region participates on a committee overseeing the study and the study covers the entire area tributary to the Wastewater Treatment Plant(s) and includes both local and Regional infrastructure.
2	Amount of Funding, Design & Construction projects – The Region shall contribute defined percentage of the cost based on the Funding Options matrix, provided that; the facility or measure is supported by a recommendation from a current CSO study, life cycle cost comparisons of alternative solutions were undertaken and the Region agrees with the cost comparisons, the Region agrees with the ‘best overall solution’, and the Region participates on a committee overseeing the design.
3	Third Party Funding – The Region’s funding shall be net of any third party funding approved for the project. If third party funding is obtained after Regional funding approval, the amount of Regional funding will be adjusted to be net of any third party funding. Payment of the funding to the Area Municipality shall be based on actual expenditures incurred up to the maximum amount approved by Regional Council based on the budget submitted with the application.
4	Project Lead Studies – Lead by either the Area Municipality or the Region based on a mutual agreement prior to initiation of study.
5	Project Lead Design & Construction – A project located in the Area Municipal wastewater system shall be managed by the Area Municipality while a project in the Regional wastewater system shall be managed by the Region. On a case-by-case basis the Region may consider managing a project in the local system, if requested by the Area Municipality.
6	Ownership and Operation of Assets – The ownership and operation of all new and existing assets shall remain the responsibility of the current owner. The Area Municipality, on a case by case basis, may request the Region to operate and maintain an existing or new CSO control facility on behalf of the Area Municipality on a direct charge back basis.
7	Follow up Flow Monitoring – On a case-by-case basis, the Region may include a condition or approval of funding that requires follow up flow monitoring to assess project’s effectiveness.

The terms and conditions under which funding will be offered to the successful applications, including the following:	
8	Expiry of Funding – Funding of a project by the Region may expire if the local Area Municipality does not invoice the Region within three (3) years of the date of funding approval by Regional Council. Also, if an Area Municipality decides not to proceed with a project, the Region may revoke funding. The Region may also withdraw funding for future phases if a project does not proceed on a continuous basis toward completion.
9	Indemnity – The Region, or its directors, officers, employees, agents or consultants will not be held liable as a result of providing funding for any project.
10	Regional Recognition – The Area Municipality is to ensure that the Region is to be acknowledged in all advertising and publicity related to the project for which funding was provided.
11	Project Deliverables – The Region shall receive copies of all project deliverables, including, but not limited to, reports, flow monitoring data, hydraulic modelling files, GIS layers/data, and technical memorandums.
12	Funding Agreement - A letter formalizing the funding in accordance with the Region's CSO Funding Policy will be issued to the Area Municipality for signature and used as the agreement to the terms and conditions of the funding.

**Appendix 4: Summary of CSO Project Remaining Budget Encumbrance by Municipality by 2023 Year-End
CSO Control Program 2023 Year-End Budget Encumbrances**

Municipality	Year								
	Pre-2017	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	Total
Fort Erie	-	-	266,589	302,271	85,233	579,443	681,500	228,800	2,143,836
Grimsby	528,293	-	-	-	-	43,393	31,837	162,500	766,023
Lincoln	-	-	-	316,130	-	542,370	-	138,000	996,500
Niagara Falls	-	113,714	-	154,903	624,957	369,418	687,500	1,363,830	3,314,323
Niagara-on-the-Lake	-	-	-	-	-	60,000	84,452	60,000	204,452
Pelham	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Port Colborne	-	-	-	-	-	169,940	195,173	220,000	585,114
St. Catharines	-	-	-	-	181,512	217,000	144,100	445,486	988,098
Thorold	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Welland	-	-	-	-	256,469	426,498	243,157	96,248	1,022,372
West Lincoln	-	-	-	-	28,026	-	-	-	28,026
Total	528,293	113,714	266,589	773,305	1,176,197	2,408,062	2,067,719	2,714,864	10,048,744

Strategic Marketing Update

Planning and Economic Development Committee

ED 4-2024

Wednesday, May 8, 2024

Katie Desharnais, Manager, Strategic Marketing

Strategic Marketing Update Niagara Economic Development

Presented by Katie Desharnais

Wednesday, May 8, 2024

Introduction

The marketing initiatives presented here contributes to Niagara Region's Economic Development mandate, aiming to position and promote Niagara as an ideal destination for businesses, fostering growth and transforming the region into a global community.

This report outlines the primary activities and achievements of the Strategic Marketing team within Niagara Economic Development during Q1 2024.

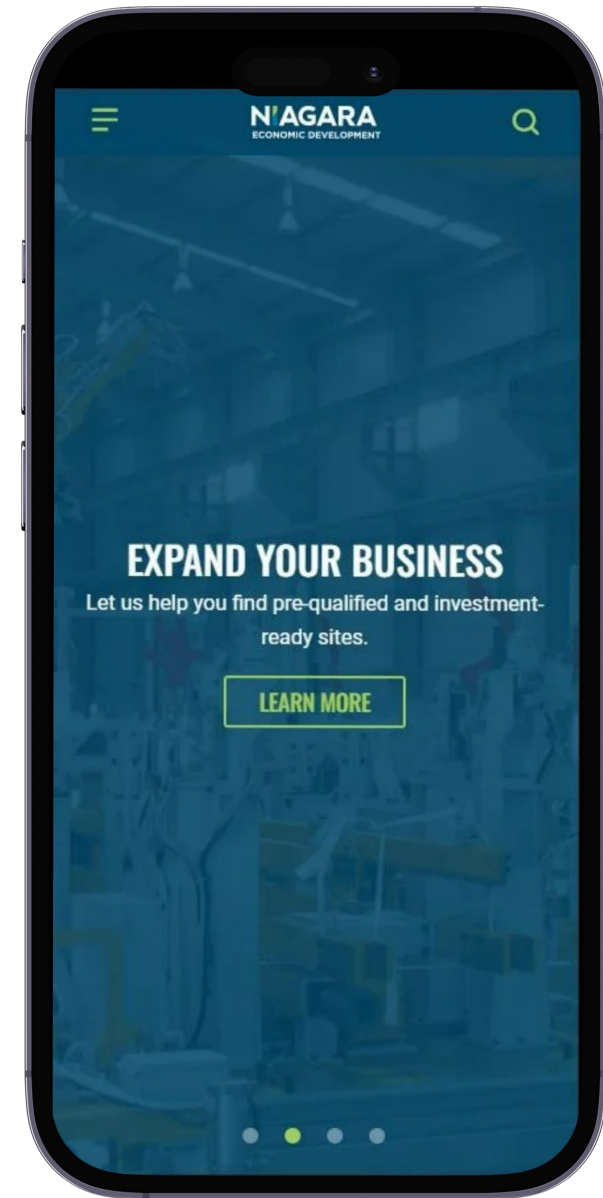
Our goal is to establish Niagara as a premier location for business expansion. The report includes summarized activities, statistical data, and planned initiatives for 2024.



Key Achievements and Activities

Website Performance:

- **NiagaraCanada.ca** serves as a resource for businesses, offering comprehensive insights into investment and attraction opportunities in the region.
- Managed by the Economic Development team, this specialized platform provides a direct link for businesses to explore Niagara's diverse business opportunities.
- **Increase in Web Traffic:**
 - Page visits increased by +2,931 in Q1 compared to the previous year.
 - Page views increased by +3,256.
 - Unique visitors increased by +2,685.
- **Driving Factors:**
 - Search engine optimization efforts contributed to over 8,000 visits.
 - Direct traffic and social media are also significant sources.



Key Achievements and Activities

Website Performance:

NIAGARACANADA.CA

Foreign Interest by Country



Digital Marketing Campaigns Overview

Geo-Fence Event Campaign Update

- Ongoing Geo-Fence Event Campaign targets four prominent events.
- Virtual boundaries were established to gather micro-targeting information for up to 30 days post-event.
- Custom ads tailored to attendee interests and preferences.
- **Results** from the first event, Business Facilities LiveXChange:
 - March 17-19, South Carolina.
 - 53,174 impressions, 71 clicks, and 0.13% click-through rate.
- **Upcoming events:**
 - The Battery Show in Novi, Michigan
 - International Economic Forum of the Americas in Toronto, ON
 - APMA Canada Automotive Summit, Vaughan, ON



Digital Marketing Campaigns Overview

Programmatic Campaign

- Utilization of programmatic campaign leveraging automated technology for media buying.
- Strategic display of digital ads on prominent websites like Wall Street Journal, CNN, BBC News, and The New York Times.

How we target:

- Persona Targeting: Tailoring ads based on firmographic, demographic information.
- Behavioral (Keyword) Targeting: Identifying prospects searching for related content.
- Site Retargeting: Displaying ads to users who have previously visited our website.



Digital Marketing Campaigns Overview

Programmatic Campaign

Campaign Components:

Programmatic Display

- Targeting C-Suite level executives and industries such as Manufacturing, Agriculture, and Marine
- Achieved 469,714 impressions with a click-through rate (CTR) of 0.10%

Paid Search

- Focused campaigns on specific keywords related to target industries
- Achieved 16,382 impressions with a notable CTR of 11.94% and 157 conversions

Paid Social (LinkedIn)

- Engaging businesses, particularly in Manufacturing and Agriculture sectors
- Achieved 19,102 impressions with a CTR of 1.37%

Greater Toronto Area and Ontario Campaign Overview

Strategic Aim: Leveraging opportunities in the GTA and Ontario markets to position Niagara as a premier destination for business.

Campaign Components and Impact

- Full-Page Ad in CANADA Travel & Lifestyle Magazine (March 2024):
- Distributed to 100,000 readers via 50,000 printed copies to paid subscribers of the Globe & Mail and National Post across Ontario.

Exhibition Place Digital Billboards:

- Garnered 60,000 impressions with two unique 6-second static commercials on the Gardiner Expressway Eastbound and Toronto Pearson Airport for 1 week.
- Achieved 100,000 impressions on an 18' x 60' screen on the 401 highway near the airport for 1 week.

Impact: Notable increase in web traffic was observed during the campaign, with 2,576 additional visitors, representing a significant year-over-year increase of 1,155.





Upcoming Marketing Initiatives

Snapshot of Upcoming 2024 Marketing Initiatives

International Council of Shopping Centers (ICSC)

- **Collaboration** between the Niagara Economic Development (NED) team and all 12 municipalities to host a coordinated booth at ICSC.
- **Aim:** Showcase investment-ready sites, leveraging commercial investment opportunities from the Greater Toronto Area (GTA).

Nations Dinner Sponsorship at 2024 World Rowing Championships

- Support of Nations Dinner at the 2024 World Rowing Championships, organized by Sport Niagara.
- Scheduled for August 24th, 2024, gathering international dignitaries from participating country delegations.
- This event supports the investment attraction and promotion of the region, underscoring our dedication to fostering regional growth and prosperity, highlighting our commitment to promoting the Active Economy in Niagara.

Prosperous Region

- The report highlights the Strategic Marketing team's dedicated efforts within Niagara Economic Development to position the region as a premier destination for business investment and overall economic growth.
- This effort is essential to stimulate economic growth and enhance prosperity across the region, a key priority outlined by Council.
- These initiatives not only attract new businesses and investments but also generate employment opportunities, facilitate infrastructure development, and ultimately enhance the overall economic prosperity of the region.



QUESTIONS & CONTACT

Katie Desharnais

Strategic Marketing Manager | Economic Development

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Subject: Economic Development Strategic Marketing Update

Report To: Planning and Economic Development Committee

Report date: Wednesday, May 8, 2024

Recommendations

1. That this Report **BE RECEIVED** for information.

Key Facts

- This report offers an overview of the primary endeavours and accomplishments of Strategic Marketing within Niagara Economic Development (NED) during the first quarter of 2024, highlighting achievements like the substantial surge in web traffic on NiagaraCanada.ca, the effectiveness of our focused newsletter strategy in driving engagement and increased traffic, and the encouraging outcomes from our Geo-Fence Event Campaign, notably the recent success at Business Facilities LiveXChange event.
- Additionally, the report also outlines upcoming campaigns slated for the year ahead, aimed at further bolstering Niagara's profile as a prime destination for business and investment. These include the launch of Niagara Economic Development's Magazine, participation in the International Council of Shopping Centers (ICSC) event, and sponsorship of the Nations Dinner at the 2024 World Rowing Championships.

Financial Considerations

The activities described in this report have been accommodated within the approved 2024 Economic Development operating budget.

Analysis

This report provides an overview of the primary activities and achievements of Strategic Marketing during the first quarter of 2024. The core responsibility aligns with implementing strategic marketing initiatives to promote Niagara as an attractive and cost competitive destination for business and investment across priority markets and key sectors of the region. Our aim is to brand Niagara as a leading location for business growth and expansion which aligns with Council's Strategic Priorities as a

Prosperous Region. The report includes key marketing tactics, statistical data and planned initiatives for the year 2024.

Current Performance Indicators

Website Performance

The **NiagaraCanada.ca** website is the primary resource for businesses and site selectors providing comprehensive information on the region's value proposition to support investment and attraction opportunities. Managed by the Economic Development team, this specialized platform offers a direct link to explore the strategic advantages and range of opportunities for business growth in Niagara.

- NiagaraCanada.ca has seen an increase in web traffic in Q1, compared to the preceding year.
- Page visits have increased by +2,931
- Page views have increased +3,256
- Unique visitors have increased +2,685

Search engine optimization efforts have played a pivotal role in driving these increases, with over 8,000 visits originating from search engines. Direct traffic emerged as the second most substantial traffic source, contributing just under 4,000 visits, followed by social media with 1,318 visits.

Top Visiting Countries: (% of total visits)

1. United States: 44.2%
2. Ireland: 2.3%
3. Netherlands: 0.9%
4. India: 0.7%
5. France: 0.6%
6. Philippines: 0.6%
7. Finland: 0.6%
8. United Kingdom: 0.5%
9. Italy: 0.5%
10. Germany: 0.4%

International interest is important as evidenced by the top 10 countries visiting the site. This demonstrates a broad spectrum of global engagement with Niagara's potential.

Newsletter Campaign Performance

- We have maintained our newsletter strategy, consistently delivering updates to our valued subscribers. This sustained effort has yielded tangible results, including increased web traffic, higher click-through rates, and a rise in business inquiries.
- Achieved 53.8% open rate against a 24.6% industry average.

Geo-Fence Event Campaign Update

In our ongoing Geo-Fence Event Campaign, we've strategically selected four prominent events for targeted marketing initiatives. By establishing virtual boundaries around these events, we aim to gather valuable micro-targeting information from attendees for up to 30 days post-event. Subsequently, custom ads will be tailored to their interests and preferences, targeting the sites they organically visit. The first event, Business Facilities LiveXChange in South Carolina, took place from March 17-19, yielding promising results with 53,174 impressions, 71 clicks, and a click-through rate (CTR) of 0.13%. This performance is nearly three times higher than the benchmark CTR for all programmatic display, including event targeting, which stands at 0.05%. This benchmark applies specifically to business-to-business programmatic display advertising.

Looking ahead, our upcoming events for this campaign include the APMA Canada Automotive Summit on June 11, The Battery Show – North America in Michigan, set for October 7-10, 2024, and the International Economic Forum of the Americas (IEFA) in Toronto from October 16-18. These initiatives are integral to our broader marketing strategy and support our foreign direct investment, allowing us to engage with a targeted audience.

Strategic Digital Marketing Campaigns Overview

We have initiated a programmatic campaign as part of our digital marketing efforts. This campaign leverages automated technology for media buying, allowing us to strategically display digital ads on prominent websites frequented by our target audience such as the Wall Street Journal, CNN, BBC News, and The New York Times. Programmatic campaigns enable us to reach our desired audience efficiently by utilizing data-driven insights and real-time bidding on ad inventory across various digital platforms.

Targeting Methods:

- **Persona Targeting:** Tailoring ads based on firmographic, demographic information.
- **Behavioural (Keyword) Targeting:** Identifying prospects searching for related content.
- **Site Retargeting:** Displaying ads to users who have previously visited our website.

Campaign Components:

- **Programmatic Display:**
 - Leveraging various ad groups targeting C-Suite level executives and industries such as Manufacturing, Agriculture, and Marine. Impressions served totalled 469,714, with a click-through rate (CTR) of 0.10%. The average CTR for programmatic display is 0.05%.
- **Paid Search:**
 - Running campaigns focused on specific keywords related to our target industries. Impressions served amounted to 16,382, with a notable CTR of 11.94% and 157 conversions. The average CTR for paid search is 3%.
- **Paid Social (LinkedIn):**
 - Engaging businesses looking to relocate, particularly focusing on Manufacturing and Agriculture sectors. Impressions reached 19,102, with a CTR of 1.37%. The average CTR for LinkedIn is 0.35%.

Greater Toronto Area and Ontario Campaign

We recently executed a targeted marketing campaign aimed at capturing the attention of businesses in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) and Ontario, highlighting Niagara as an attractive destination for business. This region serves as a strategic focus area for attracting investment to Niagara.

Campaign Components:

- Full-Page Ad in CANADA Travel & Lifestyle Magazine - March 2024.
- Distributed to 100,000 readers through 50,000 printed copies delivered to paid subscribers of the Globe & Mail and National Post across Ontario.
- Exhibition Place digital Billboard: 60,000 impressions of two unique 6-second static commercials on the Gardiner Expressway Eastbound for 1 week.
- 401 Highway digital Billboard: 100,000 Impressions on an 18' x 60' Screen on the 401 Highway near the airport for 1 week.

Overall, the campaign was strategically aimed at promoting Niagara for business in the GTA and Ontario markets, effectively positioning Niagara as a premier destination for companies considering doing business in Niagara. During the weeks when the billboards were running, we observed a notable increase in web traffic, with 2,576 additional visitors—a significant year-over-year increase of 1,155 visitors.

Upcoming Marketing Initiatives

New Niagara Economic Development Magazine Initiative

Introducing the Niagara Economic Development Magazine, a new initiative set to debut in the summer of 2024. This magazine will continue to serve as a comprehensive resource, highlighting the region's economic landscape. With articles penned by an independent journalist, it will cover key sectors like agricultural innovation and the energy transition to electric vehicles. The magazine will also maintain its focus on detailed profiles of each municipality, offering insights into Niagara's diverse offerings, including essential information on business expansion and investment services. The overarching goal remains the same: to position Niagara as a top destination for investment and growth.

International Council of Shopping Centers (ICSC)

Leverage commercial investment opportunities across Niagara, the Niagara Economic Development (NED) team, in collaboration with all 12 municipalities, will have a coordinated Niagara booth at the International Council of Shopping Centers (ICSC) from October 7-9, 2024. This strategic partnership aims to capitalize on opportunities from the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) by showcasing investment-ready sites and fostering economic growth in the region. With a membership of over 70,000 professionals worldwide, ICSC serves as a critical hub for stakeholders in shopping centers and retail real estate. Our participation in ICSC aligns with our commitment to a prosperous region and showcases the commercial investment potential of each of our municipalities.

Nations Dinner Sponsorship at the 2024 World Rowing Championships

NED is supporting the Nations Dinner at the 2024 World Rowing Championships, organized by Sport Niagara on behalf of St. Catharines World Rowing, highlighting our commitment to promoting the Active Economy in Niagara. Scheduled for August 24th, 2024, this event will gather international dignitaries from every participating country delegation, offering an opportunity to showcase Niagara's hospitality and value proposition to a global audience. This initiative aligns with the objectives outlined in the

Council Strategic Priorities and the Niagara Economic Development 10-year strategy, supports the investment attraction and promotion of the region underscoring our dedication to fostering regional growth and prosperity.

Relationship to Council Strategic Priorities

- The activities outlined in this report directly aligns with Council's strategic priority of building a Prosperous Region. By implementing strategic marketing initiatives to promote Niagara as an attractive destination for business and investment, we aim to stimulate economic growth and enhance prosperity across the region. This report reinforces Council priorities by showcasing the efforts undertaken by the Strategic Marketing team within Niagara Economic Development (NED) to position Niagara as a leading location for business expansion and investment. Through targeted marketing campaigns, participation in key events such as the International Council of Shopping Centers (ICSC), and sponsorship of prominent events like the Nations Dinner at the 2024 World Rowing Championships, we are actively working towards promoting a prosperous economy in Niagara. These initiatives not only attract new businesses and investments but also create employment opportunities, contribute to infrastructure development, and ultimately improve the overall economic well-being of the region. By strategically delivering on the Prosperous Region priority, we aim to ensure sustained economic growth and prosperity for the residents and businesses of Niagara.

Other Pertinent Reports

There are no other relevant reports.

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Recommended by:

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Recommended by:

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Commissioner, Growth Strategy and
Economic Development

Submitted by:

Ron Tripp, P.Eng.
Chief Administrative Officer

This report was prepared in consultation with Marco Marino, Associate Director,
Economic Development.

Appendices

Not applicable

Niagara Economic Update

Planning and Economic Development Committee

ED 7-2024

May 8, 2024

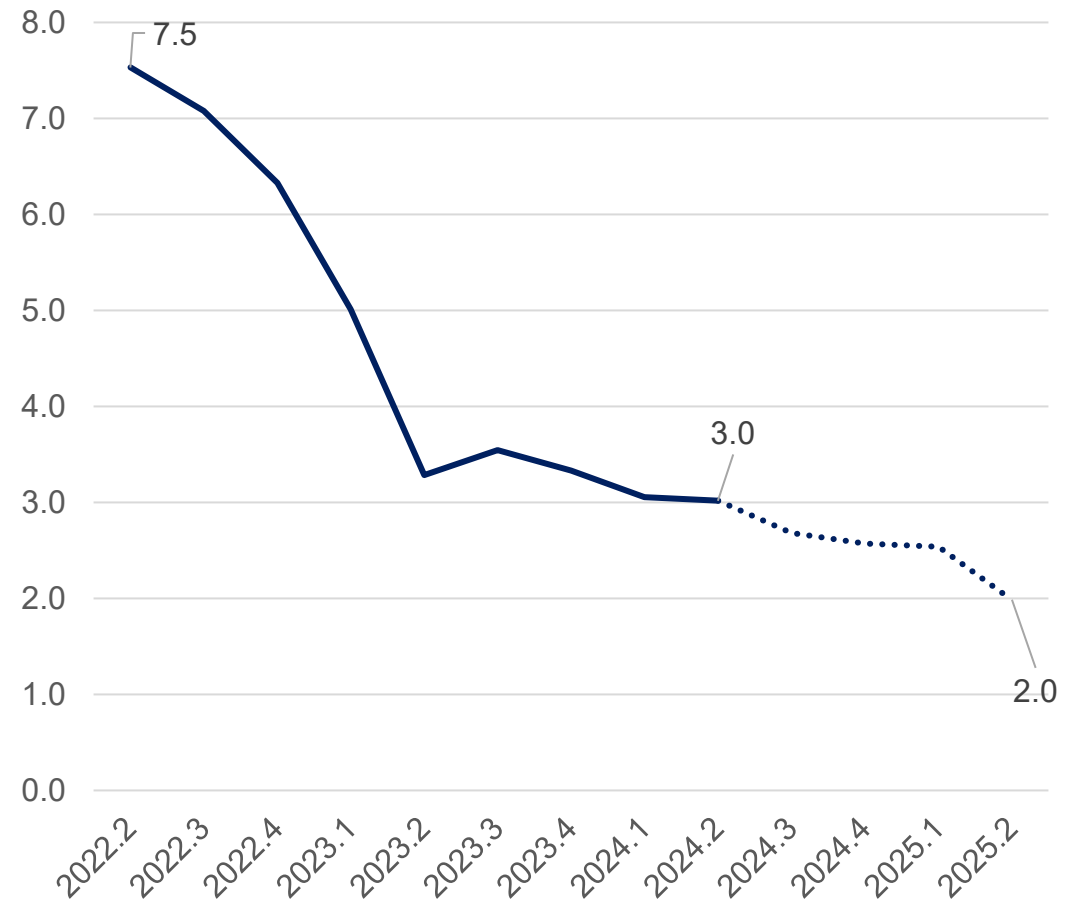
Blake Landry, Ec.D., Manager, Economic Research & Analysis

Niagara Economic Update

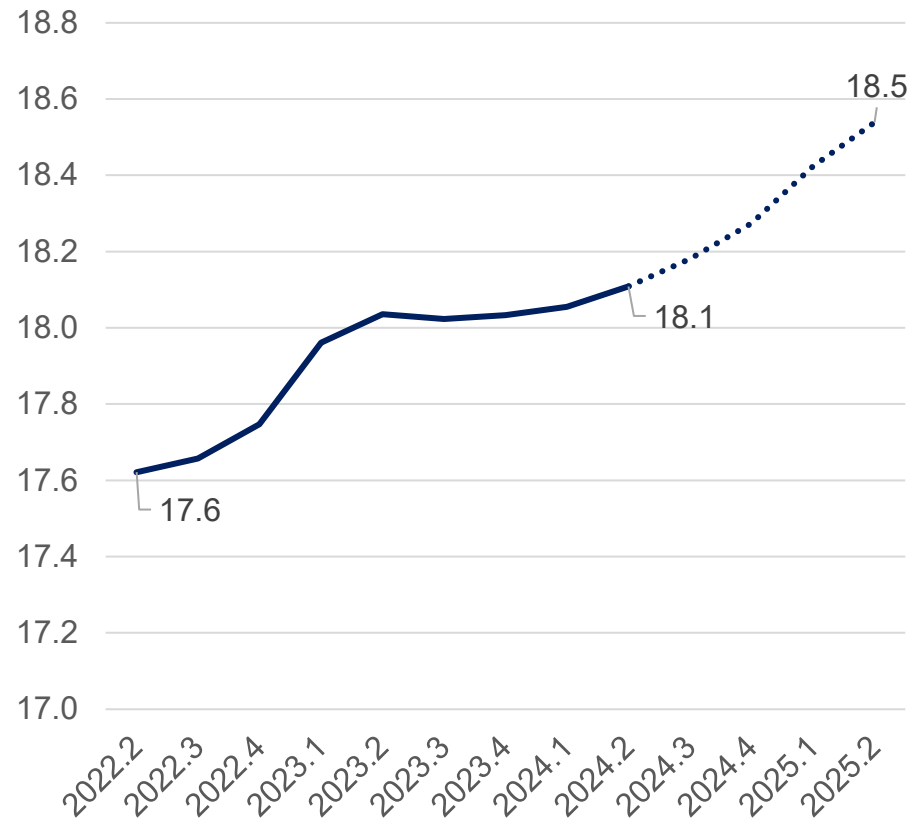
PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
COMMITTEE

May 8, 2024

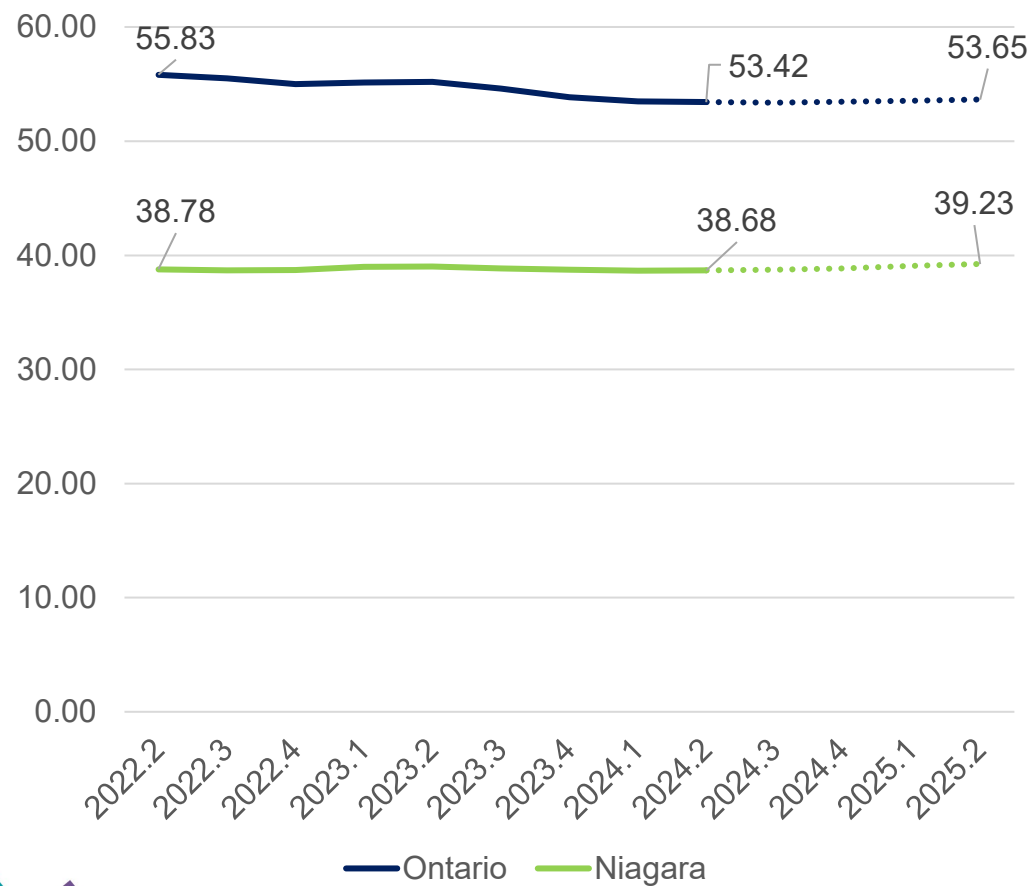
Consumer Price Index (%)



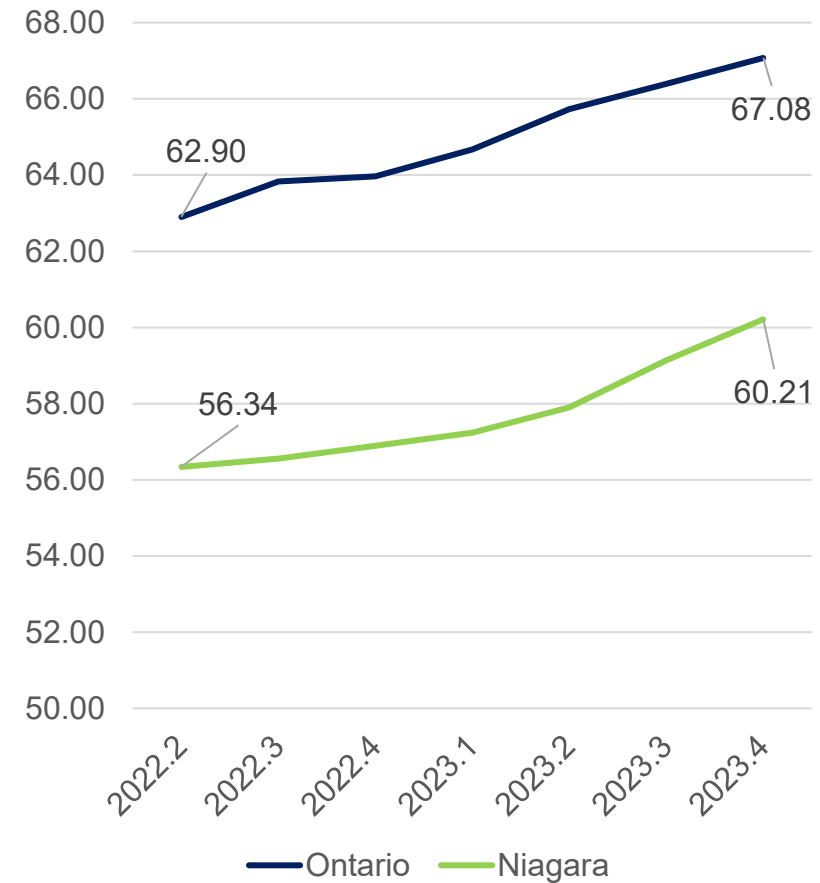
Gross Domestic Product (\$ Billions)



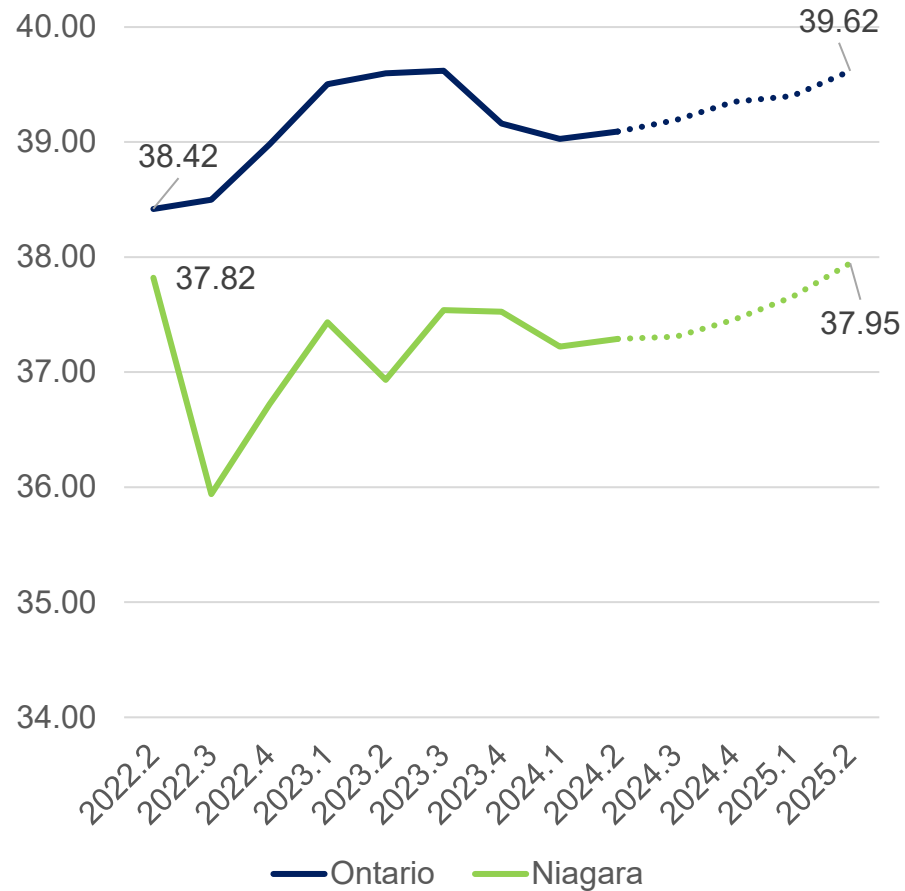
GDP Per Capita (\$ Thousands)



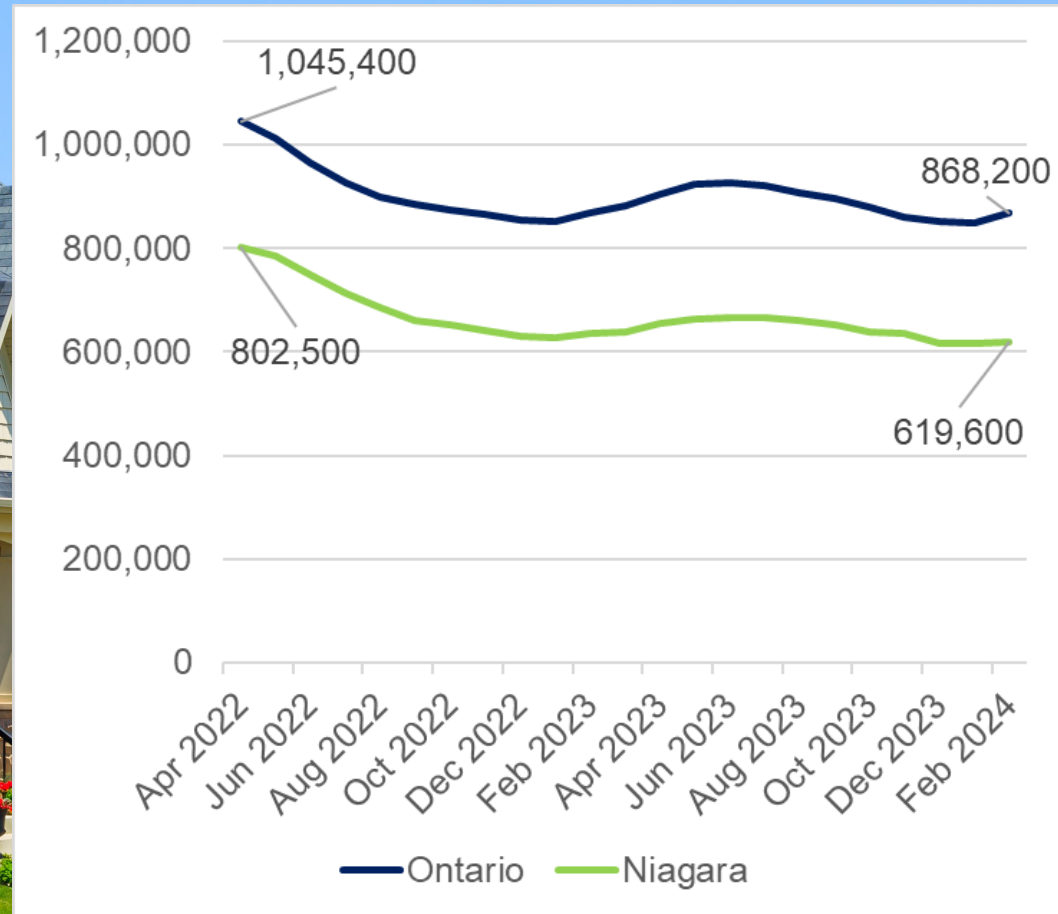
Salaries and Wages (\$ Thousands)



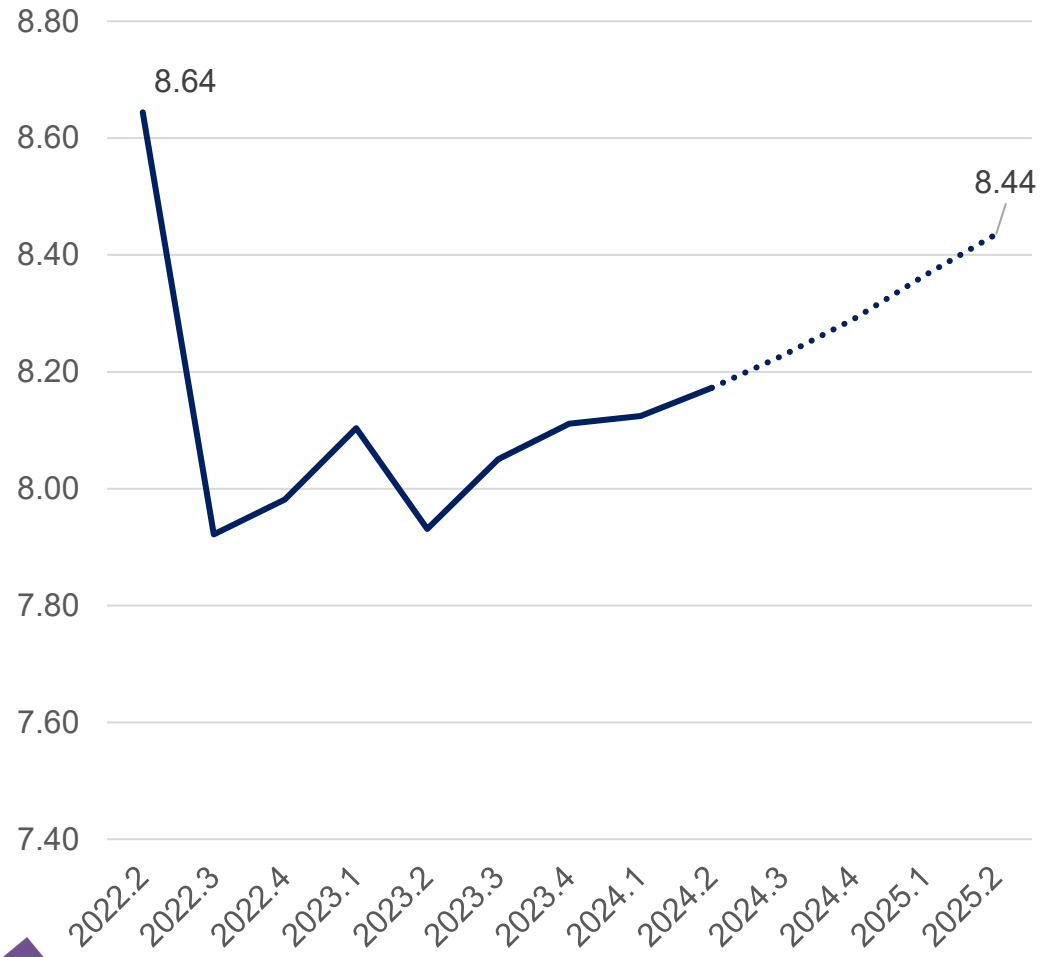
Household Disposable Income Per Capita (\$ Thousands)



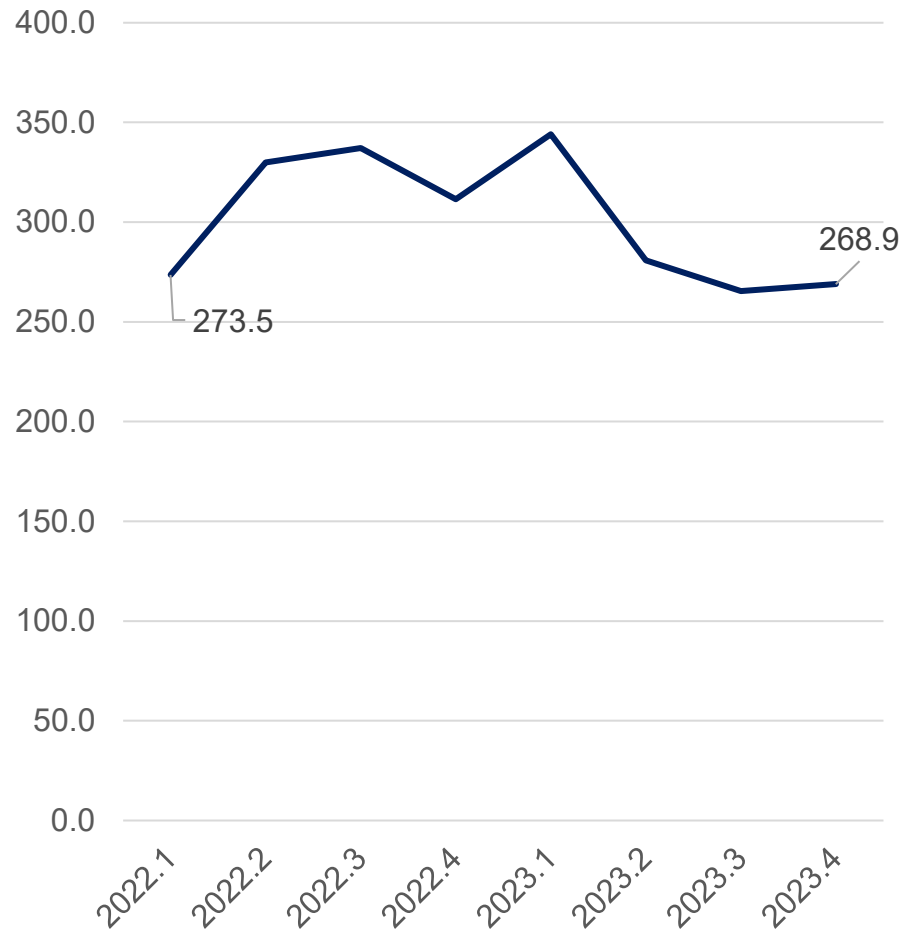
Housing Prices (\$ Thousands)



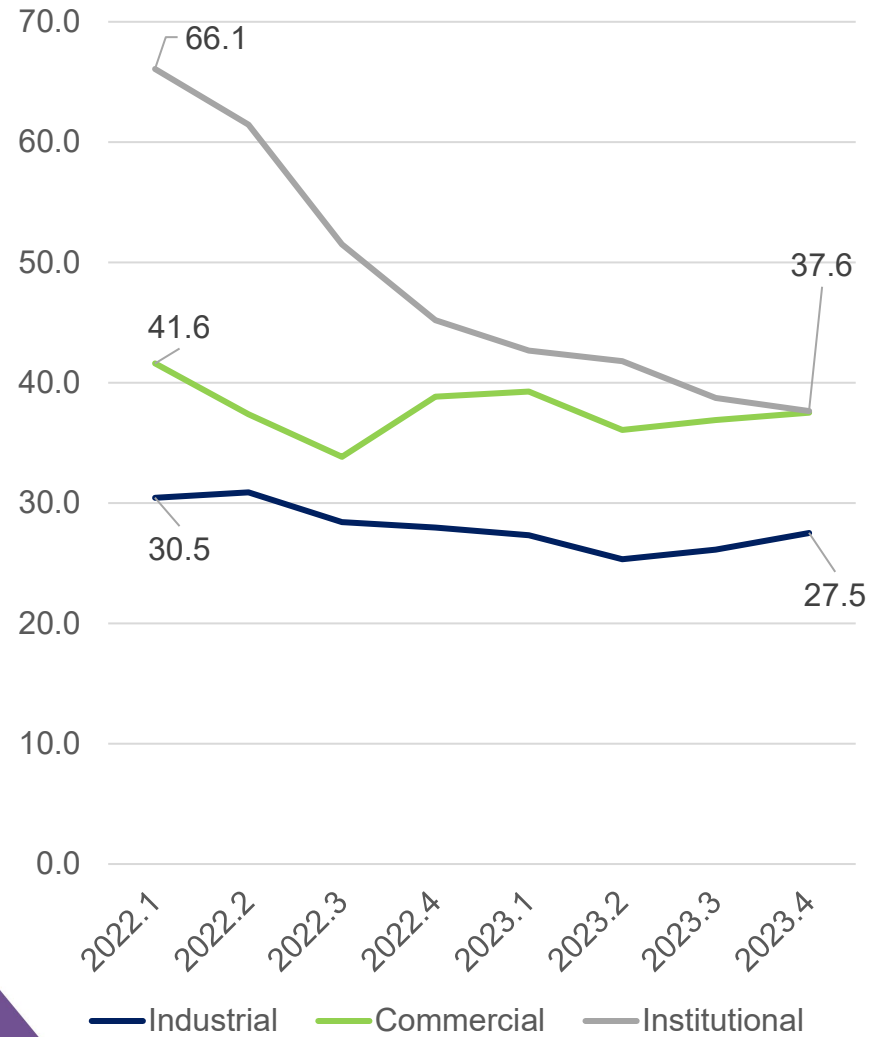
Retail Sales (\$ Billions)



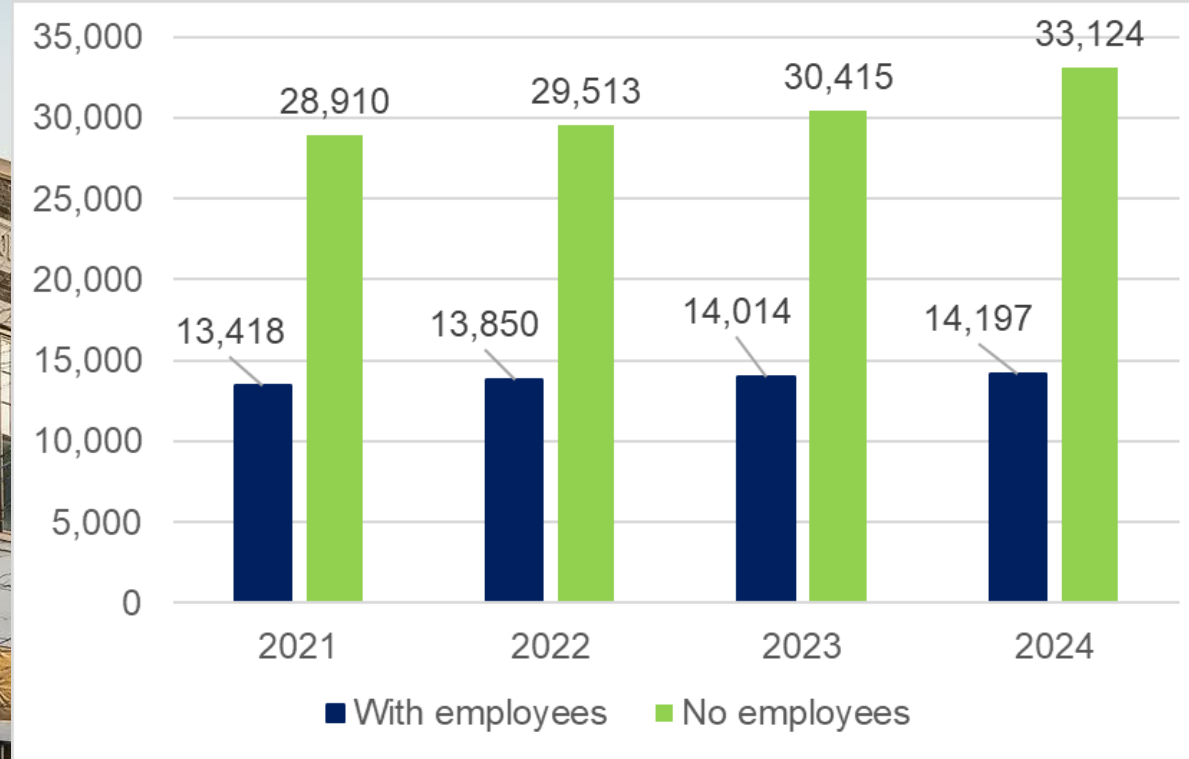
Investment In Construction, Residential (\$ Millions)



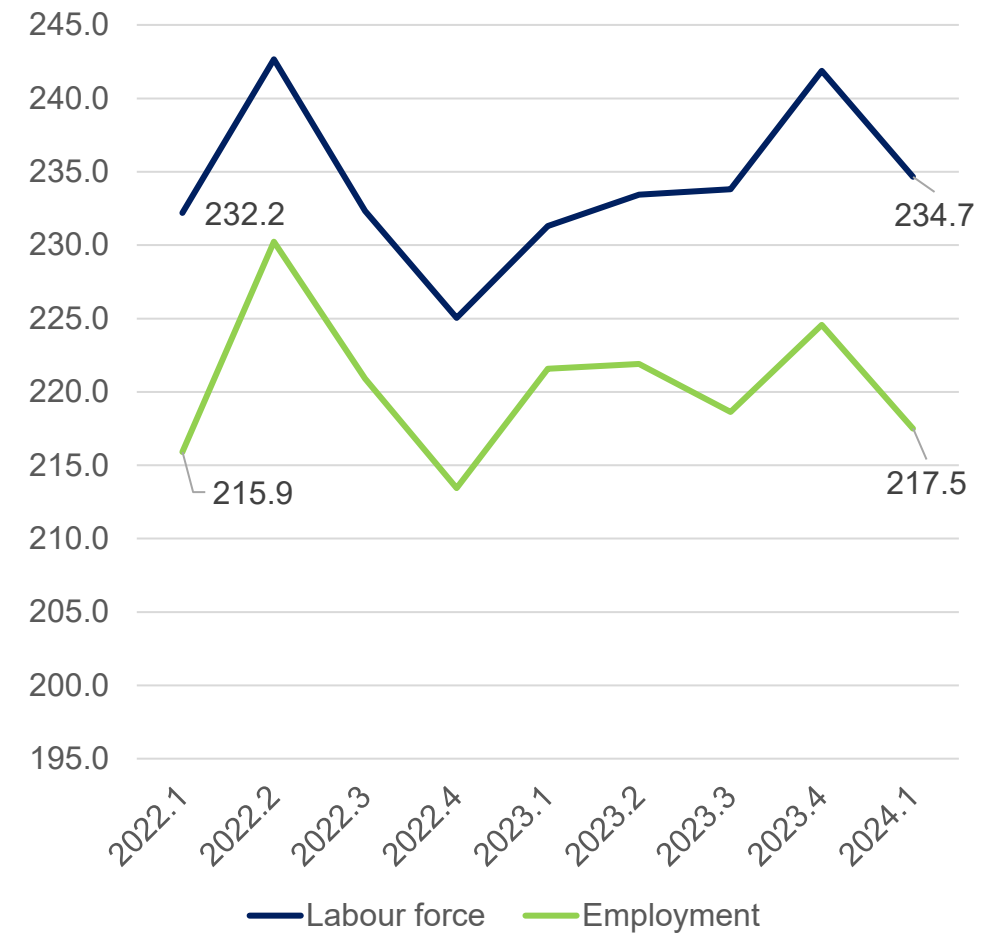
Investment In Construction, Non-residential (\$ Millions)



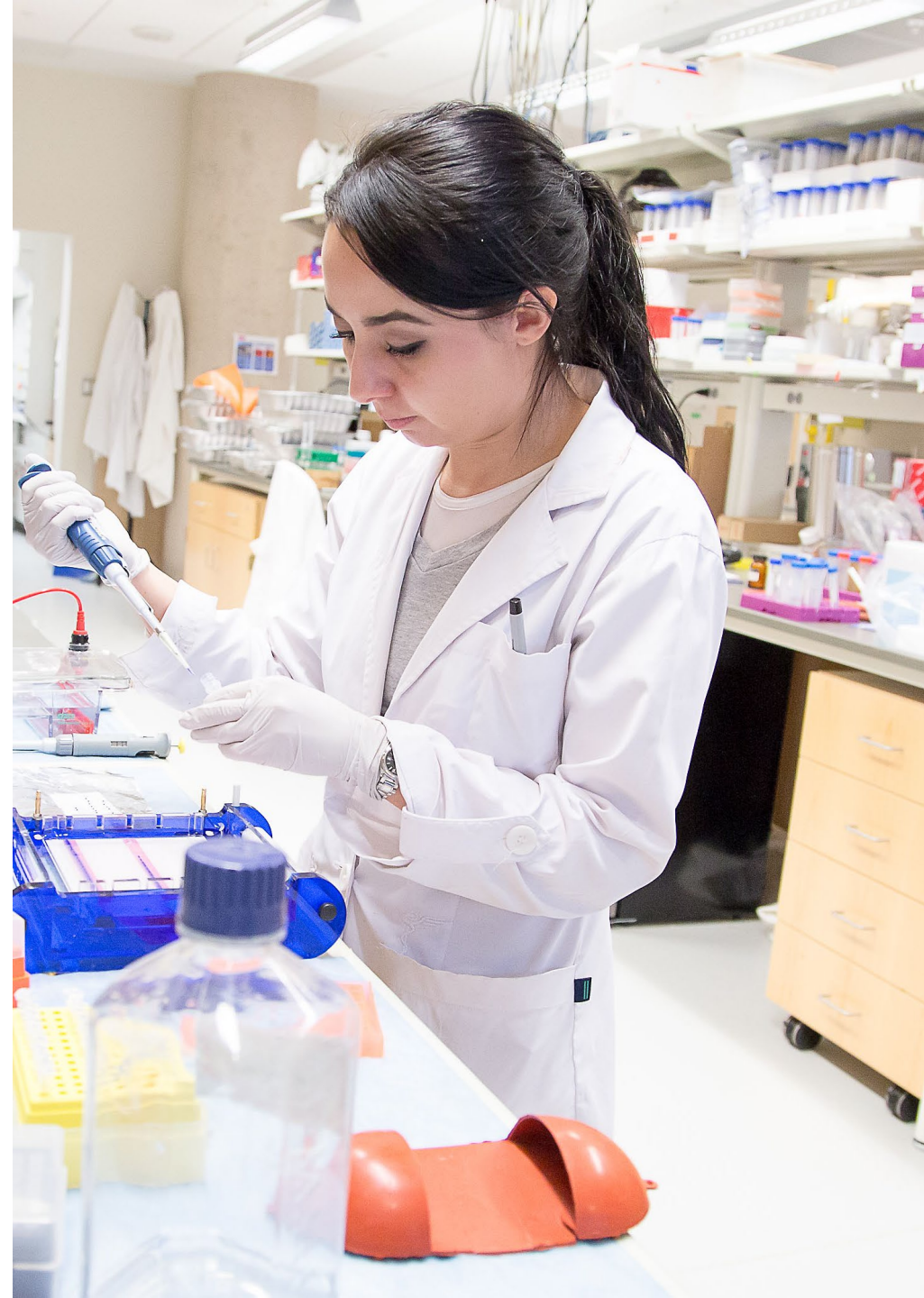
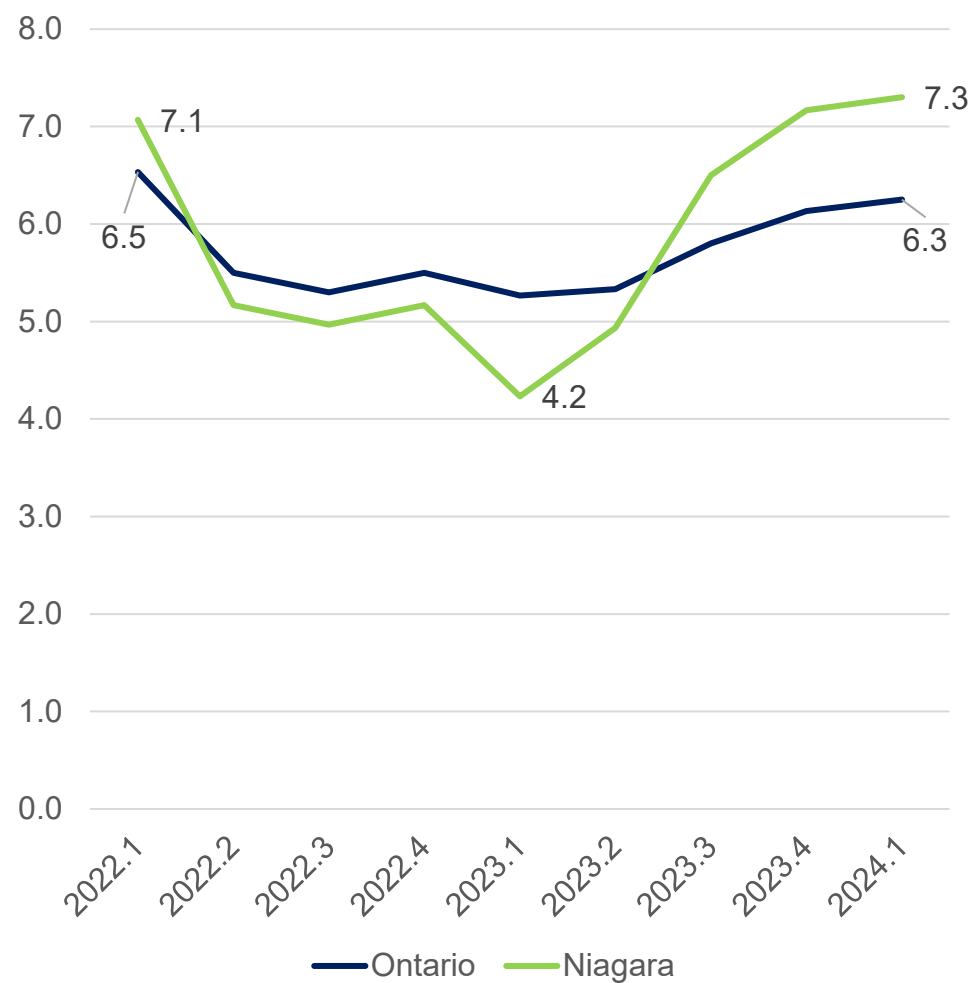
Business Counts



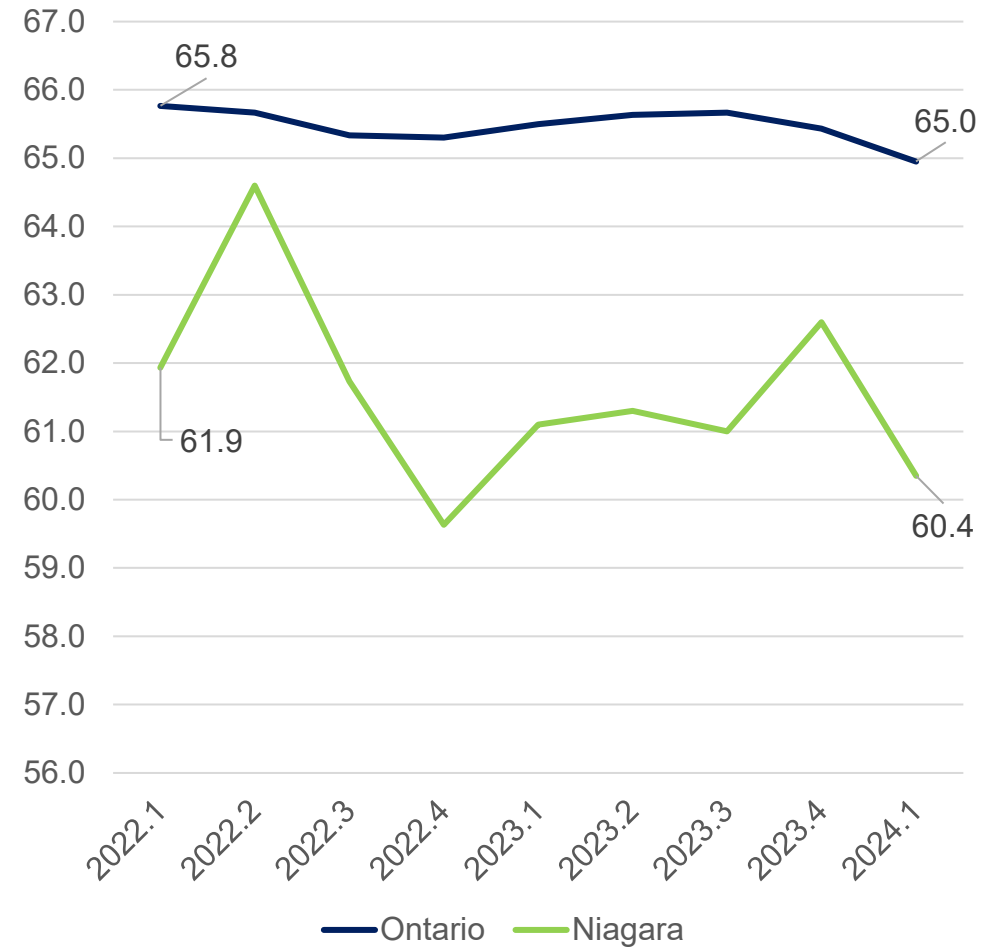
Labour Force and Employment (Thousands)



Unemployment Rate (%)



Participation Rate (%)



Thank You

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Subject: Niagara Economic Update

Report To: Planning and Economic Development Committee

Report date: Wednesday, May 8, 2024

Recommendations

1. That this report **BE RECEIVED** for information.

Key Facts

- The purpose of this report is to provide the Planning and Economic Development Committee with a briefing on the regional economy.
- Despite expectations of a slowing economy, the economy in Niagara remains resilient and growth is projected to outperform Ontario and Canada in 2024 and 2025.
- From Q2 2023 to Q2 2024, GDP growth in Niagara was minimal at 0.4% but growth is projected to resume with an expected rate of 2.4% from Q2 2024 to Q2 2025.

Financial Considerations

The activities described in this report are within the Council-approved 2024 Economic Development operating budget.

Analysis

Despite a softening national economy, Canada continues to evade recession with economic projections appearing relatively positive compared to previous forecasts. According to Statistics Canada, the Canadian economy grew by 0.6% in January, marking the fastest growth rate in a year, followed by an additional 4% growth in February, representing a significant improvement over December's 0.1% contraction.

Furthermore, in February Canada's inflation rate dropped to 2.8%, which was lower than predicted. This drop is attributed to reduced costs for cellular services, internet and groceries. However, rent and mortgage costs remained significant drivers of inflation. The Bank of Canada has maintained its policy interest rate of 5.0% since July but has agreed that the conditions for lower rates should materialize this year if the economy

performs as predicted. This has improved business and consumer confidence which has positive implications for future economic growth.

Data from the Conference Board of Canada predicts that economic growth in Niagara will slightly outperform Canada and Ontario in 2024 and 2025. The following provides an economic update for Niagara based on key economic indicators.

Consumer Price Index (CPI)

CPI is a widely used measure of inflation. CPI has been stubbornly high throughout Canada (and the world) and reached a peak of 7.5% for Niagara in Q2 2022. However, as a result of a policy interest rate of 5.0%, CPI has been reduced drastically to 3.0% as of Q2 2024 and is predicted to drop to a target rate of 2.0% by Q2 2025.

Gross Domestic Product (GDP)

GDP represents the total value of all goods and services produced in an economy. From Q2 2022 to Q1 2023, real GDP for Niagara experienced rapid growth due to increased discretionary spending following the pandemic. However, from Q2 2023 to Q2 2024, GDP growth stagnated due to rapidly increased interest rates. Real GDP growth is projected to resume, with an expected rate of 2.4% from Q2 2024 to Q2 2025.

GDP per capita measures total GDP divided by the total population. It is often used as a measure of overall economic productivity. Real GDP per capita for Niagara was \$38,678 in Q2 2024 compared to \$53,421 for Ontario. Historically, Niagara has lagged behind Ontario in GDP per capita, but over the past two years Niagara has shown improved performance. From Q2 2024 to Q2 2025, Niagara is expected to grow by 1.4% outpacing Ontario's growth rate of 0.4%.

Salaries and Wages

Historically, Niagara has trailed behind Ontario in terms of salaries and wages. As of Q4 2023, Niagara's total salaries and wages divided by the working population amounted to \$60,210; whereas Ontario's was \$67,077. However, in 2023 salaries and wages in Niagara experienced a notable increase of 5.8% surpassing Ontario's growth rate of 4.8%.

Income

Household disposable income per capita differs from salaries and wages as it encompasses all forms of income including employment income as well as government transfers, investment income, and capital gains and divides it by the total population. In Q2 2024, household disposable income per capita for Niagara was \$37,289, slightly lower than Ontario's \$39,091. Over the period from Q2 2022 to Q2 2024, Niagara's household disposable income per capita decreased by 1.4%, while Ontario's increased by 1.7%. However, Niagara is predicted to rebound to 1.8% from Q2 2024 to Q2 2025, outpacing Ontario's projected growth of 1.3%.

Housing Prices

Housing prices remain dynamic amidst evolving economic conditions. As of February 2024, the benchmark housing price in Niagara stood at \$619,000, notably lower than Ontario's \$868,000. This was a decrease of 23% from a peak of \$802,500 for Niagara and a decrease of 17% from a peak of \$1,045,000 for Ontario in April 2022.

Retail Sales

Retail sales in Niagara have exhibited volatility in recent periods. Sales values experienced a significant decline of 8.4% to \$7.9 billion in Q3 2022, coinciding with an increase in interest rates that led to a reduction in discretionary income. While retail sales have shown slow signs of recovery, a modest growth rate of 3.2% is predicted from Q2 2024 to Q2 2025.

Investment In Building Construction

Investment in residential building construction reached \$344 million in Q1 2023 but decreased by 22% to \$268.9 million by the end of 2023, Q3 2023 was the lowest point since Q3 2018.

Investment in non-residential building construction remained mostly consistent. Industrial ranged from a high of \$30.9 million in Q2 2022 to a low of \$25.3 million in Q2 2023 and was \$27.5 million in Q4 2023. Commercial had experienced a steep decrease coming out of the pandemic but has since stabilized to \$37.5 million in Q4 2023. Institutional has decreased steadily from \$66.1 million in Q1 2022 to \$37.6 million in Q4 2023. However, this is expected to rebound with the construction of the South Niagara Hospital.

Business Counts

Business counts have remained consistently strong among both employer and non-employer businesses. As of 2024, Niagara had 14,197 businesses with employees and 33,124 businesses without employees. This was a gain of 183 businesses with employees and 2,709 businesses without employees.

Labour

There was volatility in the labour force coming out of the pandemic resulting in a decrease to 225,000 in Q4 2022; however, there has been a rebound and the labour reached 234,700 by Q1 2024.

Employment followed a similar pattern. In Q1 2022 it was relatively low at 215,900 but rebounded to 217,500 in Q1 2024.

Niagara's unemployment rate reached a historical low of 4.2% in Q1 2021, compared to Ontario's rate of 5.3%. However, due to the impacts of higher interest rates and inflation on the economic environment, Niagara's unemployment rate increased to 7.3%, while Ontario's rose to 6.3%.

Niagara's participation rate has faltered coming out of the pandemic from a relatively high rate of 64.6% in Q2 2022, it dropped to 60.4% in Q1 2024. Comparatively, Ontario's was 65%. Niagara has historically been lower than Ontario and has experienced more volatility than Ontario in recent times.

Conclusion

Economic conditions appear to be improving gradually. This is expected to continue through 2024 and 2025. The Bank of Canada recently reported in their Business Outlook Survey that despite a slowing of the economy in 2023, business and consumer confidence is improving. Although demand remains subdued, it has some positive effects such as allowing price and labour market pressures to ease. Other characteristics such as population growth, market expansion efforts, and the expectation of declining interest rates are also contributing to a more positive outlook compared to previous quarters.

Alternatives Reviewed

All activities described in this report are key functions of Regional Economic Development and the tactics being used are consistent with accepted economic development practices.

Relationship to Council Strategic Priorities

This report supports the following Council Strategic Priorities:

- Prosperous Region

Other Pertinent Reports

- ED 1-2024 Niagara Economic Update

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Economic Development

Recommended by:

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Director,
Economic Development

Recommended by:

Michelle Sergi, MCIP, RPP
Commissioner, Growth Strategy and
Economic Development

Submitted by:

Ron Tripp, P.Eng.
Chief Administrative Officer

This report was prepared in consultation with Marco Marino, Associate Director, Economic Development.

Appendices

Not applicable.

Subject: 2023 Reserve Water and Wastewater Treatment Capacities

Report To: Planning and Economic Development Committee

Report date: Wednesday, May 8, 2024

Recommendations

1. That Report PDS 16-2024 **BE RECEIVED** for information; and
2. That Report PDS 16-2024 **BE CIRCULATED** to the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks, and Local Area Municipalities.

Key Facts

- The purpose of this report is to inform Council of the reserve treatment capacities at Niagara's Water and Wastewater Treatment facilities. This reporting is required by the Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks (MECP).
- The data contained in this report assists in commenting on new development proposals and related servicing, as well as planning for future treatment capacity.
- All of Niagara Water Treatment Plants (WTPs) and Wastewater Treatment Plants (WWTPs) are positioned to accept growth beyond the minimum 10-year horizon.

Financial Considerations

This report provides Council with historical and projected treatment capacity and flow data. There are no direct financial implications in receiving this report.

The reserve treatment capacities at the water and wastewater (W&WW) facilities are considered in commenting on new development proposals and related servicing therefore could result in a financial impact related to specific future applications.

Analysis

The Infrastructure Planning and Development Engineering section of Growth Strategy and Economic Development Department annually reports on an assessment of the average daily W&WW flows based on the previous five years, as recorded at our various facilities compared to MECP rated capacities for the facilities. A key objective of this report is to highlight potential capacity constraints and allow sufficient lead-time to plan for future capacity increases through the W&WW capital programs so that development may continue unencumbered. This desktop exercise, compares five-year

(annual) average flows to the respective MECP Environmental Compliance Approval(s), formerly known as Certificate of Approval(s) for each facility, then incorporates 10-year growth forecasts into the calculation. On-going phasing and staging strategy work with our local municipal partners will further refine this assessment for understanding development capacities.

This assessment does not reflect specific compliance, quality, sustainability, risk, or operational deficiencies at the treatment plants or trunk conveyance/transmission systems, which may affect the Region's ability to approve new development or permit servicing extensions. There are various developments across the Region that will require sewage pumping station upgrades to occur to provide the necessary development capacity to proceed, which are outlined in the Region's 2021 Water Wastewater Master Servicing Plan Update (MSPU). Continued investment in the sustainability of the existing WTP and WWTP is of paramount importance to ensure that the capacity continues to be available for existing users and future developments.

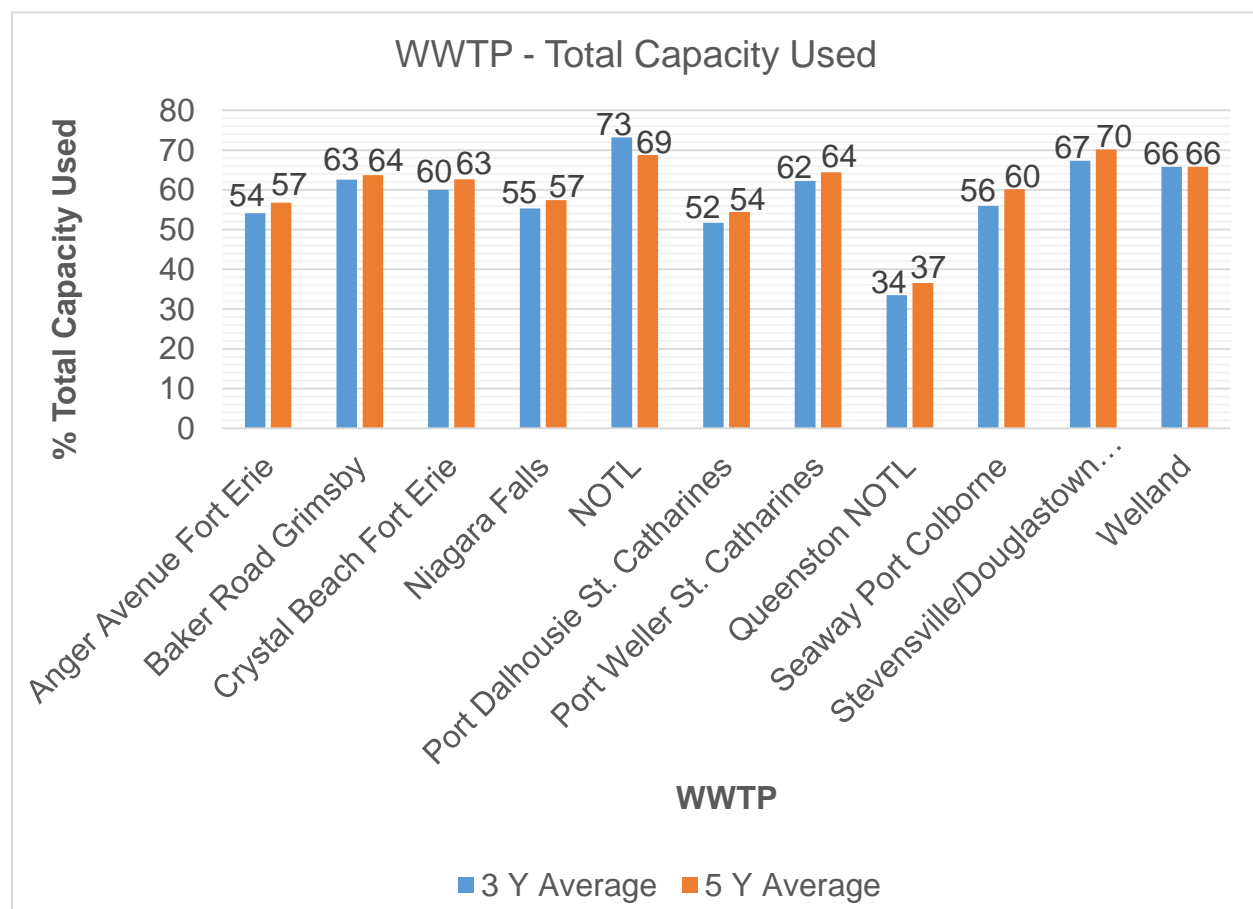
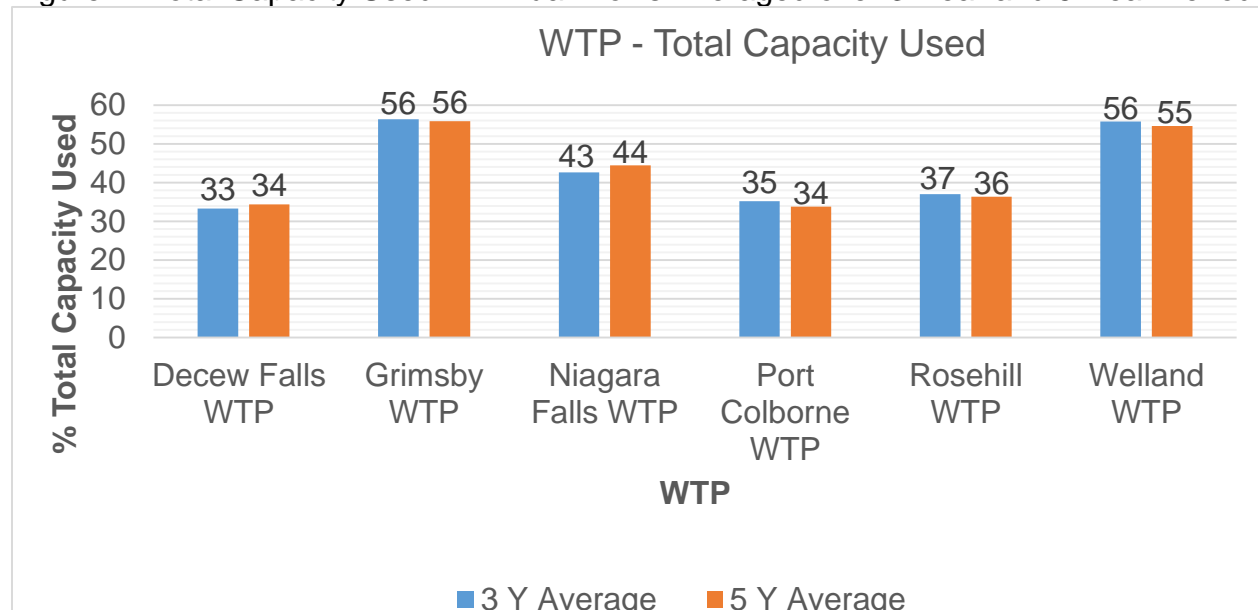
For municipal wastewater treatment, weather is the key factor that results in peak wet weather flow, which impacts the collection and trunk sewers in both local and regional systems through Rainfall Derived Inflow and Infiltration (RDI&I). Wet weather flows can have substantial impact on available WWTP capacities and a direct impact on the limitations of available servicing capacity for future growth.

Appendices 1 and 2 provide annual average daily flows and five-year average flows from 2019 to 2023 for the water and wastewater treatment plants, respectively. Appendices 3 and 4 provide a summary of Niagara's six water treatment facilities and eleven wastewater treatment facilities presenting their respective reserve capacities.

A comparison of the total capacity used over a 5-year period versus a 3-year period was completed to determine if recent growth and flow conditions have any significant impacts. For the WTP's the averaging daily flows over a 5-year period versus a 3-year period in the Reserve Capacity calculations for 2023 does not show a compelling difference or significant trend. For the WWTP's, there is a general trend of a slightly reduced annual average daily flow except for NOTL WWTP. This can partially be due to several infill and infiltration (I&I) reduction and capacity restoration projects within the recent years. Additionally, due to COVID over the last few years, there may have been some impacts on flows.

Figure 1 shows a comparison of the total capacities used for WTPs and WWTPs when daily flows are averaged over the last 3 and 5 years.

Figure 1: Total Capacity Used – Annual Flows Averaged over 3-Year and 5-Year Period



If all the major infrastructure sustainability investments are carried out, all of Niagara's WTPs and WWTPs will be able to accommodate growth beyond the minimum 10-year period (Appendix 3 and Appendix 4).

Niagara Official Plan and Water/Wastewater Master Servicing Plan

The new Niagara Official Plan was approved by the Regional Council and subsequently approved and adopted by the Province on November 4, 2022. As part of the Plan, the Region completed extensive background review, consultation, and supporting studies in 2022 and 2023, which resulted in policies and mapping to managing growth and the economy while protecting the natural environment, resources and agricultural land, and providing infrastructure to support developments of the whole region. The approval of the Niagara Official Plan helps the Region prepare for the anticipated population of 694,000 people and 272,000 jobs by 2051.

The anticipated growth out to 2051 from the Niagara Official Plan process was utilized in the 2021 Master Servicing Plan Update (MSPU) to determine the required water and wastewater growth capital projects for the future while maintaining the existing infrastructure.

The 2021 MSPU is a critical component in the Region's planning for growth and provides the framework and vision for the water and wastewater servicing needs for the lake-based service areas of the Region to 2051 and beyond. The 2021 MSPU evaluates the ability of the existing and planned water and wastewater infrastructure to continue servicing the Region's existing users, to prepare for servicing anticipated growth, and to evaluate and develop recommended strategies in an efficient and effective manner. This included consideration for Regional water and wastewater infrastructure to be aligned with the urban expansion and intensification areas identified in the Niagara Official Plan review. Additionally, the potential impacts of estimated growth beyond 2051 was considered due to the longer useful life of water and wastewater infrastructure assets.

Recent growth projections and development densities provided by LAMs have been proposing greater amounts of growth than originally anticipated in the 2021 MSPU. The Region is continuing to work with LAMs to better understand these development pressures and projections as alignment of infrastructure, growth and financing are critical to the success of Niagara. These updated growth projections will influence the next MSPU, which will be commencing in 2025.

Wet Weather Management

The Niagara wastewater systems are a mix of separated and combined sewer systems. Each system is experiencing varying levels of impact during wet weather conditions. Climate change continues to create changing weather conditions and the wastewater systems are experiencing, in most cases, high peak flows under rainfall events. To accommodate the anticipated growth from Niagara 2051 and to maintain an existing servicing level for the wastewater infrastructure, system capacity upgrades (upgrades to trunk sewers, pumping stations, etc.) and the upstream management (storage, peak shaving, diversion) together with peak flow management (I&I reduction projects) for every wastewater system were investigated. Based on this review, there are wet weather projects listed with identified areas for targeted I&I removal to offset the requirement to upgrade and expand more expensive infrastructure all the way to the WWTPs. It is crucial to achieve the I&I reductions to use free capacity for growth, to protect the environment, and mitigate potential basement flooding.

The wet weather management program currently identifies, in the 2021 MSPU, overall preliminary priority, staging of location and target amount of I&I reduction across all systems. This program provides for a proactive and targeted approach to addressing wet weather impacts.

The Region has been aiding Local Area Municipalities by funding the CSO Control Program as a part of the overall Wet Weather Management Strategy to support various I&I related projects and programs on the municipal side. This program has been reducing the impacts of I&I and has been a benefit to both, the Region, and the Local Area Municipalities. Therefore, it is important to continue working collaboratively to facilitate ongoing development throughout the region and provide the requisite servicing and capacity allocation in a responsible way to service the communities.

The available funding for the 2023 CSO Control Program has been fully utilized and subscribed with applications from the Municipal partners. A separate report on the 2024 CSO Control Program is anticipated to be presented to the Planning and Economic Development Committee as well.

Staff is working with the Development Industry including Public Works Officials, Building Officials, Developers, Consultants and Contractors to raise awareness on the wet weather management issues and potential upcoming changes to address this. The Region is also represented at the Expert Stakeholder Committee (ESC) for the Guideline to Undertaking Flow Monitoring of New Construction and will work with all

interested parties to move forward with a consistent approach for the review the flow monitoring of new subdivisions.

South Niagara Servicing Solution and South Niagara Wastewater Treatment Plant

Although this report identifies there is short term capacity available at the existing Niagara WWTP, it only considers the treatment capacity at the plant for the next 10 years. It does not consider the constraints in the existing sanitary collection system, wet weather flow issues, consideration for development demands and longer-term growth, or the required infrastructure improvements to get the flows to the plant.

As part of Niagara 2051, there was an update to the Water and Wastewater MSPU. The MSPU used updated population and employment growth forecasts based on a 2051 planning horizon. Based on the Niagara 2051 planning review, the implementation of the South Niagara Servicing Solution and timing of the new South Niagara Wastewater Treatment Plant (SNWWTP) continues to be supported and necessary to accommodate growth.

In Niagara Falls, there is not enough capacity in the existing sewer system nor at the existing treatment plant to meet the increasing system demands resulting from growth, as well as the increased wet weather flows due to aging infrastructure and climate change. The South Niagara Servicing Solution is essential to unlocking the development potential in the broader South Niagara area and the capital program to support the servicing solution will provide greater flexibility for developments in St. Catharines, Niagara Falls, Thorold, and Niagara-on-the-Lake. The total growth is estimated to be over 90,000 people and jobs to the year 2051 and the South Niagara Servicing Solution also considers potential long-term growth beyond 2051. The ability to redirect existing flows to the south, provide additional capacity in the new trunk sewer, provide flexibility for storage in the trunk sewer, and ultimately treat the wastewater flows at the new SNWWTP all contribute to a significant wet weather management program. In addition, the location of the new SNWWTP will provide flexibility for the potential for additional wet weather management through potential connections of other service areas such as Chippawa, Thorold, St. Catharines, Niagara Falls and Niagara-on-the-Lake. Through the analysis undertaken as part of the Class EA process, it is estimated that the new South Niagara Servicing Solution will result in a reduction of over 60% of wet weather volume overflow to the environment.

This servicing solution is integral to the overall growth servicing strategy that supports the anticipated residential and employment growth in the Niagara Falls, Niagara-on-the-

Lake, Thorold, and St. Catharines service areas. This total growth is estimated to be over 90,000 people and jobs in the area out to the year 2051. The South Niagara Servicing Solution also considers potential long-term growth beyond 2051.

Queenston Wastewater Treatment Plant

As part of the South Niagara Servicing solution, a variety of opportunities were explored to redirect flows from Queenston WWTP to Niagara Falls and decommission the plant. However, during the recently finished Queenston – St. David’s Wastewater Servicing Strategy EA, preferred and supported option is keeping the plant to enhance the wastewater system operational flexibility.

Alternatives Reviewed

No alternatives reviewed.

Relationship to Council Strategic Priorities

The report aligns with responding to our current community needs and planning for future growth, which is Council’s Priority of Equitable Region.

Simultaneously, the report helps ensuring current and future infrastructure is resilient emphasizing Council’s Priority for a Green and Resilient Region.

The report also provides MECP and local municipal partners operational summary and reserve capacity projections for Region’s Water and Wastewater Treatment facilities.

Other Pertinent Reports

- PW 39-2021, September 9, 2021, South Niagara Falls Wastewater Treatment Plant – Budget and Property
- PDS 13-2023, May 10, 2023, 2022 Reserve Water and Wastewater Treatment Capacities
- PDS 17-2022, June 15, 2022, Official Plan Recommendations Report for Adoption

Prepared by:

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Manager W-WW Infrastructure
Growth Strategy and Economic
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Recommended by:

Michelle Sergi, MCIP, RPP
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Submitted by:

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Chief Administrative Officer

This report was prepared in consultation with Phill Lambert, Acting Director, W-WW Services, Susan Dunsmore, Acting Director, Infrastructure Planning and Development Engineering, John Brunet, AD Water Operations and Maintenance and Jason Oatley, Manager WW Quality & Compliance.

Appendices

Appendix 1	Annual Average Daily Flow 2019 to 2023 WTP
Appendix 2	Annual Average Daily Flow 2019 to 2023 WWTP
Appendix 3	Water Reserve Capacity Calculations for 2023
Appendix 4	Wastewater Reserve Capacity Calculations for 2023

Appendix 1: WTP Annual Average Daily Flow 2019 - 2023

Water Treatment Plant	Rated Capacity (m ³ /d)	Average Daily Flow (m ³ /d)					5 Year Average 2019 / 23	3 Year Average 2021 / 23
		2019	2020	2021	2022	2023		
Decew Falls WTP	227,300	53,303	53,390	50,824	52,970	52,830	52,663	52,208
Grimsby WTP	44,000	14,029	15,726	14,872	14,809	14,610	14,809	14,764
Niagara Falls WTP	145,584	43,400	40,145	40,125	42,164	43,050	41,777	41,780
Port Colborne WTP	36,000	7,282	6,870	6,387	6,953	8,310	7,160	7,217
Rosehill WTP	50,026	11,188	11,024	11,710	13,025	12,710	11,931	12,482
Welland WTP	65,000	22,579	24,670	24,675	24,162	24,100	24,037	24,312

Appendix 2: WWTP Annual Average Daily Flow 2019 - 2023

Wastewater Treatment Plant	Rated Capacity (m³/d)	Average Daily Flow (m³/d)					5 Year Average 2019 / 23	3 Year Average 2021 / 23
		2019	2020	2021	2022	2023		
Anger Avenue WWTP	24,500	14,624	15,146	13,580	13,171	12,992	13,903	13,248
Baker Road WWTP	31,280	19,975	20,910	17,952	17,081	23,700	19,923	19,578
Crystal Beach WWTP	9,100	5,874	6,276	5,688	5,256	5,423	5,703	5,456
Niagara Falls WWTP	68,300	41,489	41,360	35,242	35,197	42,902	39,238	37,780
NOTL WWTP	8,000	4,687	5,237	5,142	5,602	6,823	5,498	5,856
Port Dalhousie WWTP	61,350	35,095	36,681	34,113	31,793	29,176	33,372	31,694
Port Weller WWTP	56,180	36,881	39,211	33,751	33,176	38,024	36,208	34,983
Queenston WWTP	500	198	213	135	142	225	183	168
Seaway WWTP	19,600	12,580	13,472	11,299	10,200	11,391	11,789	10,964
Stevensville/Douglastown	2,289	1,670	1,729	1,592	1,552	1,479	1,604	1,541
Welland WWTP	54,550	34,643	37,137	33,617	34,288	39,800	35,897	35,902

Appendix 3: WTP Reserve Capacities for 2023

Water Treatment Plant	Permit To Take Water ⁽¹⁾	Rated Treatment Capacity	Theoretical Ave Day Capacity	90% of Ave Day Capacity ⁽²⁾	5-Year Ave Day Flow	Peaking Factor	Total Capacity Used	Reserve Treatment Capacity	Design Flow Rate ⁽³⁾	Reserve Serviceable Population	10-Year Forecast Population	Surplus Population
	MLD							90% MLD	246 Lcd	Equivalents	Res & Emp	Projection
DeCew Falls	227.0	227.3	153.3	138.0	52.7	1.483	34%	85.3	246	346,748	30,223	316,525
Grimsby	44.0	44.0	26.5	23.9	14.8	1.659	56%	9.0	246	36,585	17,037	19,548
Niagara Falls	145.5	145.6	94.0	84.6	41.8	1.548	44%	42.8	246	173,984	28,700	145,284
Port Colborne	45.5	36.0	21.2	19.1	7.2	1.700	34%	11.9	246	48,374	2,032	46,342
Rosehill	78.0	50.0	32.8	29.5	11.9	1.525	36%	17.6	246	71,545	7,151	64,394
Welland	110.0	65.0	44.0	39.6	24.0	1.476	55%	15.6	246	63,415	18,388	45,027

Note 1: Original MOE approved quantity of raw water permitted (Permit To Take Water).

Note 2: Region's 2021 W&WW MSP requires planning process for expansion when plant capacity exceeds 80%, and expansion should be completed when capacity exceeds 90%.

Note 3: Region's 2021 W&WW MSP new design criteria calls for 240 Lcd residential consumption and 270 Lcd employment consumption. This is equivalent to 246 Lcd for both, using the 79% and 21% residential and employment share, respectively.

Appendix 4: WWTP Reserve Capacity for 2023

Wastewater Treatment Plant	MECP Rated Capacity	90% of Plant Capacity ⁽¹⁾	5-Year Average Daily Flow	Total Capacity Used	Reserve Treatment 90%Capacity m³/d	Design Flow Rate ⁽²⁾ 356 Lcd	Reserve Serviceable Population Equivalents	10-Year Forecast Population Res & Emp	Surplus Population 10-Year Projection
	m³/d								
Anger Avenue (Fort Erie)	24,500	22,050	13,903	57%	8,147	356	22,886	4,730	18,156
Baker Road (Grimsby)	31,280	28,152	19,923	64%	8,229	356	23,114	20,442	2,672
Crystal Beach (Fort Erie)	9,100	8,190	5,703	63%	2,487	356	6,986	1,081	5,905
Niagara Falls ⁽³⁾	68,300	61,470	39,238	57%	22,232	356	62,450	22,309	40,141
NOTL	8,000	7,200	5,498	69%	1,702	356	4,780	1,036	3,744
Port Dalhousie (St. Catharines)	61,350	55,215	33,372	54%	21,843	356	61,358	13,784	47,574
Port Weller (St. Catharines)	56,180	50,562	36,208	64%	14,354	356	40,319	9,392	30,927
Queenston (NOTL) ⁽⁴⁾	500	450	183	37%	267	356	751	34	717
Seaway (Port Colborne)	19,600	17,640	11,789	60%	5,851	356	16,437	2,008	14,429
Stevensville/Douglastown	2,289	2,060	1,604	70%	456	356	1,280	994	286
Welland	54,550	49,095	35,897	66%	13,198	356	37,072	18,235	18,837

Note 1: Region's 2021 W&WW MSP requires planning process for expansion when plant capacity exceeds 80%, and expansion should be completed when capacity exceeds 90%.

Note 2: Region's 2021 W&WW MSP new design criteria calls for 255 Lcd residential and 310 Led employment generation rate including 90 Lcd of extraneous flow allowance. An equivalent of 356 Lcd is applied using 80% and 20% for residential and employment growth share, respectively.

Note 3: The Niagara Falls WWTP assessment includes the sewage flows from the St. David's area of Niagara-on-the-Lake.

Note 4: The Queenston WWTP in Niagara-on-the-Lake has a unique capacity commitment of 226 m³/d for the following properties: Niagara Parks Commission (75 m³/d), Niagara Falls Bridge Commission (63 m³/d), Shalamar Campground (38 m³/d) and Ontario Power Generation (50 m³/d). Due to these commitments and limited UAB, limited residential growth is expected within the next 10 years within the tributary area.

Subject: Staff Comments on Proposed Provincial Planning Statement (2024)

Report To: Planning and Economic Development Committee

Report date: Wednesday, May 8, 2024

Recommendations

1. That this Report **BE RECEIVED** for Information; and
2. That Report PDS 18-2024 **BE CIRCULATED** to Local Area Municipalities and the Niagara Peninsula Conversation Authority (NPCA).

Key Facts

- As first communicated to Council through PDS 17-2024 (April 25, 2024) the Province has released a revised draft of the proposed Provincial Planning Statement (PPS, 2024).
- The purpose of this report is to provide an overview of the proposed changes and to outline staff comments that will be submitted to the Province.
- If approved, the proposed PPS (2024) will replace the current Provincial Policy Statement (PPS, 2020) and A Place to Grow: Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (Growth Plan, 2019) to form a new province-wide planning policy instrument.
- In the Spring of 2023, the Province released a previous draft of the proposed PPS (2023) for comment. Staff comments on that 2023 version were communicated to Council through PDS-C 20-2023 (June 7, 2023) with additional comments on the proposed natural heritage policies being communicated through PDS-C 21-2023 (September 13, 2023).
- Following the commenting period on the 2023 draft, the Province has made some changes to reflect concerns raised by the Region and others – such as no longer allowing lot creation in prime agricultural areas. Other regional concerns, such as changes to the definition of “employment areas”, the process for settlement area boundary expansions, and the loss of the Growth Plan Natural Heritage System remain.

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- The Province has requested that feedback on the proposed changes be submitted by May 12, 2024. Staff comments outlined in **Appendix 1** and **Appendix 2** will be submitted to the Province in response to the Environmental Registry of Ontario (ERO) postings.

Financial Considerations

There are no direct financial implications associated with this report.

Analysis

Background

On April 10, 2024, the Province introduced the *Cutting Red Tape to Build More Homes Act, 2024* (Bill 185), which proposes to amend fifteen pieces of legislation and related regulations for the purpose of “streamlining planning approvals, enhancing municipalities’ ability to invest in housing-enabling infrastructure, and increasing housing supply”. A detailed overview of Bill 185 including staff comments were provided directly to council through PDS 17-2024 (April 25, 2024).

In addition to Bill 185, the revised draft Provincial Planning Statement (PPS) was also released on April 10, 2024 with updates to reflect the feedback received on the previous version. If approved, the proposed PPS will replace the current Provincial Policy Statement (PPS, 2020) and A Place to Grow: Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (Growth Plan, 2019) to form a new province-wide planning policy instrument. In many matters, these changes represent a fundamental shift in the approach to planning for Ontario. All decisions that relate to a planning matter will be required to be consistent with this statement.

The Environmental Registry of Ontario (ERO) posting includes some information regarding the Province’s proposed approach to implementation. The Province has indicated it intends to release the final policies for a short period of time before they take effect. Any decision on a planning matter made on or after the effective date would be subject to the new PPS. The only exception would be if a transition regulation was developed. The Province has indicated that “further consultation would be conducted to identify any pertinent matters”.

Previous Draft of Proposed Provincial Policy Statement (2023)

In the Spring of 2023, the Province released a previous draft of the proposed PPS (2023) for comment. Staff comments on the 2023 proposed PPS were communicated to

Council through PDS-C 20-2023 (June 7, 2023). The original release did not include natural heritage policies – which followed several months later. Additional comments on the proposed natural heritage policies being communicated through PDS-C 41-2023 (September 13, 2023).

Overview of Current Draft of Proposed Provincial Policy Statement (2024)

Proposed changes in the PPS (2024) relative to the existing Provincial Policy Statement (PPS, 2020) include, but are not limited to:

- **Growth Management:**
The concept of a delineated built-up area has not been carried forward as a defined term
 - Planning authorities are to use Ministry of Finance projections for employment and growth forecasts, with a policy to permit existing provincial forecasts (i.e. Growth Plan) to be used
 - Removal of mandatory intensification and density targets
 - Introduction and identification of “large and fast-growing municipalities” (Niagara Falls and St. Catharines in Niagara)
 - New policy to promote the phasing of development as appropriate
- **Settlement Area Boundary Expansions**
 - Removal of the requirement to demonstrate need for a settlement area boundary expansion
 - No longer the requirement of municipal comprehensive reviews to be undertaken
- **Employment:**
 - Change to the definition of employment area
 - Permission for mixed uses, including residential, in employment lands outside of employment areas
 - The conversion of employment lands is permitted provided certain tests are met
- **Housing**
 - Expansion of the definition of housing options
- **Agriculture**
 - Removal of the requirement to use the provincially-mapped agricultural system
 - Permitting up to two additional residential units subordinate to the principal dwelling associated with an agricultural operation
- **Natural Heritage**
 - In comparison to the existing Provincial Policy Statement (2020), no changes to the natural heritage policies

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- Growth Plan Natural Heritage System policies and mapping are proposed to be eliminated
 - Watershed Planning
 - Loss of the full suite of watershed and subwatershed planning policies that were contained in the existing PPS and Growth Plan
 - Requirement for large and fast growing municipalities to undertake watershed planning with an encouragement for other municipalities to do so.

Staff Comments on the proposed PPS (2024)

Although less extensive than the concerns identified related to the 2023 draft, staff concerns with the proposed PPS (2024) include:

- **Challenges for an integrated and coordinated approach to growth management in Niagara**
 - Concern that the proposed changes to the PPS in conjunction with the loss of the Growth Plan policies related to growth management will lead to inconsistent approaches to forecasting population and employment growth in Niagara, and consequently challenges for the process of planning and budgeting of regional infrastructure and public services and facilities.
- **Changes to the definition of “employment areas” and other changes impacting employment lands**
 - Concern that the proposed changes that define employment areas as limited to traditional manufacturing uses will hinder the Region’s ability to meet employment forecasts to 2051. For example, the revised definition of “employment areas” has the potential to remove 2,175 hectares of employment area lands (approximately 46% of total employment area lands in Niagara) based on preliminary analysis.
- **The ad-hoc nature of settlement area expansion and a lack of minimum intensification targets**
 - Concern that the policies that would allow for settlement area expansions without the requirement to demonstrate need and without a municipal comprehensive review will result in the loss of integrated and coordinated growth planning.
 - Not having a minimum intensification target or a “built-up area” at the provincial level, combined with the ability to expand settlement area boundaries at any time, may discourage intensification and encourage sprawl which will have financial impacts if municipalities will be required to extend and maintain servicing to greenfield areas, with existing infrastructure not being optimized.

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- The above concerns as exacerbated by a proposed change to the Planning Act through Bill 185 which would allow for appeals to the OLT related to settlement area boundary expansions.
 - **Loss of the Growth Plan Natural Heritage System**
 - When the updated Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe was released in 2017 and subsequently revised in 2019, it included policies, definitions, and mapping for a “Natural Heritage System for the Growth Plan”. Municipalities were required to incorporate and implement the policies and mapping into their official plans. The Natural Heritage System for the Growth Plan was included as part of the integrated NES that was approved by the Province as part of the Niagara Official Plan in November 2022.
 - As the proposed PPS (2024) will integrate the PPS (2020) and Growth Plan (2019), there will no longer be a stand alone Growth Plan document. The Natural Heritage System for the Growth Plan is not proposed to be included as part of the proposed PPS (2024), and would therefore no longer be Provincial policy. Staff are concerned with the loss of environmental protections in the Region, and the implications associated with the Growth Plan Natural Heritage System having been fully integrated into the Regional Natural Environment System, but no longer Provincial Policy.
 - Further, should the Province move forward with the elimination of the Growth Plan NHS, it is recommended that direction be provided on transition/implementation for municipalities which had implemented the system through recent municipal comprehensive reviews or Official Plan updates.
 - **Removal of the requirement to use the Provincially-mapped agricultural system**
 - When 2017 Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe was released, it included policies, and mapping delineating an agricultural system for the Greater Golden Horseshoe. This mapping was used to develop the Region’s agricultural land base mapping and is an important tool for the identification and protection of agricultural land.
 - As the agricultural system mapping and policies are not being carried forward to the proposed PPS (2024), staff are unsure how agricultural lands, infrastructure and farm operations outside of the Greenbelt Plan area will be protected.

Alternatives Reviewed

No alternatives have been reviewed as this report summarizes and presents staff comments on the proposed Provincial Planning Statement (PPS, 2024) for information.

Relationship to Council Strategic Priorities

This report provides information on proposed changes to provincial policy related to land use planning. This relates to Council's Strategic Priority of Effective Region, Equitable Region, and Prosperous Region through ensuring high quality, efficient, and coordinated core services.

Other Pertinent Reports

- CWCD 2023-77 - Provincial Consultation on Bill 97 and a new Provincial Policy Instrument (April 21, 2023)
- PDS-C 20-2023 - Staff Comments on the Proposed Provincial Planning Statement (June 7, 2023)
- PDS 22-2023 – Proposed Provincial Planning Statement – Natural Heritage Policies (July 12, 2023)
- PDS-C 41-2023 – Staff Comments on Proposed Provincial Planning Statement – Natural Heritage (September 13, 2023)
- PDS 17-2024 – Bill 185 (Cutting Red Tape to Build Housing Faster Act, 2024) (April 25, 2024)

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Appendices

Appendix 1	Table 1: Staff Response to ERO 019-8462 Discussion Questions
Appendix 2	Table 2: Niagara Region Staff Detailed Analysis and Comment on the Proposed 2024 Provincial Planning Statement (PPS)

Table 1: Niagara Region Staff Responses to ERO 019-8462 Questions

ERO Questions	Niagara Region Staff Response
1. What are your overall thoughts on the updated proposed Provincial Planning Statement?	Niagara Region staff note that there are many improvements and efficiencies in the proposed PPS (2024), however, staff are concerned with the loss of some Growth Plan policies (i.e. natural heritage, agriculture, growth management, etc.) which are not being replaced in the proposed PPS (2024). Further, staff are concerned about the impact of changes to employment area policies and the unintended consequences of the 'ad-hoc' nature of settlement area expansion and the responsible delivery of services and infrastructure.
2. What are your thoughts on the ability of updated proposed policies to generate appropriate housing supply, such as: intensification policies, including the redevelopment of underutilized, low density shopping malls and plazas; major transit station area policies; housing options, rural housing and	Although it is possible that some of the updated policies will have the intended effect of increasing housing supply it is difficult to project. Overall the last several years the rate of change in Provincial planning policy and legislation has been significant. This, along with the reversal of many changes has created an atmosphere of uncertainty, both with municipalities and the development community. It is recommended that the Province move towards an environment of stability to allow policies to be implemented, their effectiveness be determined and focus municipal efforts on approving housing developments.

ERO Questions	Niagara Region Staff Response
affordable housing policies; and student housing policies?	
3. What are your thoughts on the ability of the updated proposed policies to make land available for development, such as: forecasting, land supply, and planning horizon policies; settlement area boundary expansions policies; and employment area planning policies?	<p>Niagara Region staff have concerns that requiring each individual local municipality to do their own forecasting of population and employment growth may result in inconsistent forecasts and/or methodologies which impact the Region's ability to plan for investments in infrastructure and the coordination of regional public services between local municipalities. The ad-hoc nature of settlement area expansion coupled with proposed Planning Act changes via Bill 185 will lead to inefficient use of existing services area and expansion that may not be fiscally responsible.</p> <p>It is the recommendation of Niagara Region staff that the PPS include policies to required growth targets and coordination of development with the delivery of infrastructure across municipalities.</p>
4. What are your thoughts on updated proposed policies to provide infrastructure to support development?	<p>Niagara Region staff are supportive of the proposed policies which would allow the allocation and reallocation of unused capacity in the water and wastewater system and which would promote the development of phasing policies as appropriate. These policies will encourage the orderly development of urban areas and support the efficient use of existing and planning infrastructure and public services.</p>

ERO Questions	Niagara Region Staff Response
	PPS should also reference municipal infrastructure master plans and require that development aligned with the planned services.
5. What are your thoughts on updated proposed policies regarding the conservation and management of resources, such as requirements to use an agricultural systems approach?	Niagara Region staff are generally not supportive of the proposed policies related to the conservation and management of resources. An agricultural system approach based on provincial-mapping has historically been in place in the Growth Plan GGH municipalities. Similarly with the elimination of the Growth Plan, the Growth Plan Natural Heritage System is being eliminated as provincial land use policy. Overall the proposed PPS (2024) represent a lesser protection of the natural environment and resources as compared to the existing policy framework of the PPS (2020) and Growth Plan (2019).
6. What are your thoughts on any implementation challenges with the updated proposed Provincial Planning Statement? What are your thoughts on the proposed revocations in O.Reg. 311/06 (Transitional Matters - Growth Plans) and O.Reg. 416/05 (Growth Plan Areas)?	It needs to be recognized that after the effective date, and until municipal official plans (and zoning by-laws) can be updated, there will be a range of inconsistent and conflicting policies for land-use planning in Ontario. This type of policy environment creates confusion and uncertainty for both land developers and municipal planning staff, it serves to delay development and construction rather than to expedite it. This is compounded by the removal of statutory planning authority from Regional municipalities, which further creates uncertainty in the Planning process at a time when stability and certainty is required.

Table 2: Niagara Region Staff Detailed Analysis and Comment on the Proposed 2024 Provincial Planning Statement (PPS)

Topic Area	Proposed Change / Integration	Niagara Region Staff Analysis/Response
Aggregates	The proposed PPS (2024) has not made significant changes to the aggregate resources section. References to rehabilitation in speciality crop areas have been removed – however rehabilitation in these areas would be directed by the Greenbelt Plan and Niagara Escarpment Plan where applicable. [Proposed policy 4.5]	<p>Niagara Region staff note that the Growth Plan (2019) included a number of detailed and prescriptive policies related to aggregates resources – most of which were in regards to the interaction between aggregates and the Growth Plan Natural Heritage System as well as rehabilitation.</p> <p>It is the recommendation of Niagara Region staff that consideration be given to carrying forward the Growth Plan policies which required rehabilitation to consider natural features and functions in the proposed PPS (2024)</p>
Agricultural Area Housing	In addition to a principal dwelling associated with an agricultural operation in prime agricultural areas, the proposed PPS (2024) permits up to two additional residential units as subordinate to the principal dwelling. [Proposed policy 4.3.2.5]	The Niagara Region Official Plan has a provincially-approved 0.4 ha size requirement for all lot creation in rural areas. This lot size reflects the area necessary to support on-site private water supply and long-term operation of a private sewage disposal system.

Topic Area	Proposed Change / Integration	Niagara Region Staff Analysis/Response
		<p>Niagara Region staff are concerned the addition of 2 residential units on each parcel would require upgraded private servicing, which may not be possible on lots that were created for only a single residential unit.</p> <p>In addition, Niagara Region staff are concerned that proposed policy 4.3.2.5 refers broadly to “sewage and water services” being provided, whose definition includes “municipal sewage services and municipal water services”; especially coupled with the removal of policy wording that states the extension of partial services into rural areas is only permitted to address failed individual on-site sewage and individual on-site water services for existing development from proposed Section 3.6.</p> <p>It is recommended that a set of parameters or guidelines be developed to help planning authorities determine whether these uses “demonstrate that the use are compatible with, and would not hinder, surrounding agricultural operations” (Proposed Policy 4.3.2.5 b).</p>

Topic Area	Proposed Change / Integration	Niagara Region Staff Analysis/Response
Agriculture	The proposed PPS (2024) eliminates the requirement to use the provincially-mapped Agricultural System. Municipalities would now lead the designation of prime agricultural areas, including specialty crop areas. Using the provincial mapping remains an option. [Proposed policy 4.3.1]	<p>Niagara Region staff note that an agricultural system approach based on provincial-mapping has historically been employed in Niagara's regional official plan to designate lands based on priority for protection. After the release of the proposed agricultural system mapping by the Province (2018), Niagara Region through the Municipal Comprehensive Review (MCR) process, undertook extensive consultation to identify mapping refinement opportunities in the proposed land-base.</p> <p>Niagara Region staff believe the mapping approved through the Niagara Official Plan (2022) is accurate and best represents a continuous land base and systems approach. Staff support the continued use of the approved agriculture land-base mapping in Niagara.</p>
Agriculture	The proposed PPS (2024) expands the definition of "on-farm diversified uses" to include all "land-extensive energy facilities", such as ground-mounted solar or battery storage, whereas previously only ground-mounted solar facilities	OMAFRA's <i>Guidelines on Permitted Uses in Ontario's Prime Agricultural Areas</i> states that "on-farm diversified uses should be related to agriculture, supportive of agriculture or able to co-exist with agriculture without conflict". Provided these uses are still subject to other criteria and

Topic Area	Proposed Change / Integration	Niagara Region Staff Analysis/Response
	were identified. [Proposed definition of “on-farm diversified use”]	<p>guidance for on-farm diversified uses (i.e. limited in area, secondary to the principal use, etc.), the expanded definition may align with Provincial and Regional policies that support the transition to net-zero communities.</p> <p>However, Niagara Region staff are concerned that given these uses are referred to as “land-extensive” it may mean they are meant to apply to more significant portions of a farm parcel.</p> <p>It is the recommendation of Niagara Region staff that the province consider whether “land-extensive” energy facilities are an appropriate land use in prime agricultural areas.</p>
Built Boundary	The proposed PPS (2024) has not carried forward the concept of delineated built-up areas as a defined term previously contained in the Growth Plan.	<p>The removal of the “built-up area” as a defined term and associated intensification rates may make it more difficult for municipalities to use tools and practices available to them to “support general intensification and redevelopment to support the achievement of complete communities” as outlined in Section 2.3.3.</p> <p>Similarly, the removal of a definition and policy set for “designated greenfield areas”, including associated density targets, will make it difficult for</p>

Topic Area	Proposed Change / Integration	Niagara Region Staff Analysis/Response
		<p>municipalities to push for increased densities and housing options in the remaining undeveloped, but serviced, areas of the municipality.</p> <p>Additionally, if settlement area boundaries can expand at any time without the requirement for a land needs assessment to demonstrate the need for additional urban land, this will discourage intensification and encourage urban sprawl. This will create implications for providing fiscally responsible infrastructure.</p> <p>Niagara Region staff recommend that “built-up area” [as referenced in Policy 2.3.1.4] be a defined term, and that municipalities be required to establish and implemented targets for intensification and redevelopment (as opposed to being encouraged to do so).</p>
Cultural Heritage and Archaeology	A number of definitions referenced in the Cultural Heritage and Archaeology section of the proposed PPS (2024) have been revised. [Proposed definition of “built heritage resource”, “conserved”, “cultural heritage landscape”, “heritage attributes”, “protected heritage property” and “site alteration”]	Many of the revisions are minor or provide additional clarification/protection for cultural heritage and archaeological resources. Niagara Region staff does not have concerns with the revisions to these definitions.

Topic Area	Proposed Change / Integration	Niagara Region Staff Analysis/Response
Cultural Heritage and Archaeology	The proposed PPS (2024) has also changed to policy term from “significant built heritage resource and significant cultural heritage landscape” to “protected heritage property” [Proposed policy 4.6.1]	Niagara Region staff are supportive of the proposed change in terminology and the new definition, which now includes archaeological resources.
Cultural Heritage and Archaeology	The proposed PPS (2024) includes revised policy language pertaining to engagement with indigenous communities, requiring that engagement occur early with an increased emphasis on consideration of their interests. [Proposed policy 4.6.5]	Niagara Region staff supports early engagement with indigenous communities. The emphasis on early engagement and specification in terms of the interests of indigenous communities included in the proposed PPS will be helpful from an implementation perspective.
Employment Areas	The proposed PPS (2024) changes the definition of “employment areas”. The focus of the definition is now on what would be considered traditional employment uses such as heavy industry, manufacturing, and large scale warehousing. [Proposed definition of “employment areas”]	<p>Niagara Region staff do not support the proposed change in definition as it will potentially hinder Niagara’s municipalities’ ability to achieve the employment forecasts set out to 2051, given that it will be difficult to protect the amount of land required to accommodate the number of jobs projected.</p> <p>The recently approved Niagara Official Plan includes different categories of employment areas. While the Region’s “Core Employment Area” designation may meet the revised definition,</p>

Topic Area	Proposed Change / Integration	Niagara Region Staff Analysis/Response
		<p>“Dynamic Employment Area” and “Knowledge and Innovation Employment Areas” would not meet the revised definition. As such, the revised definition has the potential to remove approximately 2,175 hectares of employment area lands (45% of total employment area lands based on preliminary analysis), putting at risk the existing and jobs planned for these lands.</p> <p>It is the recommendation of Niagara Region staff that the definition of “employment areas” not be changed as it will limit the ability of municipalities to protect employment areas in the long-term.</p>
Employment Areas	The proposed PPS (2024) includes a policy that would allow for a range of mixed land uses, including residential, in employment lands outside of employment areas [Proposed policy 2.8.1.3]	<p>Niagara Region staff do not support this proposed policy.</p> <p>The Growth Plan and the Niagara Official Plan (4.2.5.1) both contain provisions to ensure that any proposed development of non-employment uses on employment land, outside of employment areas, shall retain space for a similar number of jobs on site.</p> <p>Niagara Region staff recommend that this policy not be included, and that the proposed PPS</p>

Topic Area	Proposed Change / Integration	Niagara Region Staff Analysis/Response
		include greater protection for long-term employment uses.
Employment Land Conversions	<p>The proposed PPS (2024) allows planning authorities to remove lands from employment areas outside of a municipal comprehensive review provided certain tests are met. [Proposed policy 2.8.2.5]</p> <p>Currently, the PPS 2020 and Growth Plan only allow employment area conversions through a municipal comprehensive review. However, both documents also contain a notwithstanding provision that allows conversions prior to a municipal comprehensive review if certain criteria are met.</p> <p>However, the PPS (2024) proposes to revise certain conditions under which a conversion may be permitted. The PPS (2024) states that the municipality must have sufficient employment lands to accommodate projected employment growth to the horizon of the approved official plan, whereas the Growth Plan currently requires the municipality to accommodate projected employment growth to the horizon of the Growth Plan. The PPS (2024)</p>	<p>Niagara Region staff do not support this proposed policy change.</p> <p>Without the criteria to maintain sufficient employment lands to accommodate forecasted employment growth over time, it will be difficult to ensure that the employment forecasts set out can be achieved.</p> <p>Further, urban boundary expansions for employment areas occurred in the Region solely to accommodate forecasted employment growth. If these lands are converted and do not accommodate employment uses, further expansions will have to take place to provide sufficient space to accommodate forecasted employment.</p> <p>Considering employment area conversion requests comprehensively allows municipalities to examine all requests as part of one review to select the most appropriate areas for conversion. It also allows municipalities the ability to identify land needs in tandem with reviewing employment</p>

Topic Area	Proposed Change / Integration	Niagara Region Staff Analysis/Response
	also proposes to remove the requirement in the Growth Plan that the employment conversion does not impact the minimum intensification and density targets in the Growth Plan.	area requests to understand how potential employment area conversions will impact the need for settlement area expansions. Niagara Region staff recommend that the proposed PPS includes a policy framework for employment land conversions to be considered comprehensively and the Province instead carry forward Growth Plan policy 2.2.5.9 c) which provides long-term protection for employment uses.
Excess Soils	The proposed PPS (2024) removes policy 3.2.3 which directs planning authorities to support, where feasible excess soil management. The Growth Plan stated that municipal planning policies and relevant development proposals will incorporate best practices for soil management.	While municipalities can include policies addressing excess soil management, Niagara Region staff are concerned that the requirement for development proposals to incorporate best practices for excess soil management has been removed from provincial direction.
Growth Management	The proposed PPS (2024) - policy 2.1.5 references “where planning is conducted by an upper-tier municipality the land and unit supply maintained by the lower-tier shall be based on and reflect the allocation of population and units by the upper-tier” [Proposed policy 2.1 & policy 2.1.3.]	Inconsistent forecasts and/or methodologies to achieve such forecasts will impact the Region's ability to plan for investments in infrastructure and the coordination of regional public services between local municipalities.

Topic Area	Proposed Change / Integration	Niagara Region Staff Analysis/Response
		It is the recommendation of Niagara Region staff that all upper-tier municipalities still retain responsibility for growth management functions to ensure a coordinated approach across regional market areas.
Growth Management	<p>The proposed PPS (2024) includes a policy to direct planning authorities to base employment and growth forecasts on the Ministry of Finance 25-year projections and allows for modifications as appropriate. [Proposed policy 2.1.1]</p> <p>Proposed section 2.1.2 allows municipalities to continue to forecast growth using population and employment forecasts previously issued by the province.</p>	<p>As an upper-tier municipality, the Niagara Region is responsible for planning, coordinating, and monitoring population and employment growth across the region.</p> <p>The Niagara Official Plan, 2022 set a 2051 population forecast of 694,000 people and 272,000 jobs. Through the Niagara Official Plan program, the Region was effective in pulling together various, and often inconsistent, data sources from lower-tier municipalities for the purpose of growth monitoring, forecasting and planning. These datasets continue to be collected by the Region and are critical to the planning and budgeting of capital infrastructure and community services.</p> <p>Region staff support replacing multiple/conflicting forecasts and projections with one projection. Niagara Region staff note Ministry of Finance</p>

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		<p>projections are, like Growth Plan forecasts, provided at the Niagara Region level. With 12 lower-tier municipalities within Niagara staff note this policy change does not contemplate how projections should be allocated between municipalities. Ministry of Finance projections are, furthermore, updated annually and can differ significantly from year-to-year complicating efforts in allocating projections between municipalities. It is the recommendation of Niagara Region staff that additional guidance regarding the distribution and timing of Ministry of Finance projections to lower-tier municipalities.</p> <p>Finally, Ministry of Finance uses the term 'projections' while other provincial data is referred to as 'forecasts'. The draft PPS uses the term interchangeably. While it is understood that there is a difference between terms, it is recommended the Province clarify policy intent.</p>
Growth Management	The proposed PPS (2024) requires municipalities, when updating official plans, to have enough land designated for at least 20 years, but not more than 30 years, (a change from 25 years in the 2020 PPS) with planning expressly allowed to extend	Niagara Region staff have no concern with the proposed change in wording, however, with the repeal of the Growth Plan there will no longer be a consistent approach to completing land needs assessments, and therefore inconsistent

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	beyond this horizon for infrastructure, employment areas and strategic growth areas. [Proposed policy 2.1.3]	approaches to analysis and decision-making regarding land needs requirements.
Housing	The proposed PPS (2024) expands the definition of “housing options”, to specifically include more examples of “soft intensification” and broader housing arrangements and forms. [Proposed definition of “housing options”] .	Niagara Region staff are not opposed to an expanded definition of “housing options”; however, the proposed definition may be beyond what is appropriate for a land use planning document. It is the recommendation of Niagara Region staff that the Province review the proposed definition to ensure it is appropriate and can be implemented through land use planning tool and policies.
Intensification	The proposed PPS (2024) removes mandatory intensification and density targets for all municipalities. The Growth Plan required municipalities to meet specific intensification and density targets to accommodate forecasted growth. This requirement has not been carried forward, except for the density targets for MTSAs in large and fast-growing municipalities. Instead, municipalities are encouraged to establish density targets “as appropriate, based on local conditions.” [Proposed policy 2.3.1.4] Large and fast-growing	Niagara Region staff are concerned with the proposed change. Not having a minimum intensification target or a “built-up area” at the Provincial level, combined with the ability to expand settlement area boundaries at any time, may discourage intensification and encourage sprawl. If sprawl is prioritized over intensification, it will become costly to extend and maintain servicing to greenfield areas, with existing

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	municipalities are also encouraged, but not required, to plan for a minimum density target of 50 residents and jobs per gross hectare. [Proposed policy 2.3.1.5]	infrastructure not being optimized, and further impact any progress on climate change mitigation. It is the recommendation of Niagara Region staff that the province maintain minimum intensification and density targets with clear direction that municipalities may exceed the targets based on local conditions.
Land Use Compatibility	The proposed PPS (2024) removes requirement for proponents of sensitive land uses to demonstrate need or evaluate alternative locations for sensitive land uses where avoidance of adverse effects is not possible. [Proposed policy 3.5.2]	Niagara staff recommend that the policy requirement for the proponent of sensitive land uses to demonstrate the need for the proposed use, and evaluate alternative locations, minimized and mitigation adverse effects be reinstated.
Large and Fast-Growing Municipalities	The proposed PPS (2024) introduces and identifies “large and fast-growing municipalities” (Niagara Falls and St. Catharines in Niagara) . [Proposed definition of “large and fast-growing municipalities” and Proposed Appendix – Schedule 1] “Large and fast-growing municipalities” are encouraged to plan for a minimum density target of 50 residents and jobs per hectare in designated growth areas. [Proposed policy 2.3.1.5]	Niagara Region staff support the identification and specific policies for “large and fast-growing municipalities”. Niagara Region staff would however recommend that in Policy 2.3.1.5. “large and fast-growing municipalities” be <u>required</u> to plan for a minimum density of 50 residents and jobs per hectare, as opposed to only being encouraged to do so.

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Major Transit Station Areas	<p>The proposed PPS (2024) carries forward the concept of major transit station areas from the Growth Plan, with the definition and minimum density targets being generally the same.</p> <p>[Proposed definition of “major transit station area”]</p>	<p>Niagara Region staff support moving forward with the concept of major transit station areas (MTSA).</p> <p>It is noted that proposed policy 2.4.2.2 would result in a higher density target for the Niagara Falls and St. Catharines MTSA compared to what is been identified in the recently approved Niagara Official Plan, 2022 (i.e. an increase from 125 to 150 residents and jobs combined per hectare).</p>
Natural Heritage	<p>In comparison to the existing Provincial Policy Statement (2020), it appears that there are no changes to the natural heritage policies. Based on Niagara Region staff’s review several changes have been made to the associated natural heritage definitions. Firstly, the definition of “significant” as it applies to wetlands has been updated to reflect the revised process for identifying provincially significant wetlands which was introduced by the Province in late 2022. Secondly, “habitat of endangered species and threatened species” has been removed from the definition of “natural heritage features and areas”.</p>	<p>Niagara Region staff are not concerned with this change given that proposed policy 4.1.7 continues to prohibit development and site alteration in the habitat of endangered species and threatened species, except in accordance with provincial and federal requirements, and these habitats would continue to be protected through the Endangered Species Act.</p>

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Natural Heritage	<p>When the updated Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe was released in 2017 and subsequently revised in 2019, it included policies, definitions, and mapping for a “Natural Heritage System for the Growth Plan” (Growth Plan NHS). Municipalities were required to incorporate and implement the policies and mapping into their official plans. The Growth Plan NHS was included as part of the integrated natural environment system (NES) of the Niagara Official Plan, approved by the Province in November 2022.</p> <p>As the proposed PPS (2024) will integrate the PPS (2020) and Growth Plan (2019), it is understood that there will no longer be a stand alone Growth Plan document, and is therefore understood the Growth Plan NHS would no longer be Provincial land-use policy.</p>	<p>Niagara Region staff are concerned with timing of elimination of the Growth Plan NHS. The process to develop a new Regional Official Plan was a significant multi-year work program that required a major investment by the community and Region. The natural environment work program – including conformity with the Growth Plan, and implementation of the Growth Plan NHS – was a significant aspect of the work program for the new Official Plan.</p> <p>Further, when Niagara Region staff implemented the Growth Plan NHS it was done so as part of an integrated natural environment system (NES), which also included the natural heritage system, water resource system, and greenbelt natural heritage system. The policies, linkages, and connections included as part of the Growth Plan NHS were relied upon to satisfy the PPS for an overall municipal natural heritage system.</p> <p>It is the recommendation of Niagara Region staff that the mapping and policies of the Growth Plan NHS continue to be provincial land-use policy and be implemented through Municipal official plans.</p>

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Phasing of Development	The proposed PPS (2024) introduces a new policy which would promote the development of phasing policies as appropriate. [Proposed policy 2.3.1.6]	Niagara Region staff are supportive of the proposed policy as it will encourage the orderly development of urban areas and support the efficient use of existing and planning infrastructure and public services.
Post Secondary Institutions	The proposed PPS (2024) introduces a new policy which would require planning authorities to collaborate with publicly-assisted post-secondary institutions regarding the planning for student housing [Proposed policy 6.2.5]	Niagara Region staff support the proposed policy which will help to ensure that there is a range of housing options near existing and planned post-secondary institutions in the Region.
Provincially significant employment zones	The proposed PPS (2024) has not carried forward Provincially Significant Employment Zones, which were introduced to the Growth Plan in 2019. Lands designated as PSEZ are protected from conversion to non-employment uses, except where demonstrated to be appropriate through a full municipal comprehensive review. The implementation document suggests alternative approaches to protect these lands, possibly through the use of minister's zoning orders.	Niagara Region staff have no comments as there are no PSEZs in Niagara Region.
Schools	The proposed PPS (2024) acknowledges and encourages the use of non-traditional school	Niagara Region staff support the proposed policy.

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	locations where appropriate for the community. [Proposed policy 3.1.5]	
Settlement Area Expansion	The proposed PPS (2024) would allow for the creation of new settlement areas. Previously this was not permitted. [Proposed policy 2.3.2.2]	<p>Niagara Region staff do not oppose this proposed change in principle.</p> <p>Similar to the above response related to settlement areas, it is recommended that the proposed PPS include a requirement to demonstrate need as well as other policy tests noted in proposed section 2.3.2.1 to ensure that Ontario communities are growing in a sustainable, efficient, and cost-effective way. The availability of capacity in servicing infrastructure at a point in time should not presume that an urban area expansion or creation is feasible or appropriate.</p>
Settlement Area Expansions	The proposed PPS (2024) removes the requirement to demonstrate “need” for a settlement area expansion. [Proposed policy 2.3.2.1]	<p>Niagara Region staff do not support the proposed change.</p> <p>The requirement to demonstrate need for an urban boundary expansion is a fundamental consideration in land use planning. The requirement to demonstrate need is an essential policy tool to encourage infill and intensification and to discourage sprawl. Infill and intensification</p>

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		<p>will also assist with financial sustainability and planning for infrastructure.</p> <p>It is the recommendation of Niagara Region staff that “need” be included as a policy test for settlement area expansions in the proposed PPS (2023).</p>
Settlement Area Expansions	<p>The proposed PPS (2024) has not carried forward the concept of a municipal comprehensive reviews which was a cornerstone policy of the Growth Plan as a way to plan the expansion of settlement areas in an orderly fashion.</p> <p>The implication of this change is that municipalities may consider settlement area expansions at any time. There is no limitation on the ability of landowners to apply for an expansion. [Proposed policy 2.3.2.1]</p>	<p>Decades of poor planning in the mid-20th century demonstrated that there is a need for integrated and coordinated growth planning at the municipal-level.</p> <p>Niagara Region staff understand that there needs to be certain improvement to the planning system in Ontario to implement the provinces goal of 1.5 million new homes by 2031. However, Niagara Region staff do not agree that minimizing coordinated municipal growth management for short term gain, at long-term costs, is the appropriate solution.</p> <p>It is the recommendation of Niagara Region staff that a mechanism similar to MCRs be maintained to ensure that municipalities grow in an integrated and coordinated manner.</p>

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Sewage and Water Services	The proposed PPS (2024) introduces a new policy which would allow the allocation and reallocation of unused capacity in the water and wastewater system to support current and projected housing needs. [Proposed policy 3.6.1 d)]	Niagara Region staff are supportive of the proposed policy as it will provide an additional tool to support municipalities ensuring that approved development is built and allow the reallocation of servicing capacity from approved developments which are not moving forward.
Strategic Growth Areas	The proposed PPS (2024) has carried forward / integrated the concept of strategic growth areas from the Growth Plan. They are to be identified in official plans, and should be the focus of growth. They include major transit station areas. [Proposed section 2.4 and proposed definition of “strategic growth area”]	Niagara Region staff are supportive of strategic growth areas continuing to be part of the planning framework in Ontario.
Watershed Planning	The proposed PPS (2024) has no carried forward the full suite of policies related to watershed and subwatershed planning to inform land use planning as compared to the existing PPS (2020) and Growth Plan (2019). Large and Fast Growing Municipalities are required to undertake watershed planning and other municipalities are encouraged to do so [Proposed policy 2.2.4]	The proposed changes will limit the applicability of watershed planning, and as such will result in negative impacts to the natural environment and the ability to work towards a streamlined system that achieves complete communities. By limiting the municipalities and scope at which watershed planning is undertaken the proposed PPS (2024) does not take into consideration that

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	Municipalities undertaking watershed planning are encouraged to collaborate with applicable conservation authorities [Proposed policy 4.2.5]	watersheds are not limited by municipality boundaries.