

Council Strategic Priorities

March 2024 Highlights

Effective Region

Action	Highlights
Shared Services Strategy	<p>The work on shared services addresses four underlying principles established by the Area CAOs, serving the public good, increasing efficiency and effectiveness, improving customer services, as well as, coordinating the use of resourcing and staffing.</p> <p>In October 2023, Report PDS 30-2023 provided an update on the first phase of activities for shared services, including a building services review, identified opportunities for procurement process, policy governance review and expanding on joint procurement. In partnership with Area CAOs, work has commenced on the Building Services Review and Joint Procurement initiatives by outlining workplans, developed in collaboration with subject matter experts.</p> <p>A comprehensive update on these initiatives, as well as other shared services work will be provided to the Planning and Economic Development Committee in April 2024.</p>
Human Resource Plan	<p>The launch of the People Plan aims to support employee's health and wellbeing while also providing opportunities and resources needed for growth. Activities focused on cultivating top talent and reducing employee turnover have commenced.</p> <p>These include, recognizing staff who advance diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) principles within their work. In 2023, eight staff were given an award in this category. A corporate learning calendar was promoted and made available to staff, to encourage employees and leaders to advance their skills, along with implementing leadership exploration pathways for non-leaders to understand potential career options.</p> <p>In Q3/Q4 2024, an engagement survey will gather feedback from all Niagara Region staff, and the benefits compensation review will be completed.</p>

Green-Resilient Region

Action	Highlights
Corporate Climate Change Action Plan	<p>The development of the Corporate Climate Change Action Plan (CCAP) is underway due to the successful selection of an external consultant and the creation of the internal cross-division corporate action plan sub-committee. The CCAP will provide the Region with short- and long-term strategies to align with meeting the corporate greenhouse gas emission reduction target of net-zero GHG emissions by 2050. This includes actions for energy reduction at corporate facilities, wastewater treatment plants, fleet vehicles, and street lighting, as well as policies and initiatives throughout our operations and service delivery. A draft plan is aimed to be completed in Q2 2024, following that will be a presentation to Council in Q3 2024.</p>
Energy Conservation and Demand Management Plan	<p>The 2019 to 2023 Energy Conservation and Demand Management (CDM) Plan has been completed and work is underway to create a new Plan for 2024-2028. Achievements for the 2019-2023 plan include, establishing the Niagara Region Energy Working Group, quarterly meetings with client groups to find energy reduction opportunities, embedding energy reduction goals and guidelines into Service Level Agreements (SLA's) with Region Departments, and establishing a LEED Silver minimum standard for new facility construction. These efforts helped to reduce energy use in Corporate and Long-Term Care buildings by 8% combined electricity and natural gas reduction on a per square foot basis since 2018.</p> <p>The new Plan will be developed in parallel with the Corporate Climate Change Action Plan (CCAP) and will help to define the goals for corporate energy and greenhouse gas reduction over the next five years. Development of a new CDM Plan includes a comprehensive review of the progress made over the last five years (2019-2023). The goal is to have an updated CDM Plan, with an evaluation of past achievements and establishment of future targets, submitted to Committee in Q2 of 2024. Additionally, from Q2-Q3 2024, staff will be working with consultants to develop a Pathway to Net Zero for 8-12 corporate buildings, as well as, an in-depth feasibility study for deep carbon cutting measures at the Region's Headquarters building. This includes a soil thermal conductivity test to confirm the feasibility of geothermal heating/cooling.</p>

Equitable Region

Action	Highlights
Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Action Plan	<p>The Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Action Plan reaches all Niagara Region staff and community members. It aims to build welcoming and inclusive communities and workplaces, while eliminating barriers. A new employee recognition category celebrated twenty staff who advanced DEI work in the organization or community. A DEI Community of Practice was established in Niagara with over 100 members. The DEI team developed a learning curriculum for staff, Councillors, and volunteers. The development of a DEI handbook is underway. This resource will help staff incorporate DEI into their daily work. It will provide advice in areas such as communication, leadership, and community engagement.</p>
Community Safety and Well-being Plan	<p>The Community Safety and Well-being Plan (CSWB) is working to improve responses to 9-1-1 calls involving mental health/ addictions. In 2023, CSWB collected and analyzed data, reviewed identified pain points with the Action Table, and engaged in jurisdictional scans and a literature review to develop recommendations to improve 9-1-1 responses. On March 5th 2024, the report COM 9-2024 CSWB 911 Action Table: Findings and Recommendations was put forward for consideration and approved at Committee.</p> <p>In collaboration with community agencies, the CSWB team devised a region-wide plan to expand the Situation Table model across all of Niagara region. Table meetings meet regularly to identify community members who are at risk for crime or victimization and provide support before a crisis event occurs. The planning and implementation of the expansion plan includes 40 participating agencies across 12 sectors in a collective effort to use community resources more effectively. In October 2023, the first two Tables were launched, including Table 1: Port-Colborne, Wainfleet, Welland, Pelham, and Table 2: St. Catharines, Thorold. In January 2024, Table 3: Niagara Falls, Niagara-on-the-lake, Fort Erie, and Table 4: Grimsby, Lincoln, West Lincoln.</p> <p>CSWB drafted the Gun and Gang Prevention Strategy through the Building Safer Communities Fund. In September 2023, a call for grant applications was launched to mobilize the strategy and action the areas of focus identified by the community. This resulted in 9 agencies being supported in providing youth crime prevention and intervention programming throughout the Niagara Region.</p>

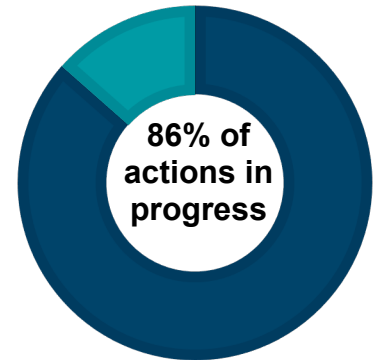
Prosperous Region

Action	Highlights
Economic Development Strategy	<p>The Economic Development Strategy outlines the goals and actions that will guide the Niagara Economic Development team to build a strong and sustainable economy for Niagara residents.</p> <p>A Customer Relationship Management system has been procured and implemented for Niagara Economic Development (NED). By leveraging the Microsoft Dynamics platform staff can document customer interactions, track progress on open files, respond efficiently, prioritize opportunities, and ensure succession. NED in partnership with the Workforce Collective, post-secondary institutions, Niagara Industrial Association, and local employment agencies created the ‘Workforce Coalition.’ This coalition has developed a pilot project to identify and recruit the necessary skills and attract the required labour force in core and emerging sectors.</p>
Government Relations Strategy	<p>Throughout 2023, considerable efforts were made to be proactive in Niagara’s Government Relations approach to ensure Regional priorities were showcased to upper levels of government.</p> <p>In addition to participating in annual advocacy initiatives, the Region continued to establish positive relationships with local partners and other levels of government, launched unique “Growing Better Together” branding for the Region’s core priorities and was proactive in hosting Niagara-specific advocacy events. These efforts helped bolster the Region’s reputation as a municipal leader while demonstrating how Niagara is working to advance areas of mutual interest with the provincial and federal governments.</p> <p>To build off 2023 successes, pre-budget submissions were completed during provincial and federal consultations to reaffirm advocacy priorities in Q1.</p> <p>Preparations for Niagara Week taking place in Q2 are underway and efforts to streamline external grant opportunities across the organization is targeted for late Q3 early Q4.</p>

Council Strategic Priorities Actions Initiated or In Progress

Effective Region

- Service, Effectiveness and Accountability Reviews
- Data Management Plan
- Water and Wastewater Asset Sustainability
- Shared Services Strategy
- Annual Budget and Long-term Forecast Planning
- Human Resource Plan



Green/Resilient Region

- Waste Management Plan
- Energy Conservation and Demand Management Plan
- Corporate Climate Change Action Plan
- Greening Strategy
- Water, Wastewater Master Servicing Plan Implementation
- South Niagara Wastewater Treatment Plant
- Water and Wastewater Biosolids Management Plan

Equitable Region

- Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Action Plan
- Indigenous Relations Action Plan
- Health Equity Strategic Plan
- Community Safety and Well-being Plan
- Poverty Reduction Strategy
- Growth Management and Staging of Infrastructure Strategy
- Vision Zero Road Safety Implementation
- Attainable Housing Strategy
- Support for Affordable and Attainable Development
- Consolidate Housing Master Plan
- Housing and Homelessness Action Plan/Built for Zero Homelessness Plan

Prosperous Region

- Economic Development Strategy
- Core and Emerging Sector Focus
- Argi-business Strategy
- Labour Force Development Partnerships
- Signature Site Strategy
- Niagara Region Transit Service Support and Growth
- Expansion of GO Transit
- Government Relations Strategy