



SUSTAINABLE NIAGARA

Acting today for a better tomorrow



PHASE 3 Action Plan

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

SUSTAINABLE NIAGARA: AN OVERVIEW

Sustainable Niagara is ...

- A Plan that describes the community’s vision for what Niagara could look like in 2060, the goals to work towards, and the actions that will support the goals.
- A guide in making decisions around this common vision of what Niagara can be like for generations to come.
- A framework for measuring progress.

The Sustainable Niagara Process

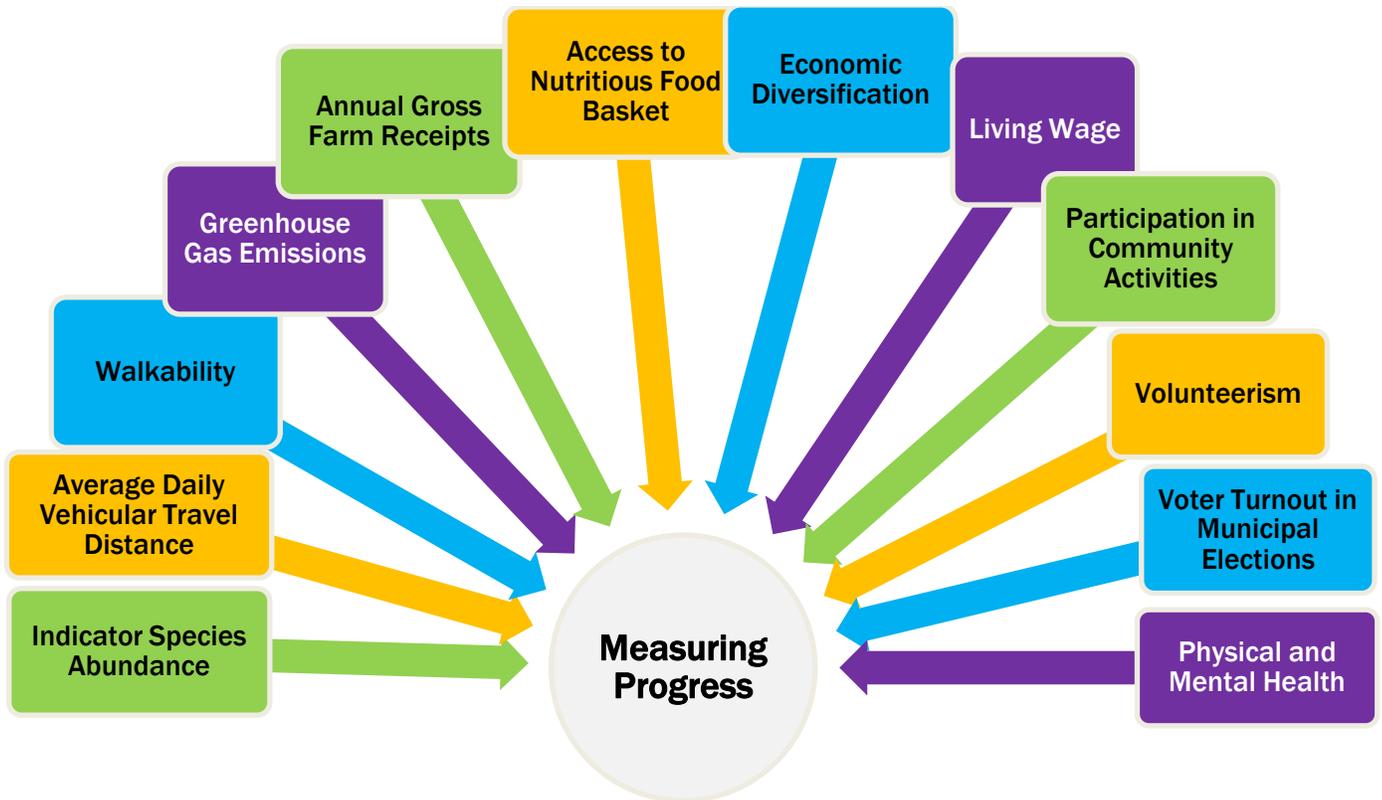
Sustainable Niagara was developed through three phases of work:

Phase 1: Goals for a Sustainable Niagara - Stakeholders (i.e. community organizations, businesses, municipalities, and residents) across the region were engaged in a collaborative discussion on, “What does a sustainable Niagara look like in 2060?” These conversations created the vision for a sustainable Niagara, and the eight long-range goals that will help to reach it. These goals include:



Phase 2: Measuring Our Progress – In-depth research on best practices, existing datasets and indicators was conducted, and many stakeholders were consulted. A set of 12 integrated indicators were identified to measure the overall progress towards the sustainability goals. The indicators were selected based on their relevance to Niagara, their ability to be measured at the regional and neighbourhood level, their relevance to the goals, the availability of data and their ability to complement other relative initiatives in Niagara.

The 12 priority system-wide indicators are effective measures of sustainability that can be measured easily within the next few years. The priority indicators are:



In addition to the 12 Priority Indicators, secondary system-wide indicators were identified. Secondary indicators are important measures of sustainability and reflect the priorities of the community, but are more complex to measure or may not have existing baselines established. These indicators are considered important to have, but may be more appropriate to measure as the plan evolves in the future.

Phase 3: Action Plan – Outlines what the community needs to do to reach the goals for a sustainable Niagara. It includes:

- Descriptions of short term priorities identified by the community;
- A longer list of other potential actions;
- A model for how stakeholders can implement the *action plan* together, and
- Ideas on how everyone in Niagara can get involved.

Niagara stakeholders were engaged in identifying priorities to support the goals, and outlining implementation plans. Among the numerous ideas for action identified by stakeholders, thirteen areas were identified as priorities requiring immediate attention.

This Action Plan is supported by an **Online Action Bank** – an inventory of actions that community members are carrying out that contribute to *Sustainable Niagara*'s goals. This database will be continually updated to showcase actions and best practices supporting sustainability across the region, and is a resource for organizations to identify opportunities for collaboration (www.niagararegion.ca).

Core Principles of the Action Plan

The *Action Plan* is built on a foundation of several core principles, including:

- ✓ **Community Partnership** – No one entity can implement everything documented in this plan. The implementation approach provides stakeholders with a way to work together to make Niagara more sustainable.
- ✓ **A Flexible Living Document** – The world changes quickly, and *Sustainable Niagara* must be able to change and adapt with it. The *Action Plan* is seen as a “living document” as opposed to a blueprint of prescribed instructions. The actions presented in this Plan are suggested, and stakeholders should look for ways on an ongoing basis to work towards sustainability. The Action Plan is a guide providing direction and suggestions and the implementation model outlined will be regularly reviewed and changes made when necessary to ensure the best and most current made-in-Niagara plan is put forward to reach our long-term goals.
- ✓ **Integration** – *Sustainable Niagara* is an umbrella plan designed to guide plans, programs and other initiatives across the region. The actions documented in the *Action Plan* provide a framework for aligning long range planning efforts in Niagara with the Sustainability Goals.



13 Priority Area Action Plans

Stakeholders identified 13 priority areas for reaching the Sustainability Goals – areas that will help achieve momentum in the first five years of implementing *Sustainable Niagara*. For each of these priority areas, the *Action Plan* outlines desired outcomes, suggested actions for implementation, potential lead organizations and partners, indicators to measure progress, and suggested timeframes for delivery. Each priority is presented in one of the eight Sustainability Goals although many contribute to a number of the goals. Each goal also presents detailed direction on what individuals, community partners, or a municipality can do to support the goal.

The 13 priority areas for the first five years of implementing *Sustainable Niagara* are:

1. Energy Management Planning
2. Promoting a Buy Local Movement in Niagara
3. Investing in Niagara's Poverty Reduction Strategy
4. Encouraging Green Roofs in Niagara
5. Tracking and Reducing Greenhouse Gas Emissions
6. Supporting New Farmers
7. Researching and Promoting Precision Agriculture
8. Creating a Coordinated Economic Development Strategy
9. Completing our Streets
10. Creating a Niagara Collaborative
11. Strengthening Education for a Sustainable Future
12. Continuing Regional Transportation Planning
13. Monitoring the Economic Impacts of our Cultural Sector

Each time the *Sustainable Niagara Action Plan* is reviewed, new priority areas may be identified, and accompanying detailed action plans will be created.

Implementing the Sustainable Niagara Action Plan

The way in which stakeholders will work together to implement the *Action Plan* will evolve over the 50-year timeline. A transitional structure has been described which will be reviewed every five years and modified as necessary.

A Leadership Team will be responsible for general oversight of the *Action Plan*, and will work with, provide advice, and support Work Teams in implementing the Plan. Networks of Community Partners will form Work Teams and will be involved in implementing the detailed plans outlined in each of the 13 priority areas. Initially, Niagara Region will act as Secretariat, establishing and guiding the implementation process, supporting and building capacity for implementation, and assisting with information flow. The Region's role as Secretariat will likely shift over time once implementation has been established.

Monitoring and Communicating Our Progress

Annual Progress Reports will be prepared that provide updates on each priority area and review action plans. A more in-depth review will be undertaken every five years. Monitoring will be done with two sets of progress indicators: 1) a set of 12 over-arching indicators that will let us know how the Plan is progressing overall; and 2) indicators developed specifically for each priority area. A community celebration, awards, or other events may be used to recognize the achievements, hard work and success of all who contributed to a more sustainable Niagara.

How Can You Get or Stay Involved?

- ✓ Make a Citizen's Commitment or become a *Sustainable Niagara* Partner;
- ✓ Take part on one of the Work Teams;
- ✓ Share your success stories and submit actions through the Online Action Bank;
- ✓ Register on the *Sustainable Niagara* email list to receive notifications of community events and meetings;
- ✓ Continue to provide input; and
- ✓ Tell as many people as possible about sustainability and the *Sustainable Niagara Action Plan*.



INTRODUCTION

WHAT IS SUSTAINABILITY?

Sustainability means meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs. (Brundtland Commission, 1987)



ABOUT THE SUSTAINABLE NIAGARA PLAN

Niagara Region began its sustainability journey in 2004 when it conducted an assessment of itself against the Melbourne Principles. Since that time stakeholders from across Niagara region have been working together on a long-term plan for community sustainability. The product of this work is the *Sustainable Niagara* plan that describes the community’s vision for what Niagara could look like in 2060, the goals to work towards, and the actions that will support the goals. *Sustainable Niagara* is also a guide in making decisions around this common vision of what Niagara can be like for generations to come and a framework for measuring progress. The *Sustainable Niagara* planning process has produced actions organized in thirteen interconnected priority areas that will be our collective first steps towards reaching our Sustainability Goals.

The *Sustainable Niagara* Plan was developed through extensive collaboration and consultation with stakeholders across three phases:

Phase 1: Goals for a Sustainable Niagara	Phase 2: Measuring Our Progress	Phase 3: Action Plan
Stakeholders (i.e. Organizations, community groups, businesses, municipalities, and residents) across the region were engaged in a discussion on, “What does a sustainable Niagara look like in 2060?” These conversations created the vision for a sustainable Niagara, and the eight long-range goals that will help to reach it.	In-depth research on best practices, existing datasets and indicators was conducted, and many stakeholders were consulted. A set of 12 priority indicators were identified to measure the overall progress towards the sustainability goals.	Stakeholders were engaged in identifying priorities to support the goals, and outlining implementation plans. Among the numerous ideas for action identified, thirteen areas were identified as priorities requiring immediate attention.

This Action Plan is supported by an **Online Action Bank** – an inventory of actions that community members are carrying out that contribute to *Sustainable Niagara*’s goals. This database will be continually updated to showcase actions and best practices supporting sustainability across the region, and is a resource for organizations to identify opportunities for collaboration. As an individual, you can also identify opportunities where you can further support sustainability efforts (www.niagararegion.ca).

HOW TO READ THIS PLAN

The *Phase 3: Action Plan* is organized in three sections:

- 1) **INTRODUCTION** - a brief background about Sustainable Niagara, including how it was developed, its structure, and key factors for its success;
- 2) **IMPLEMENTATION** - an outline of how the plan will be implemented, including the organizational structure and financial considerations; and
- 3) **THE ACTION PLAN** - beginning with a review of the community-shared goals for a sustainable Niagara in 2060. For each goal, a series of potential actions have been identified for individuals, community partners and municipalities.

The Action Plan also includes an outline of the thirteen priorities. The priorities are presented in one of the eight Sustainability Goals although many crosscut a number of the goals and should be read with that context. The priorities include the following:

- a) **Suggested Implementation Actions** - These are actions that could be done to fulfill the priority. It is anticipated that these actions will evolve as further information is gathered.
- b) **Potential Lead Organization(s) and Potential Partners** - For each priority, our community has identified potential organizations, institutions, and businesses as candidates to help lead or support the implementation of actions under the priority. The Lead Organizations were identified as those whose mandates most closely align with the action, but other potential partners may decide to fulfill the leadership role. Lead Organizations and potential partners have not been confirmed. The list of potential partners is by no means exhaustive and further discussions will be required to solidify partnerships once the implementation strategy is determined.
- c) **Indicators to Measure Progress** - Indicators are used to measure progress over time.
- d) **Desired Outcomes**- This is the desired state the action is trying to achieve.
- e) **Suggested Timeframes** - These timeframes were developed through discussions with the community. They will need to be assessed as the Plan is moved forward.

A PARTNERSHIP APPROACH

Reaching *Sustainable Niagara's* goals requires action from the community. No one entity can take responsibility for everything that is documented in this Plan. Instead, the Plan has been designed to be implemented by all members of our community – municipalities, businesses, organizations, community groups, residents and more. *Sustainable Niagara* is built on the premise that if we all contribute in our own way, we will be better positioned to move towards sustainability.



Sustainable Niagara will operate as a Community Partnership. This approach provides stakeholders with a way to work together to make our community more sustainable. Many groups are already carrying out actions to support the goals of *Sustainable Niagara*. Becoming a *Sustainable Niagara* Community Partner means these activities will be recognized as part of the bigger effort for Niagara's future. As part of the Sustainable Niagara network, there are opportunities to find synergies, integrate activities, and collaborate with other groups in ways.

HOW CAN WE ENSURE SUCCESS?

Factors that are particularly important for the success of *Sustainable Niagara* include:

Becoming a Sustainable Niagara Partner	Making a Citizen's Commitment to Sustainability	Talking About It, Then Take Action	Ongoing Collaboration
<p>A wealth of organizations contribute to the long term wellbeing and sustainability of Niagara. All organizations are encouraged to review their mandates and consider how they can help move the Plan forward by making a commitment to be a Sustainable Niagara Partner (<i>To learn more, please see the Sustainable Niagara Partnership Commitment in Appendix A</i>).</p>	<p>Every person in Niagara region can make a citizen's commitment to sustainability. Each action, no matter how big or small, can make a difference. All residents are encouraged to become Citizens for Sustainability and act on these sustainable commitments (<i>To learn more, please see the Citizen's Commitment to Sustainable Action in Appendix B</i>).</p>	<p>Everyone needs to spread the word about the Sustainable Niagara Plan so everyone across the region is involved. Talk about sustainability and the actions you are taking with your family, neighbours, co-workers, and partnering organizations. Share success stories and keep action going.</p>	<p>Niagara needs to work together to reach our vision for sustainability. This is why the Plan includes a call for community groups and organizations to become partners in sustainability by adopting the vision and goals of the Plan, sharing actions that contribute to a more sustainable future, or participating in priority areas and progress monitoring.</p>

Share Actions	Political Support	Tracking Progress	Planning for Short and Long term	Flexibility
<p>The community is invited to submit actions to the Online Action Bank where they can be shared and inspire others to contribute. It is anticipated that the Online Action Bank will be integrated with the Niagara Planning and Research Council's Knowledge Exchange when it is completed.</p>	<p>Political support from local decision-makers including members of Councils will be needed to support and endorse the Plan.</p>	<p>Tracking progress using indicators to show us where Niagara is, how Niagara is doing, and where improvements are needed.</p>	<p>Although the Plan includes a series of initial priorities for implementation within the first five years, there is a need to recognize that this is a 50-year plan, and that there will be many actions that can support achieving our goals over this term.</p>	<p>Flexibility is needed so the Plan can adapt to changing contexts in Niagara and remain relevant for the long-term.</p>



IMPLEMENTING SUSTAINABLE NIAGARA

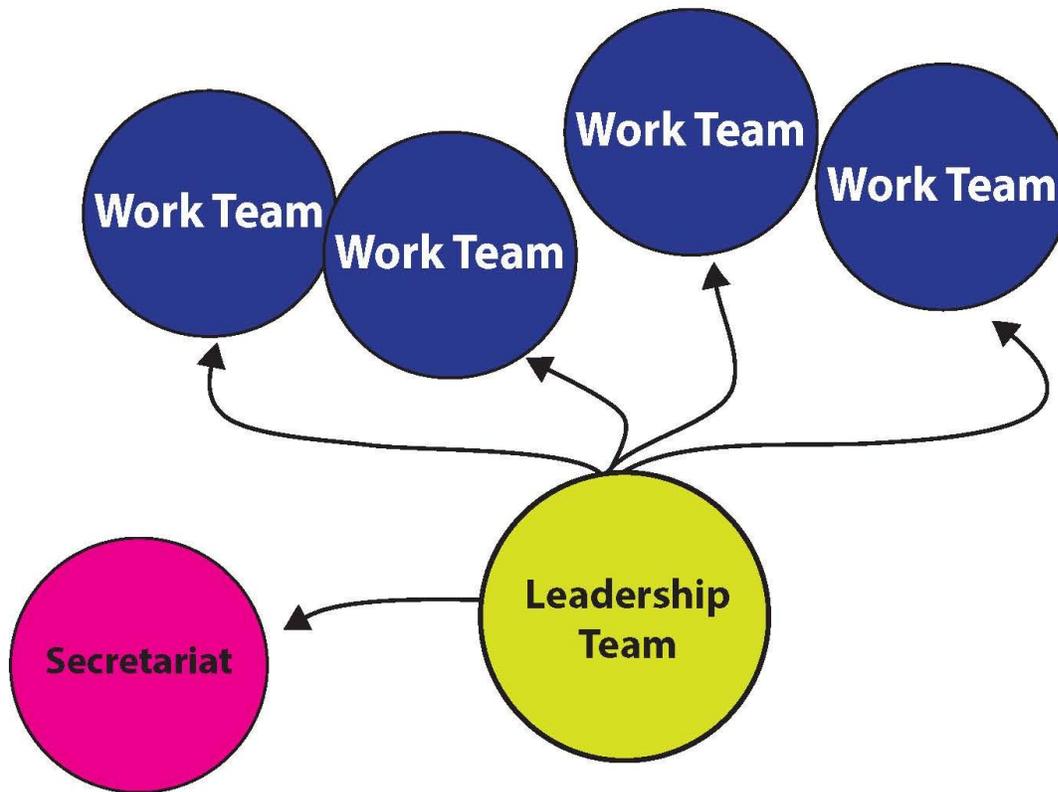
ORGANIZING FOR POSITIVE CHANGE

The *Sustainable Niagara* Plan is intended to provide a strategic framework for the community to use in work towards a sustainable Niagara. Keeping on the right path requires strong attention to implementation, governance and monitoring. No one entity alone can implement what is outlined in this Plan; instead, Niagara's sustainability journey will require commitment and cooperation at all levels – individual, community, and Regional.

Community ownership is a core principle of *Sustainable Niagara* and will be fundamental to its success. Ultimately, the Plan will be implemented within the community and is not a Region plan – however the Region will be a partner in its implementation. Creating a community partnership model adds to the complexity of implementing the Plan, but the benefits of being able to capitalize on the knowledge, capacity and creative thinking of a number of organizations in Niagara makes it worth undertaking.

Although community partnership is complex, the essential principles are simple: networks of Community Partners come together based on shared interests and motivation and make a commitment to sustainable change. For *Sustainable Niagara* these groups will form around each of the Priorities. In this capacity there are three primary roles: (1) a Leadership Team to provide general oversight; (2) Work Teams formed through a network of Community Partners organized around implementing priorities, and (3) a Secretariat to ensure that efforts are coordinated between all parties.

Roles and responsibilities of key groups are outlined below.



Leadership Team: This team is defined to provide strategic guidance for Sustainable Niagara and is made up of approximately 16 representatives including one lead organization from each priority area ensuring there is representation from all eight sustainability goals. One or two members of Regional Council may participate as ex-officio members on the Leadership Team.

Work Team: These are made up of Sustainable Niagara partners and are designed to focus on one priority area. The role of each Work Team is to design, coordinate, and effectively deliver their priority area project.

Secretariat: This role involves overall coordination and troubleshooting of issues or problems, keeping the momentum going, guiding the planning process, organizing or facilitating Leadership Team meetings, supporting Work Teams, building capacity for implementation, and ensuring there is communication between all parties and the local and regional municipalities.

TRANSITION ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Transitioning from creating the *Sustainable Niagara* Plan under the leadership of the Region to a community partnership model takes time. Therefore the roles and responsibilities presented below are reflective of the transition period.



Leadership Team

The Leadership Team is responsible for the general oversight of the *Sustainable Niagara* Plan and provides the foundation on which the Work Teams can form and current groups can align to sustainability goals. The Leadership Team will work with, advise, and support community groups and Regional Council in implementing the Plan. The Leadership Team is responsible for:

- Developing an initial Terms of Reference;
- Committing to the eight sustainability goals;
- Reviewing priorities to ensure they reflect community priorities;
- Ensuring priorities and actions are moving forward;
- Developing annual work plans in collaboration with Priority Work Teams;
- Developing resource and financial strategies with the Priority Work Teams;
- Monitoring and reporting on progress ;
- Liaising with community partners as needed;
- Continuing to build community partnerships amongst community organizations and municipalities; and
- Encouraging individuals to make a Citizen's Commitment.

The Leadership Team will consist of approximately 16 representatives including one lead organization from each priority area. Additional members should be selected to ensure that all eight goals are covered. One or two members of Regional Council may participate as ex-officio members on the Leadership Team. The first Leadership Team will be selected through a formal selection process. The initial term will be no less than two years and up to a period of five years to coincide with the review of the Plan.

Work Teams

The Work Teams will be self-organizing teams made up of Community Partners interested in working on a particular priority area. Each Work Team is encouraged to have a Lead Organization - a group member with the commitment, drive, leadership skills, and energy to help lead the group towards productive action. This individual will represent the Work Team on the Leadership Team to ensure efforts are coordinated.

The role of each Work Team is to design, coordinate, and effectively deliver their priority area project. This includes identifying or confirming the specific actions and expected outcomes for their priority, outlining the roles and responsibilities for each partner, developing a resource plan, seeking funding opportunities as needed, confirming timeframes, choosing specific targets, and outlining how success will be measured and reporting.

Community Partners

Community partners include any existing or future group, business, individual or municipality within Niagara. Many of the existing groups are already doing great work in the community with respect to sustainability. The support and contribution of these groups is essential for realizing Niagara's Sustainability Goals. These groups are encouraged to come together on Work Teams and help implement the Plan.

Secretariat

During the transition period (i.e. first five years) the Region or a delegate will act as the Secretariat for implementation. This function involves overall coordination and troubleshooting of issues or problems, keeping the momentum going, guiding the planning process, organizing or facilitating Leadership Team meetings, supporting Work Teams, building capacity for implementation, and ensuring there is communication between all parties and the local and regional municipalities. The Region has been identified in this role for the transition period to provide the institutional knowledge of how the Sustainable Niagara Plan was developed and initial partnerships were formed. It is envisioned this role may be transferred to others once implementation processes are underway.

Sustainability Coordinator

The Sustainability Coordinator, housed within the Secretariat will act as a liaison between the Leadership Team, Council, Region staff, the public and community groups, assist in the development of work plans and budgets, assist with events that bring community partners together, and help coordinate education and outreach for the Plan including annual recognition. The Sustainability Coordinator will also be the main point of contact and will administer the annual report. An ongoing list of interested stakeholders and community members will be housed with the Sustainability Coordinator – including people and organizations that may be able to significantly influence the Plan's implementation and its success, and those directly affected by the implementation.

Niagara Region Staff

Staff from all departments and levels will use the Plan as a guide or framework for decision-making, as the Plan represents community priorities and will help move Niagara Region towards a more sustainable future. Staff members whose roles support any of the eight goals may also provide occasional technical assistance and information to the Leadership Team or Work Teams.

Regional Council

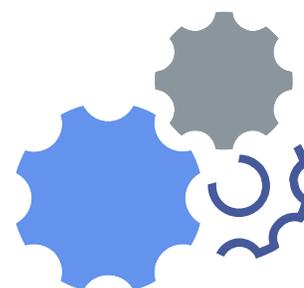
A supportive Regional Council is essential for the Plan's success. Members of Regional Council can provide leadership by understanding the benefits of sustainability planning, supporting long term goals, and considering recommendations from the Leadership Team that may require Regional resources or financial support. One or two Council Members will also be encouraged to participate as ex-officio members at Leadership Team meetings.

ENSURING EFFECTIVE INTEGRATION

The *Sustainable Niagara* Plan is an umbrella plan designed to guide plans, programs and other initiatives across the Region. It provides a framework for aligning activities with Niagara's Sustainability Goals. Community Partners were brought together to design this Action Plan, and implementing the actions within this plan provides many ways to collaborate and integrate activities. The goal is to continue to work together as Community Partners and find opportunities to combine efforts to avoid duplication and minimize the resources required.

There are several mechanisms that can help make sure *Sustainable Niagara* is integrated with other initiatives in the region. Some examples:

- ✓ Using the sustainability lens (once developed) to help guide decision-making at the Region and making it available for local municipalities for their use;
- ✓ Having the same Community Partner representative sit on two or more planning allows information to be transferred by word of mouth from one initiative to another.
- ✓ Using *Sustainable Niagara's* Online Action Bank to learn more about what others are doing for sustainability in the region and to identify opportunities for collaboration.
- ✓ Sharing ideas, knowledge and information through Niagara Planning and Research Council's Knowledge Exchange when complete.



FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

Sustainable Niagara provides a unique opportunity for regional and municipal governments, agencies, non-governmental organizations, community groups and private businesses to work together to implement activities under the Plan's umbrella. These opportunities allow for new financial solutions to be developed to ensure action takes place. Once the Plan is finalized and approved by Regional Council, the implementation phase of the work can truly begin to take shape. The Leadership Team will provide overall guidance and direction to the actions in the Plan, which includes helping to form partnerships, and identifying resource and financial strategies.



FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

There are a number of avenues for funding actions under the Plan. Most significantly, the development of the Plan will allow Niagara Region to continue to access its portion of the federal gas tax funding. This money is used to finance infrastructure improvement projects and specifically focuses on environmentally sustainable investments that help achieve cleaner water, cleaner air, or reduced greenhouse gas emissions.



The creation of the Sustainability Plan opens the doors for further Federation of Canadian Municipality Green Municipal Fund opportunities in areas such as greenhouse gas emission reduction, neighbourhood scale sustainability planning and projects relating to water, wastewater, roads, energy and transportation.

Other opportunities to secure resources to fund sustainability actions include creative solutions such as resource sharing and efficiencies, social enterprise, and the development of public and private partnerships based on shared values and principles. The Leadership Team will explore all resourcing and funding opportunities beyond the Region and Federation of Canadian Municipalities to maximize the resources available to help support the goals of the Plan.

COMMUNITY COLLABORATION & OUTREACH

Communications, engagement and outreach form a key part of the implementation strategy. By engaging Niagara residents in ongoing discussion about the plan – whether that is updates on the priorities, annual reporting, or providing opportunities to participate – all can contribute to a shift towards a more sustainable future.

The Region will continue to communicate about the aspects of the Plan that relate to Region affairs and share the annual report for the Sustainability Plan. The Leadership Team will in parallel develop a communications and outreach plan to capitalize on their communications and outreach channels. This will foster ongoing, consistent, effective communication to community groups, the public, elected officials, and municipal and Regional staff. Communication tools such as an e-newsletter, social media, project announcements, education activities and outreach will be considered, designed, and introduced throughout implementation.



Communicating about the plan and opportunities for individuals to get involved however, is a role that everyone can participate in. Everyone is encouraged to keep the sustainability conversation going!



WHAT CAN YOU DO TO GET OR STAY INVOLVED?

If you are interested in supporting the Plan there are a number of things you can do:

- Make a Citizen's Commitment or Become a Sustainable Niagara Partner;
- Take part on one of the Work Teams;
- Register on the *Sustainable Niagara* email list to receive notifications of community events and meetings;
- Continue to provide input; and
- Tell as many people as possible about sustainability and the *Sustainable Niagara* Action Plan.

ACCOUNTABILITY & REPORTING

Transparency, accountability, and clear communications are key to ensuring smooth implementation, wide-spread support, and success in reaching our sustainability goals. Specific actions that will help ensure transparency, accountability, and communication include:



Sustainability Decision Making Lens – a tool already in development for the Leadership Team, Council and Municipal staff to help ensure sustainability principles and goals are integrated into all decision-making processes.

Annual Progress Reports - should be prepared to inform Council and the community about the status of the Plan's implementation using the 12 system-wide indicators. This Annual Report will include: (1) annual progress on the Priority Areas; (2) a review of work plans; and (3) priorities for the upcoming year.

Updating the **Online Action Bank** – in order to remain relevant the online action bank should be kept up to date. The information will continue to be made available online and all businesses, organizations, and institutions will be invited to submit new actions.

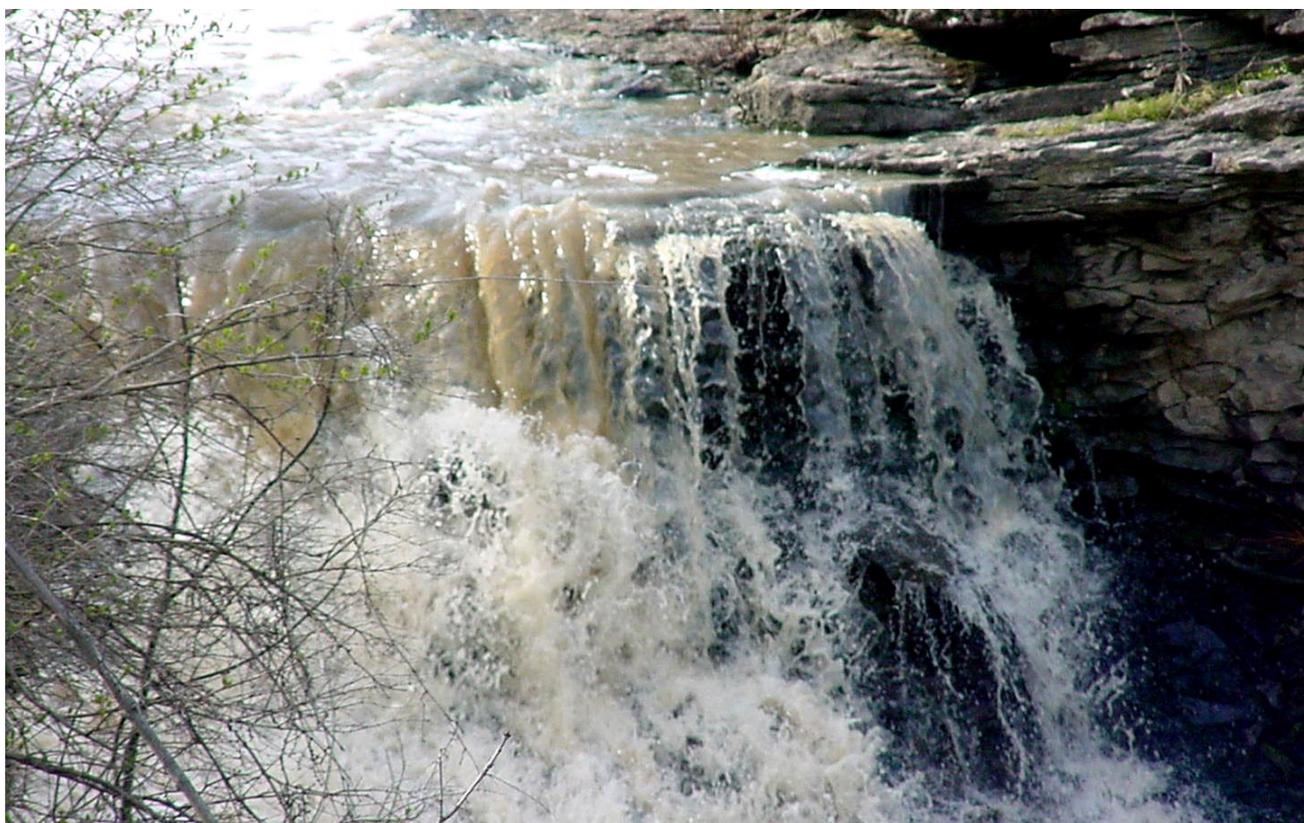
Recognition – The achievements, hard work and success of all who contribute to a more sustainable Niagara should be recognized on an annual basis. This recognition can take part through a community celebration, awards, recognition, event or other events or through integration with existing recognition processes in the region.

THE SUSTAINABLE NIAGARA PLAN

SUSTAINABILITY GOALS

Eight theme-based goals support Niagara's vision for a sustainable future. Each goal includes a description of how our community sees the theme in 2060. The goals and vision statements of Sustainable Niagara are illustrated in the diagram on the following page.

In the subsequent pages, each goal is presented with a series of actions on what individuals, community partners, or a municipality can do to support the goal. These tables are by no means the only things that can be done to foster sustainability in Niagara, but they provide actions that will result in positive change in our community. These actions have been identified by stakeholders and best practices from other jurisdictions. In addition, each goal includes one or two of the 13 priority areas identified by stakeholders and the community for immediate action in Niagara. In most cases the priorities cross a number of different sustainability goals and are presented in one for simplicity. For each priority area, the *Action Plan* outlines desired outcomes, suggested actions for implementation, potential lead organizations and partners, indicators to measure progress, and suggested timeframes.





AGRICULTURE & FOOD

In 2060 Niagara will have an abundance of agricultural land that produces quality products, supports a strong farming community, fosters a unique sense of identity, and an agricultural sector that continues to be an important economic driver.

POTENTIAL ACTION	Individual 	Community Partner 	Municipality 
Purchase local food and products when possible	✓	✓	✓
Plant a backyard garden or create/join a community garden	✓	✓	
Look at labels of the foods you buy to better understand where your food comes from	✓		
Support sustainable expansion of agri-tourism, value-added agriculture and agri-food innovation in Niagara	✓	✓	✓
Help spread the “buy local” message through municipal and Regional level communication mechanisms such as the Local Food campaign			✓
Share success stories of agricultural advancements in Niagara region			✓
Join or encourage participation in a Community Support Agriculture, Food Co-op or similar program	✓	✓	
Advocate for affordable and accessible local food for low income families	✓	✓	✓
Conduct a mapping inventory of public land to use for multi-scale community gardens	✓	✓	
Encourage more agricultural education		✓	✓
Promote FarmStart or a similar program to encourage young farmers to farm in Niagara		✓	✓
Advocate for increased funding for the Environmental Farm Plan	✓	✓	✓
Introduce vertical growing systems to maximize soil used	✓	✓	
Reinstitute the use of Niagara Region's Agriculture Subcommittee		✓	✓
Develop precision agriculture to improve yields while reducing fertilizer and water usage	✓	✓	
Secure funding for research to continuously improve competitiveness of farms		✓	✓
Preserve agricultural lands	✓	✓	✓
Establish local farmers market in each of Niagara's municipalities and consider a region-wide farmers market once a month to promote local agriculture			✓



SUPPORTING NEW FARMERS

The demographics for Niagara's farming community continue to change. Current farmers are aging and retiring, yet few new or young farmers are taking their place. Our economy depends on a healthy agricultural industry, as does the health of our residents through the local agricultural produce our farmers deliver. This priority aims to give new farmers the support they need to get their operations going. This could include linking farmers in Niagara to existing programs in other regions – such as the FarmStart program based out of Guelph – with attention paid to the unique challenges and opportunities faced in our Region.

SUGGESTED IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS:

- **Conduct a Best Practice Study of programs in other communities or regions that support new and emerging farmers (e.g. FarmStart, Farm Credit Corporation)**
- **Identify characteristics in Niagara that make our region unique and that are important factors to consider for new farmers**
- **Design or adopt a program to support new farmers – considering existing programs and other initiatives to fill in any gaps**
- **Engage the financial community**
- **Engage champion farmers as mentors**
- **Engage active farmers in program activities**

Potential Lead Organizations: Federation of Agriculture (North and South); economic development agencies.

Potential Partners: Post-secondary institutions; champion farmers.

Indicators to Measure Progress:

- Number of new farmers in Niagara
- Average age of farmers
- Uptake of the program by new farmers
- Number of successful transitions to young farmers

Desired Outcomes:

- Average age of farmers in region decreases.

Suggested Timeframe: Program started by 2014.

supporting new farmers



RESEARCHING AND PROMOTING PRECISION AGRICULTURE

Precision agriculture involves the use of electronic sensors and technology (e.g. GPS) to understand and respond to differences within an individual farm. This approach can provide precise information important to farm management, such as weed mapping – allowing a farmer to use less chemicals and pesticides by knowing how to more precisely apply them – or yield performance. This priority involves developing, carrying out, and communicating the techniques of precision agriculture across Niagara. A key part of this priority is to measure the improvements precision agriculture brings to the agricultural industry.

SUGGESTED IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS:

- Define “precision agriculture” in the Niagara context
- Establish a baseline of precision agriculture use in Niagara
- Establish a community of practice for all farmers, researchers, and other stakeholders interested in or engaged in precision agriculture
- Identify the opportunities, benefits, challenges and costs of using precision agriculture on Niagara farms by conducting a feasibility study on potential areas for precision agriculture
- Deploy research and implementation projects that focus on reducing water use, fertilizer use, and pesticide use
- Develop and implement communication plans that effectively spread the word about techniques of precision agriculture to current farmers
- Support education and training of techniques in post-secondary institutions
- Help make it easy for farmers to get the technology (sensors) they need to engage in precision agriculture

Potential Lead Organizations: Research institutions such as Niagara College, Brock University, Vineland Centre for Research and Innovation; farm organizations; growers and farmers.

Potential Partners: Post-secondary institutions; government funding for research and implementation.

Indicators to Measure Progress:

- Adoption rate of precision agriculture in the region

- Number of farmers using precision agriculture or who know about it
- Monetary savings by growers
- Field quantity and quality
- Niagara’s success in becoming a model region based on this program

Desired Outcomes:

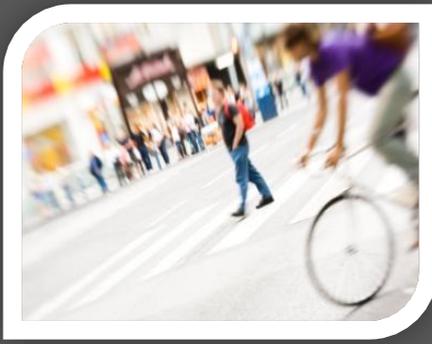
- Number of farms using precision agriculture
- Farmers are using or know about precision agriculture techniques (long term)

Suggested Timeframe: Five to 15 years.

BUILT ENVIRONMENTS

In 2060 Niagara will be a leader in planning, developing and revitalizing our neighbourhoods and communities to ensure residents can thrive and maintain a high quality of life.

POTENTIAL ACTION	Individual 	Community Partner 	Municipality 
Spread the word and support for the Complete Street Policy	✓	✓	✓
Contact the Region and share your perspectives on which roadways should be given priority and how they can be improved with a Complete Streets Policy	✓	✓	
Ensure communities in Niagara are age-friendly, accessible, and inclusive for all ages	✓	✓	✓
Develop pilot complete street sites			✓
Adopt the Complete Streets policy at the local municipal level			✓
Streamline development approvals and permitting processes to encourage business and land development in Niagara region			✓
Reduce development charges for sustainable buildings through the Smart Growth program and Gateway incentives			✓
Acquire or repurpose land/buildings to provide more community facilities		✓	✓
Consider building to Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED), Green Globes, or R-2000 standards for energy efficiency		✓	✓
Focus development on infilling brownfields			✓
Encourage compact and efficient development			



COMPLETING OUR STREETS

Complete streets are safe, livable, and welcoming to everyone – young, old, walker or wheelchair, motorist, cyclist or pedestrian. Integrating a Complete Streets Policy as part of a Sustainable Niagara will contribute to our community’s health, wellbeing, social equity, air quality, economic development and create a sense of place. The Complete Street Policy will ensure that transportation planners and engineers plan, design and maintain our roadways with the safety of *all* users in mind – bicyclists, public transportation vehicles and riders, and pedestrians of all ages and abilities. The model policies currently under development by Regional staff will be scalable to all Niagara municipalities. The Region is looking to reshape our transportation networks through rehabilitation and new development.

SUGGESTED IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS:

- Conduct research and policy analysis to determine if there are gaps to achieving complete streets (underway)
- Prepare a discussion paper (underway)
- Prepare an Information Report to Committee (underway)
- Conduct consultations and information sessions
- Develop model Complete Streets Policies with stakeholders
- Establish site selection criteria for pilot project
- Conduct the pilot project
- Refine and revise the model policies
- Bring the model policies to regional council
- Present work to 2011 AT Summit participants
- Offer workshops and other training opportunities to planners and engineers
- Institute better ways to measure performance and collect data on how well the streets are serving all users than tradition level of vehicle service
- Adopt Complete Street Policies region-wide

Potential Lead Organizations: The Region with municipal collaboration.

Potential Partners: Active Transportation Fort Erie, School Travel Planning Fort Erie, Pelham Active Transportation, Climate Action Niagara, Grimsby Green, Active Transportation Port Colborne, Garden City Alliance for Sustainable

Transportation, municipal Senior Citizens Advisory Committees, Rose City Seniors Foundation, Niagara Research and Planning Council, Provincial government through funding; the public; private companies.

Indicators to Measure Progress:

- Number of municipalities that have adopted policies
 - Identification/construction of pilot project areas;
 - Miles of on-street bicycle routes created¹
 - New linear feet of pedestrian accommodation
 - Changes in the number of people using public transportation, bicycling, or walking (mode shift)
 - Number of new street trees; and/or the creation or adoption of a new multi-modal
 - Level of Service standard that better measures the quality of travel experience
-

Desired Outcomes:

- Adoption of policies at all local levels (short-term)
 - Construction of pilots complete (intermediate)
 - Construction complete on all target areas in the Strategy (long term)
-

Suggested Timeframe:

- Short term – One- Two years
- Intermediate – Two- Five years
- Long-term - Five+ years.



completing our streets

¹ National Complete Street Coalition. Changing Policy. <http://www.completestreets.org/> accessed May 2012.

CULTURE, LEARNING & SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

In 2060 Niagara will be an inclusive, engaged community that values culture, learning and social development.

POTENTIAL ACTION	Individual 	Community Partner 	Municipality 
Mentor someone	✓		
Take a course, class or learn about something new	✓		
Encourage your child to read	✓		
Recognize volunteers		✓	✓
Go to a local theatre, museum, event or historic site	✓		
Promote, support or establish programs that work to end illiteracy	✓	✓	✓
Participate in, and advocate for affordable and accessible lifelong learning opportunities in your community	✓	✓	✓
Advocate for more affordable post-secondary costs	✓	✓	✓
Encourage greater experimental learning opportunities	✓	✓	✓
Provide and participate in learning for work opportunities in your organization	✓	✓	
Integrate sustainability education into the high school curriculum		✓	
Establish and participate in technology and social training programs for community organizations		✓	✓
Increase post-secondary completion rates	✓	✓	✓
Establish more co-op, mentorship or entrepreneurial opportunities for youth to foster professional development, increase youth retention, and achieve higher literacy rates		✓	✓
Increase community volunteerism	✓	✓	✓
Encourage the inclusion of mental health principles across all service areas	✓	✓	✓

POTENTIAL ACTION	Individual 	Community Partner 	Municipality 
Stabilize commitments to child care and core human services for people living in poverty	✓	✓	✓
Partner with aboriginal organizations to develop cultural awareness	✓	✓	✓
Better understand the needs of migrant workers	✓	✓	✓
Describe and monitor the impact of the cultural sector as an economic driver		✓	✓
Develop an inventory of Niagara's cultural assets that is current, well-described, and available to the public		✓	✓
Develop investment and funding strategies for arts, culture, and heritage in Niagara		✓	✓
Inventory and assess current funding policies and programs and establish priorities for Niagara Region (as identified in the Niagara Cultural Plan)			✓
Create a policy framework to guide the Region and local municipalities in ensuring the inclusion of cultural assets in land-use and infrastructure planning			✓





STRENGTHENING EDUCATION FOR A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

Early childhood learning and lifelong learning for all ages are measures of the health, wellbeing and quality of life in our region. The Living in Niagara 2011 Report indicates that, “Continual building of a strong learning community with a capacity for knowledge exchange and generation in Niagara will help our citizens to have the skills and creativity to deal with change, to work in the new economy and innovate together.”

Education crosses all sustainability pillars; for example, investing in people means having a community with the skills and capacity for economic resiliency. This priority involves creating a framework that fosters and supports continued learning opportunities for residents of all ages across the region, and helps build communities who are well-informed about sustainability principles and practices. This framework could be based on other lifelong learning strategies (e.g. Vancouver) and address the following dimensions:

- Learning to Know
- Learning to Do
- Learning to Work Together
- Learning to Be

This priority area could include activities such as:

- Mentorship programs
- Cooperative programs and internships for youth
- Workshops and educational programs about sustainability for all ages
- A sustainability lecture series
- Mechanisms to integrate sustainability in the high school curriculum
- Literacy programs

SUGGESTED IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS:

Continuing Existing Education Programs:

- Continue to support educational organizations and the community to increase post-secondary completion rates in Niagara²
- Support work being done to facilitate accessible pathways across education streams, institutions (college to university; university to college) and programs
- Maintain the advances made in our school systems in testing and Education Quality and Accountability Office achievement results
- In collaboration with adult literacy partners, undertake and resource a comprehensive and collaborative regional and area mapping of current literacy rates and issues and set new targets for Niagara-wide action

² Living in Niagara 2011 Report, Suggested Actions under Learning and Education in Niagara.

<http://www.livinginniagarareport.com/04-learning-education-2011/introduction-to-learning-and-education-in-niagara/> accessed May 2012.

Developing New Programs:

- Conduct an inventory of programs and services offering extra-curricular learning opportunities about sustainability in the region
- Conduct a needs assessment of knowledge or skills in the community by consulting businesses, industry, educational institutions, and the public
- Brainstorm strategies and programs to fill the gaps identified in the inventory and needs assessment
- Identify opportunities for collaboration, funding, and partnerships

Potential Lead Organizations: Early Years Niagara Planning Council and District School Board of Niagara, the Niagara Catholic School Board, the Conseil scolaire de district catholique Centre-Sud and the Conseil scolaire public de district Centre-Ouest contribute; Niagara Region

Potential Partners: Brock University; Niagara College.

Indicators to Measure Progress:

- Participation rates in formal and informal learning
- Literacy rates
- Children's readiness to learn at school
- Overall scores on the Grade 6 reading, writing and math assessments
- High school graduation rates
- Post-secondary participation and attainment;
- Number of learning mechanism (workshops; outreach programs, etc.) focused on sustainability

Desired Outcomes:

- Increased participation in formal and informal learning settings at all stages of learning and for all groups
- Increased literacy rates for all age groups
- Increased completion rates for learners at all stages of learning
- Increased opportunities for learning while at work
- Increased work readiness for all ages and populations
- Increased “sustainability literacy” in order to motivate individuals and organizations to take responsibility for sustainability
- Long-term sustainability at the forefront of day-to-day decision making of all residents

Suggested Timeframe: Ongoing.

strengthening education
for a sustainable future



MONITORING THE ECONOMIC IMPACTS OF OUR CULTURAL SECTOR

Economic impact assessments are designed to determine spending and the cumulative effect of that spending on a community's economy. According to the Conference Board of Canada, the creative cultural industries are one of the fastest growing sectors in many jurisdictions today. There are several ways of measuring the impact of culture on the economy which would be advantageous to Niagara. This assessment was identified as an action in the Niagara Culture Plan, and will assist in future programming and implementation of the Plan.

These include assessing:

- Cultural worker employment levels and trends
- Aggregate wages and salaries of the cultural sector
- Residents' sense of well-being and quality of life

This priority supports monitoring the benefits that culture brings to our local economy.

SUGGESTED IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS:

- Continue to conduct an economic impact assessment to determine the direct and indirect contribution of culture on the economy

Potential Lead Organizations: Niagara Culture Committee; Niagara Region.

Potential Partners: Brock University; Niagara College; Local Municipalities; Niagara Business Education Council; Niagara Workforce Planning Board; Information Niagara; Ministry of Culture

Indicators to Measure Progress:

- Assessment completion.

Desired Outcomes:

- Understanding of the value of our cultural resources
- Greater appreciation for the contribution of the cultural sector

Suggested Timeframe: Ongoing.

monitoring the economic

impacts of our cultural sector

ECONOMY

In 2060 Niagara will be known as a destination where innovative and diverse businesses thrive, giving residents and visitors the means to enjoy a high quality of life.

POTENTIAL ACTION	Individual 	Community Partner 	Municipality 
Shop locally	✓	✓	✓
Take a “stay-cation” Consider taking your next vacation close to home and explore local events, places and restaurants	✓		
Volunteer	✓		
Carpool, walk or bike to work. A car-free commute can reduce both emissions and stress, and save you money	✓		
Attend an event in your downtown	✓		
Contact your local Chamber of Commerce to find out what new opportunities are emerging		✓	
Participate in stakeholder workshops in the development of the Economic Development Strategic Plan		✓	
If you are a student at one of the educational institutions in the region consider applying for jobs close by	✓		
If you own a business, consider having a mentorship or internship program at your place of work		✓	
Hire local residents to fill positions at your business		✓	
Organize festivals or events that help to bring people to your community including your downtown		✓	
Work with the local educational institutions to identify labour force trends		✓	
Link economic growth and development strategies to community assets such as housing, employment, health care services, education, and transportation		✓	✓
Attract employers with sustainable employment and quality jobs for Niagara			✓
Create quality employment opportunities		✓	✓
Develop a coordinated economic development strategy		✓	✓
Establish an aboriginal youth employment strategy and support program		✓	

<h1 style="text-align: center; color: #800080;">POTENTIAL ACTION</h1>	Individual 	Community Partner 	Municipality 
Measure and describe the role and economic impact of the not-for-profit sector in Niagara		✓	✓
Re-establish the downtown of each municipality as social and economic community hubs		✓	✓
Support the diversification and sustainability of the Niagara agricultural economy by adopting and implementing the <i>Regional Agricultural Value Added Activities</i> policy recommendations		✓	✓





CREATING A COORDINATED ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

This priority involves continuing to revise and develop a region-wide coordinated Economic Development Strategy, which emphasizes the creation of sustainable quality employment opportunities, supports Niagara's strong culture, fosters green business and, most importantly ensures quality of life in Niagara. Initially developed in 2005 and revised in 2008 by Niagara Region; the Economic Development Strategy will continue to be developed in consultation with interested stakeholders. This priority also involves identifying strategies to revitalize our downtown cores across the region.

SUGGESTED IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS:

- Collaborate and engage appropriate groups throughout Strategy development
- Review background documentation and information to provide a picture of Niagara's current economic environment (including economic sectors, key industries and related diversification opportunities)
- Review existing municipal and regional economic development plans to ensure integration and consistency
- Review and revise economic sectors and focus areas
- Explore and encourage linkages to community assets such as safe and affordable housing, access to health care, etc.
- Develop a Draft Strategy with:
 - Vision and purpose
 - Diverse sectors identified
 - Strengths and opportunities in Niagara for economic development and sustainable employment
 - Strategies/actions to support vision
- Promote the Draft Strategy and obtain community input
- Develop and implement a communications plan for the Strategy

Potential Lead Organizations: Economic development organizations, and Niagara region Chambers.

Potential Partners: Municipalities; Niagara Escarpment Commission; employers & businesses; non-governmental organizations; not-for-profit organizations; Workforce Planning Board, Chambers of Commerce.

Indicators to Measure Progress:

- Percentage of unemployed residents
- Percentage change in level of employment
- Average salary/ percentage of full time versus % of part time employment

- Number of businesses in industry sectors (transportation & manufacturing, tourism & hospitality, agriculture, culture); and number of new businesses in emerging sectors

Desired Outcomes:

- Improved employment rate and quality of employment
- Increased job retention

Suggested Timeframe: Strategy developed within two years. Implementation is ongoing following strategy development.

PROMOTING A BUY LOCAL MOVEMENT IN NIAGARA



Buying local produce and products whenever possible means supporting a healthy local economy and jobs, investing in our community, building local character, supporting friends and neighbours and improving the health and wellness of our residents. This priority involves looking at how existing efforts that support the “buy local” message in Niagara could be co-ordinated into one effective movement. It will involve education and outreach to residents about the benefits of buying local and the resulting support to local industries when purchasing locally is a feasible option.

SUGGESTED IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS:

- Create an inventory of existing actions, programs, processing and distribution services in Niagara region that support a “buy local” movement building on the work completed as part of the Local Food Action Plan
- Identify any gaps in existing programs and key challenges that need to be addressed to increase participation in a “buy local” movement in Niagara
- Brainstorm activities, tools, or structures that could fill gaps and address challenges to buying local in Niagara
- Design and implement a public education and awareness campaign that promotes the benefits of buying local and how residents can participate

Potential Lead Organizations: Economic development organizations, Niagara Agricultural Task Force, agricultural organizations, and business owners.

Potential Partners: Consumers; grocery retailers.

Indicators to Measure Progress:

- The amount of local sales of fresh produce, and products
- Qualitative results to understand Niagara residents’ perspectives on barriers to and opportunities for participating in a “buy local” movement in Niagara

- Number of retail outlets carrying local produce and products
- Number of vendors selling local produce, local ingredients or products at local markets across the region

Desired Outcomes:

- Increased awareness of local product and produce options
- Increased local food consumption
- Increased purchasing of local products

Suggested Timeframe: Ongoing.

promoting a buy local movement

ECOSYSTEMS & NATURAL AREAS

In 2060 Niagara will have healthy, well-maintained and resilient natural systems that boast a wide range of species, clean air and water, and a green landscape.

POTENTIAL ACTION	Individual 	Community Partner 	Municipality 
Learn about the benefits of green roofs in your community by attending a Green Roof Workshop or visiting a demonstration site	✓	✓	
Facilitate communication about green roofs and their benefits across the region's municipalities, businesses and organizations		✓	✓
Celebrate business and industry champions who make great strides in reducing GHG emissions		✓	
Assess the feasibility of installing your own green roof, roof top or vertical garden	✓	✓	✓
Participate in broader GHG and climate change programs provincially, nationally and internationally			✓
Consider policy and bylaw development or changes to support green roofs			✓
Develop a local action plan to reduce corporate and community GHG emissions		✓	✓
Conduct more green roof and white roof research and advocate for more installations in Niagara	✓	✓	✓
Prioritize greenhouse gas emission (GHG) management		✓	✓
Create a plan to increase recycling rates, decrease water usage, and reduce sewer bypass rates			✓
Review the <i>Naturals Area Inventory</i> and develop a plan to address priority clean-up sites with local volunteers		✓	✓
Continue to update the natural areas inventory to track species diversity and natural vegetation communities		✓	✓
Develop a strategy to achieve the recommended 30 percent natural/forest lands coverage in the region		✓	✓
Recognize farmers as stewards of nature	✓	✓	✓

<h2 style="text-align: center; color: green;">POTENTIAL ACTION</h2>	Individual 	Community Partner 	Municipality 
Help “delist” the Niagara River as an Area of Concern	✓	✓	✓
Incorporate more “green” storm water infrastructure			✓
Coordinate environmental research with academic and community partners		✓	✓
Mandate a specific percentage of vegetation in new developments be native species			✓





ENCOURAGING GREEN ROOFS IN NIAGARA

Green roofs can provide many local benefits including stormwater management, reduction of urban heat island effects, improved air quality, new outdoor spaces, opportunities for urban agriculture, energy efficiency, enhanced biodiversity and reduced greenhouse gas emissions. This priority focuses on developing a strategy for green roofs in Niagara that includes conducting research on how green roofs can benefit Niagara's communities, design and development of green roofs; green roof related policy in the region; and education and outreach about the benefits of green roofs to our communities.

SUGGESTED IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS:

Research the Opportunity for Green Roofs in Niagara

- Conduct an inventory of green roof expertise
- Support a Roof Space Inventory to identify buildings suitable for green roof applications (e.g. develop a green roof feasibility tool or identify green roof professional who can conduct assessments)
- Identify the potential environmental benefits of widespread implementation of green roofs for Niagara region, given the local environment and climate
- Identify barriers and solutions to green roof implementation in Niagara
- Seek funding for research
- Investigate green roof investment and maintenance requirements

Design and Development of Green Roofs

- Investigate the potential of developing and implementing pilot green roof projects on municipal or other buildings
- Develop green roof demonstration sites that are readily accessible

Policy Development

- Review development planning policies and existing policies in other regions in Ontario, Canada (e.g. Toronto) and internationally
- Prepare a discussion paper on green roofs for Niagara with options for encouraging implementation of green roofs in Niagara (including topics such as incentives, regulations, development approval processes, building standards, education and outreach)
- Advocate for policy change that supports green roof development

Education and Outreach

- Design and deliver green roof educational workshops
- Link with relevant community awards

Potential Lead Organizations: Niagara College and Vineland Centre for Research and Innovation.

Potential Partners: Structural engineers; Niagara Region (through incentives); Local Municipalities (for policy development); Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority; Niagara Sustainability Initiative, Sustainable Niagara; Local Distribution Companies (LDCs); Enbridge Gas; and farmers.

Indicators to Measure Progress:

- Projections of environmental benefits such as reduction in stormwater runoff, energy and greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions reductions and others based on square footage of roofs
- Establishment of green roof demonstration sites
- Number of municipalities with green roof supportive policies and by-laws

- Number of building permits supporting green roofs
 - Number of green roofs in Niagara region
 - Number of green roof workshops delivered
-

Desired Outcomes:

- Acquire baseline data for the amount of available roof space in Niagara (i.e. Roof Space Inventory)
 - Identification of a target percentage for reducing non-green roof space
 - Increase in the number of green roofs in Niagara
 - Delivery of four Green Roof Workshops per year
-

Suggested Timeframe: By 2013, the Roof Space Inventory will be completed, targets defined, and Green Roof workshops underway.

encouraging green roofs in niagara



TRACKING AND REDUCING GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS

Greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) are the leading cause of human induced climate change. By having a better understanding of what our GHG emissions are in Niagara, steps can be taken towards managing our GHG emissions and increasing Niagara's contribution to solving a global problem. This priority area will involve continual measurement of our GHG emissions (e.g. did you know that Niagara already has a GHG inventory) to develop appropriate steps to reduce GHG emissions. This action will target the two highest sources of GHG emissions in Niagara - the Industrial, Commercial and Institutional (ICI) sector and transportation sector at 35 percent and 40 percent of our total GHG emissions respectively.

SUGGESTED IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS:

- Collect sector-specific data on GHG emissions that is broken down by source (complete)
- Conduct an industry-specific baseline inventory of emissions (complete)
- Conduct an inventory of who is carrying out emission reduction activities
- Establish targets for GHG emission reductions across sectors
- Design a location action plan including (but not limited to):
 - Designing a transportation commuting strategy (for example, “smart commute”, “travel wise”) that is aligned with the transportation strategy (see Priority Area #13)
 - Designing a IC&I GHG emission reduction strategy
- Implement the actions defined in the local action plan
- Develop a monitoring and progress reporting strategy that includes:
 - Mechanisms to report on GHG emission data to public
 - Educational workshops focused on climate change awareness and GHG emission reduction actions

Potential Lead Organizations: Niagara Climate Change Network, Niagara Sustainability Initiative; Niagara Region; industry leaders.

Potential Partners: Ministry of Transportation; LDCs.

Indicators to Measure Progress:

- CO₂ emissions over time for all sources, compared to other regions
- Industry-specific baseline numbers
- Number of organizations engaged

Desired Outcomes:

- Reduced GHG emissions (CO₂) in each sector
- Increase the number of organizations participating in GHG emission reduction activities

Suggested Timeframe: Ongoing with annual reporting.

GOVERNANCE

In 2060 Niagara is a leader in effective governance, responding to, anticipating and representing the current and future needs of its residents.

POTENTIAL ACTION	Individual 	Community Partner 	Municipality 
Get involved in community engagement opportunities in your community	✓		
Research and talk to people about what kinds of organizations are doing similar work to yours		✓	
Learn about the types of organizations, initiatives and opportunities that are in your community on the “Information Niagara” website	✓		
Ensure your organization is listed in “Information Niagara”		✓	
Complete the Niagara Planning and Research Council’s Knowledge Exchange and integrate the Sustainable Niagara Online Action Bank		✓	✓
Create a comprehensive, inclusive community calendar of events occurring in Niagara and opportunities for collaboration		✓	✓
Increase Niagara-wide planning and partnerships	✓	✓	✓
Establish mechanisms to encourage all NGOs and community groups to collaborate and be updated with each other’s programs and success.	✓	✓	✓
Support initiatives to build linkages between private enterprise and the "for social profit" sector		✓	✓
Develop new leadership approaches and innovative ideas for prosperity development		✓	✓
Support the creation of a culture that helps youth to develop entrepreneurial skills, creativity, and innovation	✓	✓	✓
Encourage the public to participate in local government	✓	✓	✓
Create a municipal sustainability charter	✓	✓	✓
Advocate for governance that demonstrates integrity, honesty, and transparency	✓	✓	✓
Forster inclusive participatory and responsive governance	✓	✓	✓
Develop and promote e-governance tools that can provide			✓

<h2 style="text-align: center; color: #0070C0;">POTENTIAL ACTION</h2>	Individual 	Community Partner 	Municipality 
residents with updates based on postal codes allowing people to easily participate in decisions that affect them			
Consider hiring an aboriginal liaison at Niagara Region to help coordinate government and agency interaction with aboriginal communities			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Continue to develop a Niagara-wide culture of involving citizens in civic engagement	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Create actual, virtual, and relational space (i.e. Centre for Social Innovation) where community dialogue and innovative action strategies can be nurtured	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>





CREATING A NIAGARA COLLABORATIVE

Niagara has a wealth of non-governmental and non-profit community organizations working hard to make our communities a better place. However, these organizations face many challenges in delivering their programs and services, including lack of time, money, personnel, and specific skill sets. There is also a need for more opportunities to learn about what others are doing in the region to decrease overlap. This priority involves establishing a physical and virtual network to support NGO's in Niagara. This will involve identifying existing needs in NGOs across Niagara, and brainstorming mechanisms to address those needs – from information sharing, to networking opportunities, to skill bartering websites.

SUGGESTED IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS:

- Meet with interested stakeholders
- Conduct a study on our current situation including existing service duplications and needs analysis for collaboration
- Develop a vision by asking stakeholders “Where do you want to go?”
- Create a business case that:
 - Identifies potential costs and savings, as well as potential time savings for business;
 - Identifies opportunities for streamlining of existing services
 - Outlines options and opportunities
 - Outlines key factors needed for success
- Hold “putting the pieces together” workshops to identify integration and collaboration opportunities
- Update Information Niagara
- Compile a resource and action inventory across the region to help identify overlap and opportunities for skill bartering
- Explore a virtual infrastructure for knowledge sharing, success stories, networking, etc.
- Explore the possibility of a “one stop shop” listing all programs/projects/events in Niagara
- Consider opportunities and challenges of building a physical Centre for Social Innovation in Niagara (e.g. speak with communities who have one; identify potential locations; poll on interest; explore funding opportunities, etc.)
- Define a governance model that does not lose Niagara's uniqueness
- Implement a broad marketing and communication campaign

Potential Lead Organizations: United Ways; Niagara Research and Planning Council; Information Niagara; Collaboration Task Force.

Potential Partners: Individual NGO's invested in collaboration, community leaders and residents.

Indicators to Measure Progress:

- Number of partnerships developed
- Number of units exchanged (time shared)
- Client satisfaction (testimonials)
- Information shared
- Establishment of a virtual network
- Establishment of a physical centre (long term)

Desired Outcomes:

- Increased collaboration across community organizations
- Information and skill sharing across NGOs
- Streamlined public sector services

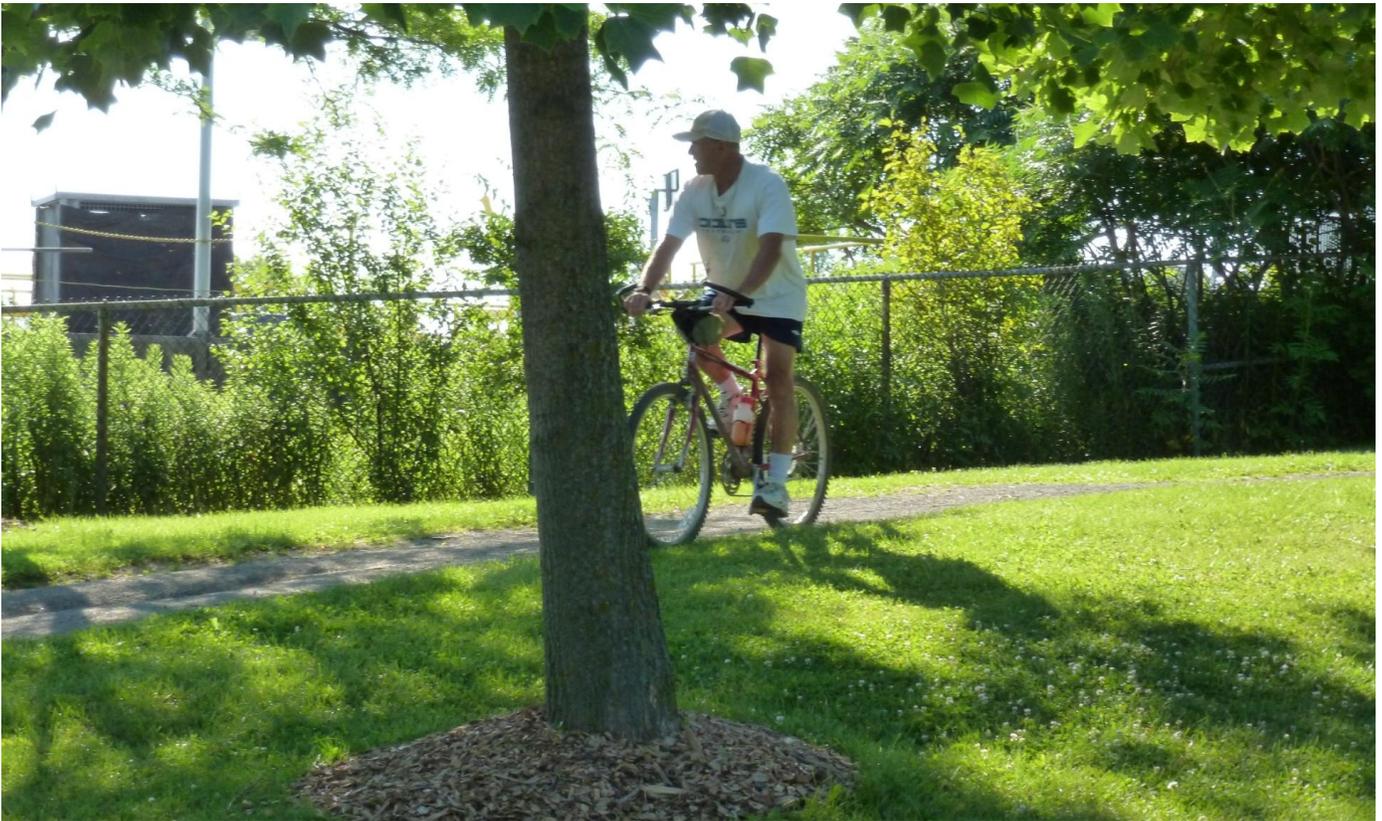
Suggested Timeframe: Ongoing.

HEALTH & SECURITY

In 2060, Niagara residents enjoy complete physical, mental and social well-being.

POTENTIAL ACTION	Individual 	Community Partner 	Municipality 
Buy local to support a healthy local economy	✓	✓	✓
Donate to a local charity organization or food bank	✓	✓	✓
Be an advocate for poverty reduction	✓	✓	✓
Increase community knowledge of and access to local health systems		✓	✓
Support Healthy Living Niagara and its community partners in process of leading creation of a Mental Health Charter	✓	✓	✓
Support Niagara Suicide Prevention Coalition activities	✓	✓	✓
Strengthen Niagara's investments in poverty reduction	✓	✓	✓
Invest in children and youth to improve their health, well-being, education, and resiliency		✓	✓
Support and endorse the actions promoted in the Ontario Poverty Reduction Strategy and Building a New Legacy: Increasing Prosperity for Niagara Residents by Improving the Quality of Neighbourhood Life	✓	✓	✓
Offer employment experience to persons living in poverty		✓	✓
Participate in community discussions and actions that support poverty elimination and engage those living in poverty in the discussions	✓		
Collaborate with other not-for-profit organizations to share resources and skills	✓	✓	✓
Work towards a national housing strategy	✓	✓	✓
Increase the profile of poverty reduction strategies across the region by effective media information dissemination		✓	✓
Create a cohesive Niagara-wide initiative to assist women requiring housing because of poverty and/or violence	✓	✓	✓
Improve access and affordability of recreation and sports for all ages, including for family-shared types of recreation		✓	
Develop specific strategies to assist unique populations (including youth and seniors) with shelter and housing needs			✓

<h2 style="text-align: center;">POTENTIAL ACTION</h2>	Individual 	Community Partner 	Municipality 
Expand and resource supported housing arrangements for seniors and persons with disabilities			
Develop a cross-sectoral collaboration that emphasizes the value of seniors aging in their own homes			
Expand the community policing program and intensify efforts to engage the public, youth, and other sectors			



INVESTING IN NIAGARA'S POVERTY REDUCTION STRATEGY



The Niagara Prosperity Initiative was established in 2008 to support poverty reduction and prevention activities across the region. The Initiative has its roots in a 2007 report called *A Legacy of Poverty? Addressing Cycles of Poverty and the Impact on Child Health in Niagara Region*. This report highlights that the “experience of poverty has wide sweeping effects on the quality of life and health of individuals, families and communities. In fact, poverty is often identified as the most important determinant of health, as it is highly associated with diminished access to the other determinants of health (e.g., housing, education, social supports).

One of the goals of the Initiative is to guide decisions and leverage both community resources and investment. The Initiative currently provides for an annual investment of \$1.5 million to support poverty reduction and prevention activities.

This Priority Area focuses on strengthening the investment of resources that can support poverty reduction efforts in Niagara region.

SUGGESTED IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS:

- Design and implement a public education and awareness campaign around the Niagara Poverty Initiative or Strategy that:
 - Dispels the myths about poverty
 - Changes the public’s perception of people living in poverty
 - Provides information for all residents in Niagara that focuses on “what can you do?”
 - Improves collaboration and actions in poverty reduction efforts by all stakeholders;
 - Emphasizes inclusion and engagement
- Identify best practices in other regions that have successfully encouraged an anti-poverty movement, and see how this can be applied to Niagara
- Develop a resource investment strategy

Potential Lead Organization: Niagara Prosperity Community Committee.

Potential Partners: Regional and municipal governments; businesses; community organizations; educators; Niagara residents.

Indicators to Measure Progress:

- Amount of investment in poverty reduction (both dollars and resources)
- Level of community participation in poverty reduction activities
- Poverty indicators provided in *Ontario’s Poverty Reduction Strategy* and

Building a New Legacy: Increasing Prosperity for Niagara Residents by Improving the Quality of Neighbourhood Life, such as:

- Healthy birth weights
- Percentage of children under 18 living in a family with an income less than 40 percent and 50 percent of the median adjusted family income in 2008
- Percent of Low Income Cut Off families in Niagara and others

Suggested Timeframe:

Ongoing until poverty is eliminated.

INFRASTRUCTURE SYSTEMS

In 2060 Niagara will have physical and social infrastructure systems that are of outstanding quality and are fully integrated - environmentally, socially, economically and culturally.

POTENTIAL ACTION	Individual 	Community Partner 	Municipality 
Walk, bike or carpool to work or school	✓		
Turn your engine off if you are idling your vehicle for more than 20 seconds	✓		
Advocate for more public transit options and more paths and trails for active transportation in your community		✓	
Organize and support a car share program or smart commute		✓	
Lobby for improved GO Train service to Niagara region	✓	✓	✓
Turn up the temperature on your air conditioning	✓	✓	✓
Wash clothes in cold water	✓		
Use a clothes line	✓		
Switch off lights, power bars, and unplug electrical devices when not in use	✓	✓	✓
Purchase energy star rated appliances	✓		
Continue to develop the Regional Niagara Transportation Strategy with a focus on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Accessibility and transportation linkages ○ Regional transit to be developed to reach rural communities ○ Long-term transportation capacity planning ○ Inter-municipal transportation system schedule refinements 			✓
Develop local pedestrian and bicycle master plans and supporting policies with a focus on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Enhanced and increased bike paths, and walking paths ○ Bicycle infrastructure ○ Shared use lanes and pathways ○ Financial and maintenance strategy 		✓	✓

POTENTIAL ACTION	Individual 	Community Partner 	Municipality 
Consider preferred parking for electric vehicles, smaller cars, and E-Bikes	✓	✓	✓
Provide and maintain infrastructure to safely meet the needs of the agricultural industry		✓	✓
Work with transit authorities to provide elementary and secondary school students with transit passes	✓	✓	✓
Create community carpool program that reaches residents from both rural and urban Niagara	✓	✓	✓
Develop and implement anti- idling bylaws			✓
Institute a net-metering solar energy policy in Niagara			✓
Install LED streetlights and funding for non-microFIT solar installs			✓
Adopt a dark skies policy			✓
Have an energy audit done and implement the recommendations	✓	✓	✓
Participate in provincial energy conservation programs	✓	✓	✓
Identify and pursue opportunities to reduce your energy consumption in your operations		✓	✓
Demonstrate, promote and communicate the benefits of energy-efficient operations		✓	✓
Develop Energy Management Plans		✓	✓
Celebrate energy champions by featuring them in community newsletters, special events, and other communication means		✓	✓
Provide incentives and recognition for businesses that make significant changes in energy management			✓
Promote the use of storm water management strategies such as bioswales, porous pavements and green roof application	✓	✓	✓



ENERGY MANAGEMENT PLANNING

As technology changes, so will our energy conservation culture. It is important to understand the consequences of our energy use, and the benefits that energy conservation practices can bring to Niagara. Energy management planning is a requirement for all public agencies such as municipalities under the Ontario Green Energy Act. This priority therefore focuses on the private sector and involves creating a regional benchmarking and audit system for businesses, and consolidating existing energy conservation incentives. The intention is to make it easy for businesses to participate in energy conservation by offering standard solutions, and to create a culture in Niagara's business and industry community that supports energy conservation and management.

SUGGESTED IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS:

- Identify a key business champion(s) to lead the charge;
- Assess current use of electricity, gas and renewable energy sources for various types of businesses (e.g. industrial, commercial) and various sizes (e.g. small, medium, large)
- Identify goals and targets for energy conservation and management
- Identify energy management actions
- Create monitoring templates that are easy to complete
- Select pilot sites to test energy management options
- Report on results and successes
- Provide resources and tools to assist businesses to develop energy management plans;
- Gain buy-in from key influencers to encourage more organizations to participate
- Implement a broad communication campaign to businesses about existing conservation incentives and money savings from conservation practices
- Celebrate and promote successes

Potential Lead Organizations: Utilities.

Potential Partners: Municipal and regional energy conservation champions; energy champions with success stories to share; businesses showcasing in a single location (e.g. Pearson Eco-Industrial Zone).

Indicators to Measure Progress:

- Units of energy consumed/conserved
- Industry-specific units of energy used per:
 - product manufactured
 - employee or student
 - square footage of facility
- Number of businesses participating

Desired Outcomes:

- Increased participation by business and industry in energy conservation practices
- Increased awareness of existing programs and incentives
- Decreased energy use across the private sector

Suggested Timeframe:

Ongoing.



CONTINUING REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLANNING

Niagara's 2002 transportation strategy contains directions and initiatives related to the improvement of the Region's transportation network. As the strategy nears its 10th anniversary, the Region is reviewing the document to ensure its content and recommendations are still relevant, current and appropriate. The updated strategies currently include:

- Improve connectivity and travel and commuting conditions within, to and from Niagara for our residents, employees and visitors
- Improve conditions for the efficient and appropriate movement of goods within, to and from Niagara
- Recognize the influence that transportation and land use development have on economics, social well-being, public health, and the natural environment, and support plans, policies, infrastructure and programs that improve these aspects of life in Niagara
- Encourage increased use of transit and active transportation through the development of supportive plans, policies, programs and infrastructure
- Encourage coordination between agencies, governments, businesses and the community in the areas of transportation planning and project/program implementation
- Include a comprehensive accessibility review, including the social, environmental and economic perspectives, in the planning of new or improved transportation programs, infrastructure and initiatives

For more information, please visit:

<http://www.niagararegion.ca/living/roads/projects/transportation-strat/default.aspx>

SUGGESTED IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS:

- Work with organizations and committees currently developing the Niagara Transportation strategy
- Identify a transportation planning champion(s) whose influence can help move the strategy forward
- Provide input and review of the Strategy to ensure it includes consideration of:
 - Extension of regional transit systems
 - Car share and carpooling
 - Enhancement of walking paths and bike paths
 - Local municipal Bicycle Master Plans and Pedestrian Master Plans
- Explore best practices in other communities

Potential Lead Organization: Niagara Region.

Potential Partners: local municipalities, Active Transportation Niagara Network, business, utilities, Car share, Metrolinx (GO Transit), CN Rail, CP Rail, Trillium Railway, St. Lawrence Seaway Management Corporation, Niagara Parks Commission, Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority Ministry of Transportation and Transport Canada.

Indicators to Measure Progress:

- Commute Distance
- Kilometres of Bike lanes
- Metres of new sidewalk
- Transportation infrastructure gap

Desired Outcomes:

A completed Niagara-wide Transportation Strategy that is inclusive and accessible.

Suggested Timeframe:

2012.

APPENDIX A: COMMUNITY PARTNERS AGREEMENT

To insert on Organization Letterhead

[DATE]

Erin Britnell, Sustainability Coordinator
Integrated Community Planning Department
Niagara Region
2201 St. David's Road
P.O. Box 1042
Thorold, ON L2V 4T7

Re: Commitment Letter to the Sustainable Niagara Partnership Program

Dear Ms. Britnell

It is our understanding that Sustainable Niagara is an integrated community sustainability plan developed for the Niagara region community. Sustainable Niagara is built on the premise that if everyone contributes in their own way, Niagara will be better positioned to move towards sustainability. As such, the plan includes a community partnership program which provides private sector, public sector, and not-for-profit organizations with a way to work collectively to make our local community more sustainable. Community partners can help by agreeing to participate in the overall implementation of the Sustainable Niagara plan. We understand that Sustainable Niagara offers three levels of participation as a partner – Participating Partner, and Priority Action Partners, and Leaders - outlined as follows:

Participating Partners make a commitment to:

- Identify actions we are already doing that support the vision and goals of Sustainable Niagara in the online Action Bank
- Measure our progress
- Provide updates annually on our progress

Priority Areas Partners make a commitment to the above with a specific focus on the following Priority(s):

- Energy Management Planning
- Promoting a Buy Local Movement in Niagara
- Investing in Niagara's Poverty Reduction Strategy
- Encouraging Green Roofs in Niagara
- Tracking and Reducing Greenhouse Gas Emissions
- Supporting New Farmers
- Researching and Promoting Precision Agriculture
- Creating a Coordinated Economic Development Strategy
- Completing Our Streets
- Creating a Niagara Collaborative
- Strengthening Education for a Sustainable Future
- Continuing Regional Transportation Planning

- Monitoring the Economic Impacts of our Cultural Sector

Leaders make a commitment to:

- Support the vision of Sustainable Niagara through a municipal resolution of Council, a Band Council resolution, a board of directors resolution, or a policy or similar
- Include the actions that our organization is already taking in the Online Action Bank.
- Integrate Sustainable Niagara into our operations by selecting one of the following approaches:
 - Adopt Sustainable Niagara and its goals and strategic directions; OR
 - Adapt the goals to meet the needs of our organization and use the strategic directions that are a good fit; OR
 - Align the organization's strategic goals and objectives with Sustainable Niagara the next time that they are reviewed and updated.
- Assist Sustainable Niagara by providing guidance, direction and support where possible.

As a partner, we will assist in creating an annual report on Sustainable Niagara by sharing information on our successes during the year. We understand that Sustainable Niagara will promote our efforts within the community and beyond through the internet and social media.

Our organization would be pleased to be involved as a Participating/Priority Area/Leaders partner in the implementation of the Sustainable Niagara plan for the region. We are excited to participate in such a forward-looking project that takes into account the future of this region.

Name of Organization: _____

Date: _____

Authorized Signature: _____

(Print Name): _____

Email: _____

Phone: _____

APPENDIX B: CITIZENS COMMITMENT

Citizens of a Sustainable Niagara

We invite you, as a member of the Niagara community, to make a personal commitment to adopt a change that helps promote sustainability.

Below are 30 commitments you can make related to a more sustainable future. By committing to one simple act and encouraging others to do the same, you can make a huge positive impact.

- 1 Choose one of the following simple actions that you are currently not doing. Choose to make a commitment to practice this action in your daily life by selecting it.

If you would like to commit to a new action that is not on this list, skip this question and share your customized personal commitment in question two.

- I will use reusable bags.
- I will switch off lights, power bars, and unplug electrical devices when not in use.
- I will strive to be idle-free while driving.
- I will wash my clothes in cold water
- I will turn down my AC
- I will use a clothes line
- I will shop at local farmers markets or roadside stands
- I will visit a farm and talk to a farmer
- I will tell my neighbours about the Sustainable Niagara Plan
- I will volunteer for a community organization, event, activity, or community project
- I will pick up litter
- I will plant a backyard garden
- I will experience local cultural events
- I will learn something new everyday
- I will use ecologically friendly building materials or cleaning products
- I will teach someone to read
- I will mentor someone
- I will support new business
- I will take a walk, hike or ride a bike to explore my Niagara
- I will walk or bike to work
- I will carpool
- I will walk my children to school
- I will explore our downtown cores
- I will shop locally
- I will support more bike and pedestrian friendly developments
- I will explore local trails
- I will visit a local museum
- I will take a course, class or learn something new
- I will visit a historic site
- I will explore the Niagara escarpment

- 2 I will commit to my own idea. I will...
- 3 I will make this commitment for (indicate length of time-month(s), day(s), year(s)):
- 4 To encourage others to participate and see the actions that they can take as a citizen, we would like publish your name and actions online. Please provide your name if you are willing to allow Sustainable Niagara to publish your name online.
- 5 How you would like to keep in touch with Sustainable Niagara.
 - I would like you to send me a reminder about my commitment.
 - I would like to receive the Sustainable Niagara's electronic updates.

Please email me at this address: