



GROWING REGION

**NIAGARA** OFFICIAL PLAN



# GROWING REGION



## 2.1 Forecasted Growth

The Niagara Region is planning to accommodate a minimum population of 694,000 people and 272,000 jobs by 2051. This represents an increase of over 200,000 people and 85,000 jobs compared to 2021. Effective and proactive growth management is needed to ensure there is appropriate housing, employment, and *infrastructure* available to support Niagara's growth.

Land use, housing, and servicing is planned using the forecasts set out in Table 2-1. The Region will monitor these forecasts to ensure growth is planned for and managed based on reliable data.

The objective of this section is as follows:

- a. coordinate Regional growth forecasts with land use, transportation, *infrastructure* and financial planning.

### 2.1.1 Regional Growth Forecasts

- 2.1.1.1 Population and employment forecasts listed in Table 2-1 are the basis for land use planning decisions to 2051.
- 2.1.1.2 Forecasts in Table 2-1 are a minimum.
- 2.1.1.3 Forecasts in Table 2-1 are used to determine the location and capacity of *infrastructure*, *public service facilities*, and the delivery of related programs and services required to meet the needs of Niagara's current and future residents.
- 2.1.1.4 Local Area Municipalities shall plan to accommodate the population and employment allocations in Table 2-1 in Local official plans and use the allocations to determine the location and capacity of Local *infrastructure*, *public service facilities*, and related programs and services to 2051.

**2.1.1.5** Local Area Municipalities may plan for *infrastructure* and employment uses in addition to what is set out in Table 2-1, but cannot designate lands for urban or rural *settlement areas* or *employment areas* except as set out in Schedule B and Schedule G.

**2.1.1.6** The Region shall undertake a land needs assessment during a *municipal comprehensive review* to review Table 2-1 or implement new forecasts provided by the Province.

**2.1.1.7** The Region, in consultation with Local Area Municipalities, will monitor and review the distribution of growth forecasts between municipalities in Table 2-1 every five years and revise the allocations, if necessary, through a *municipal comprehensive review*.

**2.1.1.8** Nothing in this Plan limits planning for *infrastructure*, *public service facilities* and *employment areas* beyond 2051.

### **Population and Employment Forecasts**

Forecasts in Table 2-1 shall be accommodated predominantly within *settlement areas* as shown on Schedule B. The forecasts in Table 2-1 were used to complete the Region's land needs assessment to determine the Region's community and employment land need.

**Table 2-1     2051 Population and Employment Forecasts by Local Area Municipality**

<b>Municipality</b>	<b>Population</b>	<b>Employment</b>
Fort Erie	48,050	18,430
Grimsby	37,000	14,960
Lincoln	45,660	15,220
Niagara Falls	141,650	58,110
Niagara-on-the-Lake	28,900	17,610
Pelham	28,830	7,140
Port Colborne	23,230	7,550
St. Catharines	171,890	79,350
Thorold	39,690	12,510
Wainfleet	7,730	1,830
Welland	83,000	28,790
West Lincoln	38,370	10,480
<b>Niagara Region</b>	<b>694,000</b>	<b>272,000</b>

## 2.2 Regional Structure

The policies in this section establish a regional structure that directs forecasted growth to *settlement areas*.

*Settlement areas* are comprised of both *urban areas*, which include *built-up areas*, *designated greenfield areas* and *strategic growth areas*, as well as *rural settlements*, otherwise known as hamlets.

Most *development* will occur in *urban areas*, where *municipal water and wastewater systems/services* exist or are planned and a range of transportation options can be provided. In particular, *strategic growth areas* are identified to accommodate a significant portion of the Region's population growth, higher density housing forms, and a greater mix of land uses.

Strategically directing growth can be achieved through a balanced mix of *built forms* in our communities. The policies in this section support principles of *complete communities*, which incorporate sustainable land use forms to make Niagara's communities more resilient and *infrastructure* adaptive to the impacts of *climate change*.

Established residential neighbourhoods have a unique scale and character. Local Area Municipalities may establish standards for appropriate infill *development* in these areas.

### The objectives of this section are as follows:

- a. manage growth within *urban areas*;
- b. accommodate growth through strategic *intensification* and higher densities;
- c. protect and enhance the character of *rural settlements*;
- d. plan for the orderly implementation of *infrastructure* and *public service facilities*; and ensure *settlement area* expansions support Regional forecasts and growth management objectives; and
- e. promote *transit-supportive* development to increase transit usage, decrease greenhouse gas emissions, and support the overall health of the community.

## 2.2.1 Managing Urban Growth

2.2.1.1 *Development* in *urban areas* will integrate land use planning and *infrastructure* planning to responsibly manage forecasted growth and to support:

- a. the *intensification* targets in Table 2-2 and density targets outlined in this Plan;
- b. a *compact built form*, a vibrant *public realm*, and a mix of land uses, including residential uses, employment uses, recreational uses, and *public service facilities*, to support the creation of *complete communities*;
- c. a diverse range and mix of housing types, unit sizes, and densities to accommodate current and future market-based and *affordable* housing needs;
- d. social equity, public health and safety, and the overall quality of life for people of all ages, abilities, and incomes by expanding convenient access to:
  - i. a range of transportation options, including public transit and *active transportation*;
  - ii. affordable, locally grown food and other sources of *urban agriculture*;
  - iii. co-located *public service facilities*; and
  - iv. the *public realm*, including open spaces, parks, trails, and other recreational facilities;
- e. *built forms*, land use patterns, and street configurations that minimize land consumption, reduce costs of *municipal water and wastewater systems/services*, and optimize investments in *infrastructure* to support the financial well-being of the Region and Local Area Municipalities;
- f. opportunities for *transit-supportive* development pursuant to Policies 2.2.2.17, 2.2.2.18 and 2.2.2.19;

### Transit-Supportive Development

*Transit-supportive* development typically consists of mixed-use buildings, integrated transit facilities, and high-quality public spaces. It encourages *place-making* and fosters high-density planning to support public transit, protect green space and lower emissions to assist in addressing *climate change*.

- g. opportunities for *intensification*, including infill *development*, and the *redevelopment* of *brownfields* and *greyfield sites*;
- h. opportunities for the integration of gentle density, and a mix and range of housing options that considers the character of established residential neighbourhoods;
- i. the development of a mix of residential *built forms* in appropriate locations, such as *local growth centres*, to ensure compatibility with established residential areas;
- j. conservation or reuse of *cultural heritage resources* pursuant to Section 6.5;
- k. orderly *development* in accordance with the availability and provision of *infrastructure* and *public service facilities*; and
- l. mitigation and adaptation to the impacts of *climate change* by:
  - i. protecting *natural heritage features and areas*, *water resource systems*, and other components of the Region's *natural environment system* pursuant to Section 3.1;
  - ii. where possible, integrating *green infrastructure* and *low impact development* into the design and construction of *public service facilities* and private *development*; and
  - iii. promoting *built forms*, land use patterns, and street configurations that improve community resilience and sustainability, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and conserve biodiversity.

## 2.2.2 Strategic Intensification and Higher Densities

- 2.2.2.1** Within *urban areas*, forecasted population growth will be accommodated primarily through *intensification* in *built-up areas* with particular focus on the following locations:
- a. *strategic growth areas*, including:
    - i. Downtown St. Catharines *urban growth centre*;
    - ii. *protected major transit station areas*;
    - iii. regional growth centres; and
    - iv. district plan areas identified in Section 6.1;

- b. areas with existing or planned *public service facilities*;
- c. other locations with existing or planned transit service, with a priority on areas with existing or planned *frequent transit service*; and
- d. *local growth centres and corridors*, as identified by Local Area Municipalities.

**2.2.2.2** Within *urban areas*, forecasted employment growth will be primarily accommodated within the *employment areas* shown on Schedule B and Schedule G, and subject to the policies of Section 4.2.

**2.2.2.3** *Built-up areas* and *strategic growth areas* identified in Policy 2.2.2.1 are shown on Schedule B.

**2.2.2.4** *Settlement area* boundaries, *built-up areas*, *strategic growth areas*, and *designated greenfield areas*, where applicable, shall be identified in Local official plans.

**2.2.2.5** A Regional minimum of 60 percent of all residential units occurring annually will be within *built-up areas*.

**2.2.2.6** Local Area Municipalities shall establish *intensification* targets in their official plans that meet or exceed the targets identified in Table 2-2.

**Table 2-2 Niagara Region Minimum Residential Intensification Targets by Local Area Municipality 2021-2051**

Municipality	Units	Rate
Fort Erie	3,680	50%
Grimsby	4,500	98%
Lincoln	8,895	90%
Niagara Falls	10,100	50%
Niagara-on-the-Lake	1,150	25%
Pelham	1,030	25%
Port Colborne	690	30%
St. Catharines	18,780	95%
Thorold	1,610	25%
Wainfleet	0	0%
Welland	10,440	75%
West Lincoln	1,130	13%
<b>Niagara Region</b>	<b>62,005</b>	<b>60%</b>

Note: Local Area Municipalities may plan for additional *intensification* units and higher *intensification* rates within *built-up areas* than those identified in Table 2-2 for *infrastructure* purposes as it reflects *development* trends and land use permissions at the time of Local conformity.

**2.2.2.7** Local Area Municipalities shall prepare *intensification* strategies to set out where and how the minimum *intensification* targets in Table 2-2 will be accommodated.

**2.2.2.8** Local *intensification* strategies will identify *strategic growth areas*, as shown on Schedule B, and *local growth centres* as a focus for *intensification*, as well as other areas appropriate for *intensification*.

**2.2.2.9** Local Area Municipalities may apply different *intensification* targets throughout their *built-up area*, provided the overall minimum *intensification* target in Table 2-2 for their municipality is planned to be achieved.

- 2.2.2.10** Local *intensification* strategies shall be implemented through Local official plans, secondary plans, zoning by-laws, and other supporting documents that identify:
- a. *development* standards to support the achievement of *complete communities*, permit and facilitate a *compact built form* and all forms of *intensification* throughout the *built-up area*, and avoid or mitigate risks to public health and safety;
  - b. the location and boundaries of *local growth centres and corridors*, that:
    - i. are considered priority areas for *development*;
    - ii. achieve higher densities than what currently exist;
    - iii. identify an appropriate design and scale of *development* and the transition of *built forms* to adjacent areas pursuant to Section 6.2;
    - iv. provide a diverse mix of land uses at densities that support existing or planned public transit and *active transportation* infrastructure;
    - v. support the provision of *affordable* housing; and
    - vi. revitalize and, where appropriate, preserve *cultural heritage resources* within areas that reflect local heritage, character, and streetscapes pursuant to Section 6.5;
  - c. other major opportunities for *intensification*, such as infill, *redevelopment*, *brownfields*, and the expansion or conversion of existing buildings and *greyfield sites*; and
  - d. the timing and efficient provision of Regional and Local *municipal water and wastewater systems/services* and their fiscal impacts on the Region and Local Area Municipality.
- 2.2.2.11** *Strategic growth areas* are the highest priority for *development* and *intensification*, as well as the primary location for major *public service facilities*, *major institutional uses*, high density and mixed-use development, *major office uses*, *major commercial uses* and *major recreational uses*.
- 2.2.2.12** Local Area Municipalities shall identify the applicable *strategic growth area* minimum density targets outlined in Table 2-3 in their official plans.

**Table 2-3 Minimum Density Targets for Identified Strategic Growth Areas**

Strategic Growth Area	Density Target
Downtown St. Catharines Urban Growth Centre	150 people and jobs per hectare by <b>2031</b>
Protected Major Transit Station Areas in St. Catharines, Lincoln, Niagara Falls, and Grimsby	125 people and jobs per hectare by <b>2051</b>
Downtown Welland Regional Growth Centre	125 people and jobs per hectare by <b>2051</b>
South Niagara Falls Hospital Regional Growth Centre	100 people and jobs per hectare by <b>2051</b>
Brock and Glendale Niagara District Plans	100 people and jobs per hectare by <b>2051</b>

**2.2.2.13** The *strategic growth areas* identified in Policy 2.2.2.1 a) shall be planned by secondary plan, or equivalent work, in accordance with Section 6.1.

**2.2.2.14** The Downtown St. Catharines *urban growth centre* will be planned:

- a. as the focal point for investment in *major office uses*, commercial, recreational, cultural, civic, and entertainment uses, *public service facilities*, and related programs and services;
- b. to serve as a high density employment centre that will attract employment uses;
- c. to accommodate and support opportunities for *transit-supportive* densities, including high density residential, mixed-use development, and *affordable* and *attainable housing*; and
- d. as a transit hub that supports investments in and improvements to public transit and *active transportation* infrastructure.

**2.2.2.15** The use of a Community Planning Permit System should be considered within the Downtown St. Catharine's *Urban Growth Centre* to facilitate *development* within the area and the use of inclusionary zoning.

- 2.2.2.16** *Protected major transit station areas*, as shown on Schedule B, are the existing, planned and proposed *higher order transit* stations in St. Catharines, Lincoln, Niagara Falls and Grimsby.
- 2.2.2.17** *Protected major transit stations areas* will be required to achieve the minimum density targets outlined in Policy 2.2.2.12 and, in accordance with Policy 2.2.2.13 will be implemented through secondary plans or equivalent in official plan policy that:
- a. identify authorized land uses in the area;
  - b. identify the minimum authorized densities;
  - c. incorporate *transit-supportive* planning and design;
  - d. provide for *multimodal* connections and access to Regional public transit service, and *major trip generators* where appropriate;
  - e. provide for *infrastructure* to support *active transportation*, including sidewalks, bicycle lanes, and bicycle parking; and
  - f. provide for commuter pick-up/drop-off areas.
- 2.2.2.18** Within *protected major transit station areas*, *development* will be supported by:
- a. planning for a diverse mix of land uses, including *additional residential units*, *affordable* and *attainable housing* that accommodates a population and employment base to support existing and planned public transit, including *higher order transit*;
  - b. providing *multimodal* access to *higher order transit* and connections to nearby *major trip generators*;
  - c. fostering collaboration between public and private sector, such as joint *development* projects;
  - d. providing alternative *development* standards, such as reduced parking standards; and
  - e. prohibiting land uses and *built form* that would adversely affect the achievement of *transit-supportive* densities.
- 2.2.2.19** The Region will develop *transit-supportive* development standards in consultation with relevant Local Area Municipalities, with consideration for Section 5.1 of this Plan, to guide *development* within *protected major transit station areas* or on sites adjacent to or near existing or planned public transit.
- 2.2.2.20** Regional growth centres shall be focal points for accommodating significant population and employment growth and other activities to achieve higher densities through a broad mix and range of uses to the horizon of this Plan.

- 2.2.2.21** New *strategic growth areas* may be identified by the Region through a *municipal comprehensive review*. The boundary of the *strategic growth area* and its minimum density target shall be determined through a district plan or secondary plan process in accordance with Section 6.1, and incorporated through the next *municipal comprehensive review*.
- 2.2.2.22** New *strategic growth areas* shall, at a minimum, support the forecasts in Table 2-1, the minimum *intensification* targets in Table 2-2, and the established density targets in Local official plans that exceed the targets in this Plan.
- 2.2.2.23** *Designated greenfield areas* shall achieve a minimum density of 50 residents and jobs combined per hectare as measured across the entire region.

- 2.2.2.24** Local official plans are required to achieve the minimum greenfield density target in Policy 2.2.2.23 across the entire municipality, and are encouraged to exceed this minimum.

### Density in Designated Greenfield Areas

Density in the *designated greenfield areas* is measured over the entire region and excludes areas constrained by environmental features, *utility* corridors, cemeteries, and *employment areas*.

- 2.2.2.25** *Designated greenfield areas* will be planned as *complete communities* by:
- ensuring that *development* is sequential, orderly and contiguous with existing *built-up areas*;
  - utilizing proactive planning tools in Section 6.1 and Section 6.2, as appropriate;
  - ensuring *infrastructure* capacity is available; and
  - supporting *active transportation* and encouraging the integration and sustained viability of public transit service.

## 2.2.3 Character of Rural Settlements

- 2.2.3.1 A limited amount of *development* will occur outside of *urban areas* to achieve the forecasts in Table 2-1.
- 2.2.3.2 *Rural settlements* identified on Schedule B shall be the focus of *development* outside of *urban area* boundaries.
- 2.2.3.3 *Development* in *rural settlements* should be planned to:
- a. encourage residential infill *development* that builds on the rural character and characteristics of the surrounding area;
  - b. ensure there is adequate amenities to serve the needs of rural residents, area businesses and the surrounding nearby agricultural community;
  - c. consider the inclusion of *active transportation* infrastructure;
  - d. protect the Region's *natural environment system* in accordance with the policies in Section 3.1; and
  - e. encourage reduced energy consumption, improved air quality, reduced greenhouse gas emissions, and increased resilience to *climate change* in accordance with the policies in Section 3.5.
- 2.2.3.4 A portion of rural employment is to be planned within *rural settlements* to support the surrounding agricultural community. Local Area Municipalities should ensure that adequate lands are available for rural employment within *rural settlement* boundaries to satisfy long-term needs and support the rural economy.
- 2.2.3.5 *Rural settlements* will be serviced by sustainable private water and wastewater treatment systems in accordance with Section 5.2.

## 2.2.4 Infrastructure and Public Service Facilities

- 2.2.4.1 Land use planning will be supported by *infrastructure* and *public service facilities* that:
- a. consider the full life-cycle costs of these assets and options to pay for these costs over the long-term;
  - b. meet the requirements of forecasted growth within *settlement areas*; and
  - c. is planned, built, and maintained in accordance with the applicable policies in Chapter 5.

- 2.2.4.2** *Public service facilities*, such as municipal works depots, police stations and fire halls, are strongly encouraged to locate within *settlement areas*. Where considered outside of *settlement areas*, such uses shall be compatible with and have minimal impacts on their surroundings.
- 2.2.4.3** *Infrastructure* and *public service facilities* should be strategically located to support the effective and efficient delivery of emergency management services and to ensure the protection of public health and safety.
- 2.2.4.4** The Region will work with the applicable governments on locating new Provincial or Federal *institutional uses* or facilities.
- 2.2.4.5** Priority will be given to maintaining and adapting existing *public service facilities* as *community hubs* by co-locating services.
- 2.2.4.6** *Public service facilities* and public services should be co-located in *community hubs* and integrated to promote cost-effectiveness. The preferred location for *community hubs* is in or near identified *strategic growth areas*.
- 2.2.4.7** The Region will coordinate with Local Area Municipalities, school boards and other public agencies to improve the delivery of *infrastructure*, *public service facilities*, and other related programs and services for the creation of *community hubs*.
- 2.2.4.8** The Region may develop a Smart City Strategy that identifies and assesses the use of existing and new technologies in order to manage Regional *infrastructure*, resources and services more efficiently and more sustainably.

## **2.2.5 Settlement Area Expansions**

- 2.2.5.1** The establishment of new *settlement areas* is prohibited.
- 2.2.5.2** The Region is responsible for mapping *settlement area* boundaries. *Settlement area* boundaries cannot be expanded except as part of a Regional *municipal comprehensive review* where it is demonstrated that:
- a. based on the minimum *intensification* rates and density targets identified in this Plan and the Provincial land needs assessment methodology, sufficient opportunities to accommodate forecasted growth to the horizon of this Plan are not available through *intensification* or new *development* in *settlement areas*:
    - i. within the Niagara Region; and
    - ii. within the applicable Local Area Municipality;

- b. the proposed expansion will only make available sufficient lands needed to the horizon of this Plan based on the analysis required in Policy 2.2.5.2 a), while minimizing land consumption; and
- c. the timing of the proposed expansion and the phasing of *development* within *designated greenfield areas* will not adversely affect the achievement of the minimum *intensification* rates and density targets established in this Plan, and the comprehensive application of all of the policies in this Plan.

**2.2.5.3** *Settlement area* boundaries may be adjusted through a Local official plan conformity exercise by amendment to this Plan outside of a *municipal comprehensive review*, provided:

- a. there would be no net increase in developable land within *settlement areas*;
- b. the adjustment would support the Local Area Municipality's ability to meet the *intensification* targets and density targets established in this Plan;
- c. the location of any lands added to the *settlement area* will satisfy Provincial policy and any applicable Regional policy and guidelines;
- d. the affected *settlement area* is not a *rural settlement* or in the Greenbelt Plan area; and
- e. the *settlement area* is serviced by *municipal water and wastewater systems/services* and there is sufficient reserve *infrastructure* capacity to service the lands.

**2.2.5.4** Outside of a *municipal comprehensive review*, minor adjustments to the boundaries of *rural settlements* may be permitted through amendment to this Plan, in consultation with the Local Area Municipality, subject to the following criteria:

- a. the *rural settlement* is not in the Greenbelt Plan area;
- b. the change would constitute minor rounding out of existing development, in keeping with the rural character of the area;
- c. servicing through private water and wastewater treatment systems can be provided suitably over the long-term and in an appropriate manner with no *negative impacts* on water; and
- d. the change follows the applicable process and criteria as set out in the Region's minor rounding out guidance document.

- 2.2.5.5** The Region will develop criteria to guide the review of *settlement area* boundary adjustments in consultation with Local Area Municipalities.
- 2.2.5.6** Secondary plans shall be developed for the *urban area* expansions identified in Appendix 2, pursuant to Policies 6.1.4.2 and 6.1.4.4.

## 2.3 Housing

The provision of an adequate supply of housing is key to good quality of life.

Housing needs change throughout our lifetimes. A diverse housing stock with a range of tenures, sizes, types, and supports should be made available to meet the needs of our communities. As a priority, the Region must retain, protect, and increase the supply of *affordable* housing for *low and moderate income households*.

In alignment with the Region's Housing and Homelessness Action Plan, the policies in this section support the provision of a range and mix of housing options that are essential for the creation of *complete communities* and support the regional economy.

Land use tools and targets are identified to help improve access to housing and encourage innovation in housing design and construction that help adapt to and mitigate the impacts of *climate change*.

### The objectives of this section are as follows:

- a. provide a mix of housing options to address current and future needs;
- b. provide more *affordable* and *attainable housing* options within our communities; and
- c. plan to achieve *affordable* housing targets through land use and financial incentive tools.

### 2.3.1 Provide a Mix of Housing Options

**2.3.1.1** The development of a range and mix of densities, lot and unit sizes, and housing types, including *affordable* and *attainable housing*, will be planned for throughout *settlement areas* to meet housing needs at all stages of life.

**2.3.1.2** Local Area Municipalities shall establish targets in Local official plans for an overall housing mix by density type and affordability based on consultation with the Region and the minimum *affordable* housing targets outlined in Policy 2.3.2.3.

**2.3.1.3** The forecasts in Table 2-1 will be used to maintain, at all times:

- a. the ability to accommodate residential growth for a minimum of 15 years through residential *intensification*, and lands designated and available for residential development; and

- b. where new *development* is to occur, land with servicing capacity to provide at least a three-year supply of residential units through lands suitably zoned to facilitate residential *intensification*, and lands in draft approved or registered plans.

**2.3.1.4** New residential development and residential *intensification* are encouraged to be planned and designed to mitigate and adapt to the impacts of *climate change* by:

- a. facilitating *compact built form*; and
- b. incorporating sustainable housing construction materials or practices, *green infrastructure*, energy conservation standards, water efficient technologies, and *low impact development*.

**2.3.1.5** New residential development and residential *intensification* should incorporate *universal design* standards to meet housing needs at all stages of life.

**2.3.1.6** Coordination with Provincial and Federal governments and agencies, including the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, will be undertaken to advocate for sustained Provincial and Federal funding that:

- a. promotes the development of residential *intensification*, *brownfield redevelopment*, and *affordable* and *attainable housing* options, including *community housing* and purpose-built rental units; and
- b. supports energy efficiency and sustainable housing design for new and existing residential units.

## **2.3.2 Provide for Affordable and Attainable Housing**

**2.3.2.1** This Plan aligns with the Region's Housing and Homelessness Action Plan for the provision of housing that supports social, health, and economic well-being, including unmet demands for *community housing* and *specialized housing needs* within the region.

**2.3.2.2** This Plan will be reviewed with any updates to the Region's Housing and Homelessness Action Plan.

### **Housing and Homelessness Action Plan**

The Region's Housing and Homelessness Action Plan outlines goals and actions the Region will take over the next ten years to help end homelessness within Niagara, and address the need for *affordable* and *community housing*.

- 2.3.2.3** To encourage the development of *affordable* housing, the following minimum targets will be implemented to the horizon of this Plan, unless local targets are higher in which case those apply:
- 20 percent of all new rental housing is to be *affordable*; and
  - 10 percent of all new ownership housing is to be *affordable*.
- 2.3.2.4** The Region will consult with Local Area Municipalities, school boards, and Federal and Provincial agencies to:
- identify surplus government lands and/or buildings that may be suitable for *affordable* and *attainable housing* development;
  - prioritize the sale or lease of suitable surplus Regional property for the development of *affordable* and *attainable housing* in accordance with the Region's Disposal of Land By-law; and
  - identify *brownfield* and *greyfield sites*, including underutilized commercial sites or strip plazas, outside *employment areas* for mixed-use residential *intensification* and *affordable* housing development.
- 2.3.2.5** *Affordable* housing, *specialized housing needs*, and *community housing* should be located:
- in areas with existing or planned *municipal water and wastewater services/systems* and urban amenities;
  - near existing or planned transit, including *higher order transit* and *frequent transit service*, and *active transportation* facilities; and
  - near *public service facilities*, especially *community hubs*.
- 2.3.2.6** Local Area Municipalities shall include policies in Local official plans that only permit the demolition or conversion of rental housing to ownership tenure, where:
- the average rental vacancy rate within the Local Area Municipality is at or above three percent over the preceding three year period;
  - the conversion to ownership housing would result in the creation of *affordable* housing; or
  - the demolition or conversion is needed to address existing health and safety issues through retrofits and renovations, which would result in an increase in rental levels above the threshold for *affordability*.

Guidance material for the implementation of policies 2.3.2.6. b) and c) will be developed in collaboration with Local Area Municipalities.

## 2.3.3 Planning Tools to Achieve Affordable and Attainable Housing

**2.3.3.1** The following tools will be considered to support the development of *affordable* and *attainable housing*:

- a. flexibility in the scale, form, and types of residential uses permitted as-of-right, including *additional residential units* and other alternative housing forms;
- b. streamlining of planning approvals for the development of *affordable* housing, *attainable housing*, and *community housing*, with a priority for developments receiving time-sensitive government funding;
- c. financial incentive programs, such as grants, development charge deferrals, and property tax reductions that promote *brownfield redevelopment* and *affordable* housing options, including purpose-built rental housing;
- d. the inclusion of a mix of unit sizes in multi-unit developments to accommodate a diverse range of household sizes and incomes;
- e. site standards that facilitate the development of *additional residential units*, such as reduced *setbacks*, narrower lot sizes, and reduced parking standards;
- f. inclusionary zoning provisions within *protected major transit station areas* and/or areas with an approved Community Planning Permit System, subject to the preparation of an assessment report as described in the Planning Act and Ontario Regulation 232/18; and
- g. demolition control and residential replacement by-laws that would prohibit the demolition of existing rental units without replacement of the same or higher number of rental units.

**2.3.3.2** Local Area Municipalities shall permit up to two *additional residential units* as-of-right within new or existing residential development, subject to Provincial legislation and appropriate land use, size, and locational criteria.

**2.3.3.3** Local Area Municipalities, in consultation with the Region, are encouraged to develop local housing strategies that:

- a. identify land use planning tools and other housing initiatives and programs, including those listed in Policy 2.3.3.1, that support housing need within the Local Area Municipality;
- b. establish *affordable* housing targets that contribute to achieving targets outlined in Policy 2.3.2.3; and
- c. identify performance indicators that monitor the achievement towards the strategy's targets and objectives.