



housing and
community services

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11. Housing and Community Services

11.A Residential Areas and Housing

- Policy 11.A.1** The Region encourages the provision of a variety of housing types within urban communities and neighbourhoods to serve a variety of people as they age through the life cycle.
- Policy 11.A.2** The Region encourages the *development* of attractive, well designed residential *development* that:
- a) Provides for *active transportation* within neighbourhoods with connections to adjacent residential and commercial areas, parks and schools.
 - b) De-emphasizes garages, especially in the front yard.
 - c) Emphasises the entrance and points of access to neighbourhoods.
 - d) Is accessible to all persons.
 - e) Incorporates the principles of sustainability in building design.
 - f) Provides functional design solutions for such services as waste collection and recycling.
 - g) Provides an attractive, interconnected and *active transportation friendly* streetscape.
 - h) Contributes to a sense of safety within the public realm.
 - i) Balances the need for private and public space.
 - j) Creates or enhances an aesthetically pleasing and functional neighbourhood.
 - k) Encourages a variety of connections based on transportation mode between land uses based on diverse transportation modes, allowing people to move freely between the places where they live, work and play.
- Policy 11.A.3** The Region encourages housing which allows people to work at home or in relatively close proximity to work.
- Policy 11.A.4** The Region will adopt and monitor annual *affordable* housing supply target for each *local municipality* arising from analysis of the regional housing market. Local official plans are to include these targets and policies to achieve the target.
- Policy 11.A.5** The Region requires the local municipalities to adopt policies discouraging the demolition or conversion of rental housing to condominium ownership in situations where the vacancy rate is less than 3 percent and the ownership housing to be created is not considered to be *affordable*.
- Policy 11.A.6** The Region will encourage the local municipalities to adopt policies and zoning by-laws facilitating the creation of secondary suites throughout the urban area.
- Policy 11.A.7** The Region will monitor and report on the impact of approvals for demolition and conversion of existing *affordable* rental housing units on *affordable* rental housing supply.



- Policy 11.A.8** The Region supports, and encourages the local municipalities to support, not-for-profit housing agencies as well as the private sector in the *development* of *affordable* housing for low and moderate income households, individuals who have physical disabilities, and other special needs groups, including those living in a situation of absolute or relative homelessness.
- Policy 11.A.9** The Region will work with local municipalities and housing agencies in preparing an inventory of potential sites for not-for-profit housing units.
- Policy 11.A.10** The Region encourages the local municipalities to participate in providing incentives to contribute to the supply of *affordable* housing, and to participate in senior government programs to create new *affordable* housing.
- Policy 11.A.11** The Region will consider, and encourages the local municipalities also to consider waiving, exempting, or providing grants-in-lieu of residential development charges, planning fees, and building permit fees for new *affordable* housing in return for a commitment by the developer to meet specified affordability targets and/or requirements under a senior government *affordable* housing program or a program of Niagara Regional Housing.
- Policy 11.A.12** The Region encourages developers of *affordable* housing to consider using Regional and local incentives related to *brownfields* and downtown areas in conjunction with senior government funding programs to create new *affordable* housing. The Region particularly encourages using the Federal program in support of the creation of *affordable* housing
- Policy 11.A.13** The Region will investigate establishing an Affordable Housing Reserve Fund to provide incentives to private and community organizations for the creation of *affordable* housing and for other *affordable* housing purposes.
- Policy 11.A.14** The Region will work with the local municipalities, school boards, federal, and provincial governments to identify surplus government lands and/or buildings that may be suitable for *affordable* housing purposes.
- Policy 11.A.15** Where appropriate, the Region commits to, and encourages the local municipalities to also commit to, a 'housing first' policy for surplus municipal lands such that the first priority in the decision process regarding possible disposal of surplus lands shall be *affordable* housing, and that best efforts will be made to make the surplus property available for *affordable* housing purposes.
- Policy 11.A.16** The Region encourages the local municipalities to investigate and implement dwelling unit size regulation as a means to provide *affordable* housing.
- Policy 11.A.17** The Region will provide information and technical advice to the not-for-profit housing sector to assist in and facilitate the approvals process for **Planning Act** applications submitted by this sector.

Policy 11.A.18

The following types of group homes administered under Provincial legislation shall be permitted to establish in any residential zone or residence in the Niagara Region:

- a) Approved homes
- b) Homes for special care
- c) Supportive housing programs
- d) Accommodation for adult mental health programs
- e) Accommodation services for individuals with a developmental disability
- f) Satellite residences for seniors
- g) Homes for individuals who have physical disabilities when the *Province* licenses, funds or approves such a group home program
- h) Transitional housing for individuals who are socially disadvantaged and community resource centres will require a rezoning unless a *local municipality* decides that such a zoning is not necessary.

11.B Community Facilities and Institutions

- Policy 11.B.1** Community facilities include but are not limited to active recreational areas such as parks, arenas and trails, and institutions such as schools, churches and government offices.
- Policy 11.B.2** The Region expects that major public community facilities and *community infrastructure* will be located in downtown areas, to the extent that site size considerations and land needs can be addressed. Major public community facilities are those that serve a federal, provincial or regional clientele, and also those which provide local service functions for an entire municipality.
- Policy 11.B.3** Smaller scale community service facilities should, where possible and practical, be co-located and sited in *intensification areas* and/or existing nodes and corridors to increase *multi-modal* transportation opportunities for accessing community services.
- Policy 11.B.4** Recognizing that smaller scale community facilities are an integral component to liveable, *active transportation friendly* neighbourhoods, the Region encourages the integration of smaller-scale community facilities within neighbourhoods. These smaller-scale community facilities are intended to serve neighbourhood residents.
- Policy 11.B.5** Expansion and optimization of existing developed community service facilities should be considered before developing new community facilities. Where it is determined that new facilities should be developed, retention of the existing facilities and conversion to other uses should be encouraged.
- Policy 11.B.6** While recognizing the cyclical nature of school enrolment, the Region encourages the school boards to protect sites for schools as key components in the achievement of *complete communities*. The Region further encourages consideration of co-location opportunities with complementary community services and shared use of school facilities for public recreation purposes.
- Policy 11.B.7** The Region encourages the local municipalities and the school boards to consider the location of new school sites in the centre of new neighbourhoods and *intensification areas*.
- Policy 11.B.8** The Region encourages the planning of integrated parks and open space systems which link urban to rural areas via pathways, trails and cycling routes and incorporate larger facilities such as the Waterfront Trail, the Circle Route, the Gord Harry and Bruce Trails, Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority (NPCA) Conservation Areas, and the lands of the Niagara Parks Commission.
- Policy 11.B.9** The Region of Niagara will liaise with local municipalities, the NPCA and other agencies and organizations, such as land trusts, in securing natural areas for conservation purposes in greenfield areas and, where possible, in *intensification areas*.



11.C Recreational Uses

Policy 11.C.1

Recreational uses are to be located within *Urban Areas* where they can be served by municipal water and sewer services. Outside *Urban Areas* proposals for new recreational uses, or expansions to existing recreational uses involving major *intensification* of land use, shall only be considered by Amendment, subject to the other policies of this Plan, and provided that:

- a) it has been demonstrated through appropriate studies to the satisfaction of the Region that:
 - i. the principal use is to be resource-based recreation;
 - ii. there is a need for the proposed use and it is in the public interest;
 - iii. there are no reasonable alternative locations within *Urban Areas*;
 - iv. the proposed use does not involve lands in the Unique *Agricultural Area*;
 - v. if the proposed *development* is in the Good General *Agricultural Area*, there is no reasonable alternative in the Rural Area or is on lower priority agricultural land in the Good General *Agricultural Area*. Preference should be given to sites in the Rural Areas;
 - vi. the proposed use will not require municipal water or sewer services;
 - vii. the site will be accessible by other mobility options in addition to the private automobile, including public transit;
 - viii. there will be no *significant negative impact* on adjacent agricultural operations, existing residences and the natural environment; and
- b) the proposed use shall be subject to the following conditions:
 - i. any changes to the existing topography will be kept to a minimum;
 - ii. buildings and structures shall be minor in scale and located in a manner that is in keeping with the rural, open-space character of the area; and
 - iii. there shall be no overnight accommodation for users or guests of the facility.