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4. Managing Growth

4.A Shaping Growth In Niagara

4.A.1 Growth Management Objectives

The objectives of the Growth Management Policies of this plan are to:

Objective 4.A.1.1 Direct the majority of growth and development to Niagara’s existing Urban Areas.

Objective 4.A.1.2 Direct a significant portion of Niagara’s future growth to the Built-up Area through intensification.

Objective 4.A.1.3 Direct intensification to Local Municipally Designated Intensification Areas.

Objective 4.A.1.4 Prevent urban development in inappropriate areas, thus contributing to the conservation of resources such as the Niagara Escarpment, the Greenbelt, aggregate areas, Core Natural Areas, and prime agricultural land.

Objective 4.A.1.5 Establish the Regional Market Area as the basis for planning for growth.

Objective 4.A.1.6 Build compact, mixed use, transit supportive, active transportation friendly communities in the Built-up Area and in Designated Greenfield Areas.

Objective 4.A.1.7 Reduce dependence on the automobile through the development of compact, mixed use, transit supportive, active transportation friendly urban environments.

Objective 4.A.1.8 Provide a foundation for developing access to intra and inter-city transit.

Objective 4.A.1.9 Ensure the availability of sufficient employment and residential land to accommodate long term growth in Niagara to the year 2031.

Objective 4.A.1.10 Provide a framework for developing complete communities all across Niagara, including a diverse mix of land uses, a range of local employment opportunities and housing types, high quality public open spaces, and easy access to local stores and services via automobile, transit and active transportation.

Objective 4.A.1.11 Prohibit the establishment of new Settlement Areas.

Objective 4.A.1.12 Direct growth in a manner that promotes the efficient use of existing municipal sewage and water services.

4.B.1  Provincial Population and Employment Forecasts for Niagara

Policy 4.B.1.1  The Province of Ontario has identified the following population and employment forecasts for the Region in Schedule 3 of the Provincial Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe:

<p>| Niagara Region, Population and Employment Forecast |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Employment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>2011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>427,000</td>
<td>442,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>2011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>186,000</td>
<td>201,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Schedule 3, Provincial Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, Ministry of Infrastructure (2006).*

Policy 4.B.1.2  The Provincial forecast shall be used as the basis for planning and growth management.

4.B.2  Municipal Population, Household and Employment Forecasts

Policy 4.B.2.1  Table 4-1 to this Plan contains municipal population, household and employment forecasts for each lower tier municipality consistent with the Provincial forecast. The population, household and employment forecasts have been derived through a comprehensive and collaborative process involving a wide variety of stakeholders, including local municipalities, Provincial agencies, the private sector, the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority, residents and not-for-profit organizations.

Policy 4.B.2.2  The figures in Table 4-1 must be included in local official plans and be used for local municipal conformity exercises. The population figures to be used should be the Total Population with Undercount.

Policy 4.B.2.3  The figures in Table 4-1 are forecasts to be used for the purposes of planning and growth management for the individual municipalities.

Policy 4.B.2.4  The municipal forecasts will be reviewed every five years taking into account updated data from Statistics Canada and other sources.

4.B.3  Housing Growth

Policy 4.B.3.1  The Region will maintain the ability to accommodate residential growth within the Regional Market Area:

a) For a minimum of ten years through residential intensification and redevelopment and, if necessary, through lands which are designated and available for residential development; and,

b) For a minimum of three years through lands with servicing capacity that are suitably zoned to facilitate residential intensification and redevelopment or are in draft approved and registered plans.
4.B.4 Employment Growth

Policy 4.B.4.1 The Region will maintain the ability to accommodate employment growth within Niagara by ensuring that there is a minimum ten year supply of designated employment lands within Urban Areas.
4.C  Intensification and Greenfield Growth

4.C.1  General Intensification

Policy 4.C.1.1  *Intensification* includes all forms of development that occur within the Built-up Area as identified on Schedule A of this Plan. The Region will promote intensification by:

a) Providing a Regional framework for measuring *intensification*.

b) Supporting *infrastructure development* and improvements in Local Municipally Designated Intensification Areas where upgrades or improvements to Regional *infrastructure* works are required.

c) Working with local municipalities to develop intensification strategies including but not limited to coordination between growth management and the maintenance and expansion of utility infrastructure, both in terms of technological advancement and service provision.

d) Monitoring intensification rates across the Region on an annual basis.

4.C.2  Local Municipally Designated Intensification Areas

Policy 4.C.2.1  Each municipality will develop and implement through its local official plan and other supporting documents, a strategy and policies for promoting *intensification* and achieving the *intensification* targets set out in Sub-section 4.C.4 of this Plan. Local official plans shall:

a) Incorporate the *Built Boundary* delineated on Schedule A of this Plan as the basis for identifying the *Built-up Area*;

b) Generally encourage *intensification* throughout the *Built-up Area*;

c) Identify specific Intensification Areas to support the achievement of the intensification targets, including downtowns, intensification nodes and corridors and strategically located brownfield and greyfield areas.

d) Plan *Intensification Areas* to attract a significant portion of population and employment growth, relative to the shape and character of the community.

e) Plan *Intensification Areas* to provide a diverse mix of land uses that complement and support the overall residential *intensification* objective. These may include employment, commercial, recreation, institutional and other compatible land uses in relative proportions dependent on area characteristics and the intended critical mass of residential development.

f) Plan *Intensification Areas* so as to be *transit supportive* and link *intensification* opportunities with existing or planned future transit hubs and *active transportation* routes.

g) Plan *Intensification Areas* so as to reduce traffic congestion, improve circulation, and encourage *active transportation*. Where opportunities exist, best efforts should be made to establish fine grain, grid street patterns with active transportation facilities and linkages.

h) Plan each *Intensification Area* to achieve higher densities than currently exist within the *Intensification Area*. It is expected that *Intensification Areas* will generally achieve higher densities than the surrounding areas.
i) Ensure that Intensification Areas provide appropriate densities and transitional areas to ensure relative compatibility with surrounding neighbourhoods, including the use of minimum and maximum heights and densities.

j) Develop official plan policies and zoning provisions to support and encourage growth and redevelopment within the Intensification Areas.

k) Identify opportunities for providing affordable housing within Intensification Areas.

l) Make use of other tools, such as the Region’s Model Urban Design Guidelines, Alternative Development Standards, Development Permit Systems or Community Improvement Plans to facilitate growth and development within Local Municipally Designated Intensification Areas.

4.C.3 Regional Residential Intensification Target

Policy 4.C.3.1 By the year 2015 and for each year thereafter, a minimum of 40% of all residential development occurring annually within Niagara will occur within the Built-up Area of Niagara’s communities.

Policy 4.C.3.2 The rate of intensification occurring in Niagara will be measured by calculating the total number of residential units created on an annual basis within the Built-up Areas of Niagara in relation to the total number of units created within Niagara Region.

Policy 4.C.3.3 Beginning in 2009, the Region will track residential intensification rates on an annual basis and prepare an annual report. The Region will work closely with local municipalities to determine the preferred method for tracking residential intensification rates.

4.C.4 Municipal Residential Intensification Target

Policy 4.C.4.1 The following residential intensification targets are to be met by Niagara’s local municipalities and are considered to be minimum standards.

Policy 4.C.4.2 Local municipalities will develop their own residential intensification targets and strategies, which may equal or exceed these minimum standards, and incorporate the targets into their official plans.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Municipality</th>
<th>Residential Intensification Target</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Town of Fort Erie</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Town of Grimsby</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Town of Lincoln</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City of Niagara Falls</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Town of Niagara on-the-Lake</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Town of Pelham</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City of Port Colborne</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City of St. Catharines</td>
<td>95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City of Thorold</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Township of Wainfleet</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City of Welland</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Township of West Lincoln</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REGION OF NIAGARA</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.C.5 Greenfield Development

Policy 4.C.5.1 Designated Greenfield Areas will be planned as compact, complete communities by:

a) Where permitted by scale, accommodating a range of land uses including residential, commercial, institutional, recreational, employment and other uses.
b) Where limited by scale or configuration, making a significant contribution to the growth of the respective Urban Areas as a complete community.
c) Providing opportunities for integrated, mixed land uses.
d) Creating street patterns that are fine grain and in grid pattern, supporting transit and active transportation within the area and to adjacent areas.
e) Ensuring that Greenfield development is sequential, orderly and contiguous with existing built-up areas.
f) Ensuring that the provision of municipal servicing is in accordance with the water and wastewater servicing master plans.

4.C.6 Greenfield Density Target

Policy 4.C.6.1 The Region will require a minimum combined gross density target of 50 people and jobs per hectare across all Designated Greenfield Areas, excluding the following features within the Environmental Protection Areas and Environmental Conservation Areas in the Region’s Core Natural Heritage System and any non-developable features designated in local official plans:

a) Wetlands;
b) Coastal wetlands;
c) Significant woodlands;
d) Significant valley lands;
e) Areas of natural and scientific interest;
f) Habitat of endangered species and threatened species;
g) Publicly owned conservation lands;
h) Significant wildlife habitat;
i) Fish Habitat; and,
j) Floodplain areas.

This policy establishes how density is to be measured in identifying Greenfield density targets and monitoring achievement of these targets. It is not intended to provide policy direction respecting the maintenance and enhancement of the natural environment or natural hazards.

Policy 4.C.6.2 The Region, working in collaboration with local municipalities, will identify minimum Greenfield density targets for local municipalities which will achieve the overall Regional density target set out in policy 4.C.6.1.
4.C.7 Achieving the Density Target

Policy 4.C.7.1 In order to achieve the planned minimum greenfield density target, official plans shall:

a) Adopt minimum and maximum residential and employment densities in local Official Plans, including distinctions between net and gross density.

b) Include policies for achieving higher residential and employment densities in greenfield areas.

c) Include policies for achieving a mix of housing types and residential densities in greenfield areas.

d) Develop greenfield development guidelines to support local policy direction for greenfield areas.

Policy 4.C.7.2 The Region will monitor the combined 50 people and jobs per hectare target.
4.D Municipal Comprehensive Review

4.D.1 Urban Area Boundary Expansion

Policy 4.D.1.1  An Urban Area boundary expansion may only be considered outside the Greenbelt Area and may only occur where a municipal comprehensive review completed by the Region has demonstrated that:

a) Sufficient opportunities to accommodate the forecasted housing growth, through intensification and in designated greenfield areas, using the municipal intensification target and density targets are not available within Niagara Region.

b) The expansion makes sufficient lands available within the Region for a time horizon not exceeding twenty years.

c) The timing of the expansion and the phasing of development within the Designated Greenfield Areas will not adversely affect the achievement of the municipal intensification and density targets and any other policies of this Plan.

d) The proposed expansion will meet the requirements of the Greenbelt Plan and Niagara Escarpment Plan. Settlement areas outside of the Greenbelt area are not permitted to expand into the Greenbelt. Expansions within either plan area are not encouraged, and any proposal for expansion within these areas are subject to the following provisions:

i. Expansions to areas identified as “Towns and Villages” within the Greenbelt Plan may only be considered pursuant to the Greenbelt Plan and subject to policy 3.4.2.5 of the Greenbelt Plan.

ii. Expansions to areas identified as “minor urban centre” or “urban area” in the Niagara Escarpment Plan require an amendment to the Niagara Escarpment Plan. Pursuant to the Niagara Escarpment Planning and Development Act.

iii. Such an amendment may not be considered until the commencement of the Provincial reviews of the Niagara Escarpment Plan Review and/or the Greenbelt Plan.

e) Both regional and local existing and planned infrastructure required to accommodate the proposed expansion can be provided in a financially and environmentally sustainable manner.

f) In prime agricultural areas:

i. The lands do not comprise specialty crop areas;

ii. Alternative locations have been evaluated;

iii. There are no reasonable alternatives that avoid prime agricultural areas; and

iv. There are no reasonable alternatives on lower priority agricultural land in prime agricultural areas.

g) Impacts from expanding Urban Areas on agricultural operations which are adjacent or close to the settlement areas are mitigated to the extent feasible.

h) In determining the most appropriate location for expansions to boundaries of Urban Areas, the Environmental Policies in Chapter Seven of this Plan are applied.

i) Where expansion of an Urban Area that does not contain an Urban Growth Centre is proposed the applicable lower tier municipality is planning to maintain or move significantly towards a minimum of one full time job per three residents within or in the immediate vicinity of the settlement area.
j) The expansion to the settlement area is in compliance with the minimum distance separation formulae.

**Policy 4.D.1.2**

An application for an Urban Area boundary expansion may be initiated by a local municipality independent of the five year cycle for review and updating of this Plan where:

a) The application is based on a municipal comprehensive review prepared by the local municipality subsequent to or in conjunction with a Regional comprehensive review in conformity with Sub-section 4.D.1.1 of this Plan; and,

b) The local comprehensive review is in conformity with the policies of this Plan and of the Provincial Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe and comprehensively applies the Policies of those Plans.

**Policy 4.D.1.3**

The Region expects the local municipalities to develop comprehensive work programs in collaboration with the Region to ensure that municipal requests for urban area boundary expansions are done within the context of and in conformity with Provincial legislation and policy, and the policies of this Plan.

**4.D.2 New Settlement Areas**

**Policy 4.D.2.1**

The establishment of new settlement areas is not permitted.
4.E Employment Lands Conversion

4.E.1 Conversion of Lands Within Employment Areas

Policy 4.E.1.1 Municipalities may permit the conversion of lands within employment areas to non-employment uses only through a municipal comprehensive review where it has been demonstrated that:

a) There is a need for the conversion.
b) The municipality will meet the employment targets allocated to the municipality pursuant to this Plan.
c) The conversion will not adversely affect the overall viability of the employment area and the achievement of the municipal intensification target, density targets and other policies of this Plan.
d) There is existing or planned infrastructure in place to accommodate the proposed use.
e) The lands are not required over the long term for employment purposes for which they are designated.
f) Cross jurisdictional issues have been considered.

Policy 4.E.1.2 For the purposes of Policy 4.E major retail uses are considered to be non-employment uses and are not permitted. Development applications for major retail uses on designated employment lands will need to be undertaken within the context of a municipal comprehensive review, and are subject to the policies of 4.E.
4.F Phasing of Development

4.F.1 Managing the Land Supply to Achieve Efficient Development

Policy 4.F.1.1 The Region shall adopt policies to address the overall supply of land within Settlement Areas. In so doing the Region shall assess the tools that are available, including planning, to manage the supply of Greenfield lands to achieve the Urban Structure and Growth Management objectives of this Plan. The Regional Phasing Strategy is outlined in Section 14.I of this Plan.

Policy 4.F.1.2 Local Official Plans shall be amended to implement the Regional phasing strategy accordingly, giving priority to intensification, infilling and completion of existing neighbourhoods and communities.

Policy 4.F.1.3 Approval of new Greenfield development will occur where both regional and local existing planned infrastructure can be provided in a financially and environmentally sustainable manner and where such development would not be isolated from existing development.

Policy 4.F.1.4 If approval of a draft plan of subdivision lapses, the growth management and environmental policies shall apply to all subsequent applications.

Policy 4.F.1.5 If a plan of subdivision or part thereof has been registered for eight years or more and no installation of infrastructure or construction has occurred and the subdivision does not meet the growth management policies of Section 4, the respective area municipality shall use its authority under Section 50(4) of the Planning Act to deem it not be a registered plan of subdivision.

Policy 4.F.1.6 The council of the respective area municipality shall require that approvals of draft plans of subdivision include a lapsing date in accordance with Section 51(32) of the Planning Act.

Policy 4.F.1.7 Only one extension to a lapsing draft plan of subdivision shall be approved by the Council of the respective area municipality for a period of up to two years unless the draft plan meets the growth management and environmental policies of the Regional and local Plans.
4.G Urban Growth

Our Sustainable Urban Vision

Niagara is home to a wide range of communities. Some communities are fully developed, mature urban centres, with transit systems, densely developed downtown cores and a variety of other diverse uses. Other communities are more rural in nature and have hamlets serving a small population. There are also communities which can be characterized as in between a fully developed urban community and a small rurally based community. Notwithstanding these differences, there is one key element which links Niagara’s diverse communities together. This unifying element is the desire to develop a more sustainable framework for urban development.

Niagara’s sustainable urban vision has been informed by Council’s endorsement of the principles of Smart Growth and of the Melbourne Principles.

Niagara aspires to build sustainable, complete communities. Such communities serve the needs of the present local population, without compromising the potential needs of future generations. Niagara’s approach to building such communities addresses social, environmental, economic and cultural aspects of land use planning. Niagara will build more sustainable, complete communities by:

• Encouraging mixed and integrated land uses;
• Making efficient use of land, resources and infrastructure;
• Promoting compact, transit supportive development friendly to active transportation;
• Supporting intensification;
• Building better greenfield neighbourhoods;
• Fostering development that conserves natural resources and maintains or enhances natural systems.
• Integrating cultural programs and facilities in our Urban Areas;
• Making prudent fiscal decisions.

Niagara will promote an integrated land use planning framework for decision making, one which includes all twelve lower tier municipalities, the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority, residents, business and all other stakeholders.

Through these efforts, Niagara will improve air quality, enhance the integrity of natural systems, maintain its valuable prime agricultural lands; reduce traffic congestion; and provide opportunities for healthy living, social connectivity, economic well-being; and affordable housing that generally elevate the overall quality of life for Niagara’s residents.

There is no one single action that will transform Niagara into a sustainable community. Rather, the path of sustainability is a long journey which will require Niagara to make tough decisions around financial, economic and social development, and environmental issues. These decisions and actions will continuously emerge and will require Niagara to constantly reaffirm its commitment to the Vision.

The following policies represent an opportunity for Niagara to affirm its commitment to building sustainable, complete communities.
Our Common Objectives

The following objectives are the basis for the policies in this Chapter of the Plan and should guide decisions related to land use planning, infrastructure development, natural and cultural resource management and fiscal planning:

**Objective 1**  
Build compact, vibrant, sustainable, integrated and complete communities.

**Objective 2**  
Plan and manage growth to support a strong, competitive and diverse economy.

**Objective 3**  
Protect, conserve, enhance and wisely use the valuable natural resources of land, air, energy and water for current and future generations.

**Objective 4**  
Maximize the use of existing and planned infrastructure to support growth in a compact and efficient manner.

**Objective 5**  
Provide flexibility to manage growth in Niagara in a manner that recognizes the diversity of communities across the Region within the framework set out in the Regional Official Plan.

**Objective 6**  
Promote continued collaboration and cooperation among governments, institutions, businesses, residents, and not-for-profit organizations to achieve our Vision and the objectives of these policies.
4.G.1 Niagara's Urban Community Objectives

The objectives of the Urban Community policies are to:

Objective 4.G.1.1 Provide a framework for developing sustainable, complete communities.

Objective 4.G.1.2 Plan for all of Niagara’s residents, both current and future, by promoting social inclusion, improved access to housing, commercial goods and services, job opportunities and social services.

Objective 4.G.1.3 Provide a policy direction for creating healthy, safe, vibrant, transit supportive, active transportation friendly, diverse, mixed use residential areas.

Objective 4.G.1.4 Develop a policy framework to ensure that, as urban development occurs, natural resources and ecosystem health and sustainability are maintained, enhanced or restored.

Objective 4.G.1.5 Ensure that the Region has an adequate supply of accessible, attractive commercial areas.

Objective 4.G.1.6 Promote and facilitate the revitalization and redevelopment of downtowns.

Objective 4.G.1.7 Promote the preservation and enhancement of cultural heritage resources.

Objective 4.G.1.8 Recognize the importance of a diversified economic base by establishing flexible policies to support the wide variety of employment types in Niagara.

Objective 4.G.1.9 Provide a Regional policy framework for guiding the long term development of Niagara’s employment areas.

Objective 4.G.1.9 Recognize the unique role of tourism and recreation-based employment in Niagara’s economy.

4.G.2 Urban Community Structure

Policy 4.G.2.1 Urban communities (i.e. Urban Areas) are generally comprised of the following key structural elements:

a) Residential areas and housing;
b) Commercial areas;
c) Community facilities and institutions;
d) Mixed use areas;
e) Public realm, including cultural amenities;
f) The Core Natural Heritage System and hydrological features;
g) Employment areas.
Policy 4.G.2.2  
Policy direction for each of the above-noted components is provided in Chapters 3.C, 3.D, 4.I, 4.J, 11.A and 11.B except for the Core Natural Heritage System and hydrological features for which policy direction is given in Chapter 7 of this Plan.

4.G.3  Sustainable Urban Development

Policy 4.G.3.1  The Region encourages the local municipalities to establish official plan policies and other measures supporting development that addresses the principles of environmental sustainability including:

a) Reducing energy demands;
b) Designing development to optimize passive solar energy gains;
c) Providing for on-site, renewable energy generation and co-generation and district energy systems
d) Maximizing water conservation, including water efficient landscaping and collection and reuse of clean water;
e) Providing appropriate stormwater infiltration at source;
f) Integrating green roofs into energy and water conservation strategies;
g) Providing for collection and storage of recyclable wastes on site;
h) Integrating active transportation and transit into development plans; and
i) Maintaining and enhancing natural heritage and hydrological features and functions in accordance with Chapters 7 of this Plan.

The Region shall assist and support the local municipalities in developing such policies and measures to implement them.

4.G.4  Regional Urban Structure Objectives

The objectives of the Regional Urban Structure policies are to:

Objective 4.G.4.1  Clearly articulate and define Niagara’s key structural elements.

Objective 4.G.4.2  Establish a formal system of designated Urban Areas so that growth and development can be directed and managed in a cost effective, efficient and sustainable manner which acknowledges the distinction between urban and rural areas, protects Prime Agricultural Lands and the Niagara Escarpment Biosphere Reserve, is based on a review of approved land supplies in settlement areas as well as existing and planned servicing infrastructure, and encourages growth in the southern areas of the Region.

Objective 4.G.4.3  Provide a framework for implementing Niagara’s vision for sustainable, complete communities.

Objective 4.G.4.4  Provide an urban structure for accommodating regional and local population, household and employment growth.
4.G.5 Niagara Region’s Urban Structure

Policy 4.G.5.1 The key components of the Region’s Urban Structure are

a) Urban Areas composed of:
   i. Built-up Areas
   ii. Designated greenfield areas
b) The Downtown St. Catharines Urban Growth Centre;
c) Local municipally designated Intensification Areas;
d) The Niagara Economic Gateway Zone and Centre as shown in the Provincial Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe; and
e) Transportation Corridors

Policy 4.G.5.2 Other key determinants defining and shaping the Region’s urban structure are its agricultural land base; the Greenbelt Plan and the Niagara Escarpment Plan; major community facilities such as hospitals, universities and colleges, transportation hubs, and cultural and recreational facilities; the Core Natural Heritage Areas as shown on the Core Natural Heritage Map; and significant physical features (Lake Ontario and Lake Erie, the Welland Canal, the Welland River and the Niagara River).

Policy 4.G.5.3 The Regional Urban Structure and the key determinants described in policy 4.G.5.2, other than major community facilities and Core Natural Heritage, are displayed on Schedule A.

4.G.6 Settlement Areas

Policy 4.G.6.1 Settlement areas consist of Urban Areas and hamlets as delineated on Schedule A. These boundaries shall be precisely defined in the local official plan.

Policy 4.G.6.2 Urban Areas will be the focus for accommodating the Region’s growth and development. Accordingly, neither the expansion of existing hamlet and village boundaries nor the establishment of new hamlets or villages is permitted.

4.G.7 Urban Areas

Policy 4.G.7.1 Urban Areas are defined on Schedule A and are designated in local official plans. Urban Areas have municipally provided services, including water and sewage services.

Policy 4.G.7.2 Urban Areas will be the focus of the Region’s long term growth and development.

4.G.8 Built-up Areas

Policy 4.G.8.1 Built-up Areas are lands located within Urban Areas which have been identified by the Ministry of Infrastructure (formerly the Ministry of Public Infrastructure Renewal). Built-up Areas will be the focus of residential and employment intensification and redevelopment within the Region over the long term.
4.G.9 Designated Greenfield Areas

Policy 4.G.9.1 Designated Greenfield Areas are the lands within a settlement area that are not within the Built-up Area.

4.G.10 Downtown St. Catharines Urban Growth Centre

Policy 4.G.10.1 The Downtown St. Catharines Urban Growth Centre is located in the City of St. Catharines as shown on Schedule A. The boundaries of the Urban Growth Centre have been defined by the City of St. Catharines and the Province of Ontario. These boundaries are to be used in the City’s official plan and form the basis for developing detailed policies for the area.

Policy 4.G.10.2 Consistent with the Provincial Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, the Downtown St. Catharines Urban Growth Centre will be planned:

   a) As a focal area for investment in institutions and region-wide public services, as well as commercial, recreational, cultural and entertainment uses.
   b) To accommodate and support transit infrastructure and active transportation.
   c) To serve as a high density employment centre that will attract provincially, nationally or internationally significant employment uses.
   d) To achieve a minimum density target of 150 people and jobs combined per hectare by 2031.
   e) To accommodate and support opportunities for high density residential development, including development to meet specialized housing needs, in the Downtown to support the variety of uses located in this area.

4.G.11 Local Municipally Designated Intensification Areas

Policy 4.G.11.1 Local Municipally Designated Intensification Areas are specific areas designated in local Official Plans for intensification and redevelopment. These areas are not mapped on Schedule A.

Policy 4.G.11.2 Municipalities will define these areas pursuant to the policies of Sub-section 4.C.2 of this Plan.

4.G.12 The Niagara Economic Gateway

Policy 4.G.12.1 The detailed policies for the Niagara Economic Gateway are incorporated in the Employment Chapter of this Plan (Chapter 3). The Urban Areas policies of this Plan must be read in conjunction with the Niagara Economic Gateways policies for the respective municipalities.
4.G.13 Transportation Corridors

Policy 4.G.13.1 The Transportation Corridors shown on Schedule A are intended to be the focus for moving people and goods within Niagara and through the Region. The Region’s key Transportation Corridors include:

- a) The Welland Canal;
- b) The Queen Elizabeth Way;
- c) Highway 406;
- d) Other Provincial Highways;
- e) Regional Roads; and
- f) Railways.
Chapter 4.H Hamlets contains policies and text modifications that will be added to the Plan once Amendment 3-2013 – Hamlet Policies is Approved by the Ontario Municipal Board. The in-effect Hamlet policies can be found in Chapter 5.D of the Plan.

4.H Hamlets

6.C——Policies for Villages and Hamlets

Villages and Hamlets are areas designated in local official plans for further development of a low density nature without the provision of municipal water and sewers. They include existing groups of houses and may play an important social and economic role for the people in the surrounding Agricultural or Rural Area.

**Objective 4.H.A**

To provide growth management policies for Hamlets for housing, social, cultural, and economic opportunities to support the hamlet community and agricultural and rural communities in Niagara Region.

**4.H.1 Hamlets in the Regional Structure**

**Policy 4.H.1.1**

Hamlets are settlement areas that play an important housing, social, cultural, and economic role for the people within the hamlet community and in the surrounding Agricultural and Rural Areas. Hamlet shall provide for the range of housing, social, cultural and economic land uses within their boundaries.

**Policy 4.H.1.2**

Hamlets should have sufficient development capacity to accommodate supporting farm-related uses and commercial uses to support the nearby agricultural and rural communities.

**Policy 4.H.1.3**

Hamlets are currently serviced by sustainable on-site private services. Municipal servicing and communal servicing shall only be considered in the event of health concerns in accordance with Section 6 of this Plan. Municipal and communal servicing options shall require an acceptable financial plan approved by Regional Council which shall include:

i. Capital construction costs are borne by the development;

ii. In the case of communal servicing, an executed agreement that includes financial securities in the event of default is required prior to any approvals under the Planning Act.

**Policy 4.H.1.4**

Hamlets are generally lower density communities designed to support the surrounding agricultural and rural landscape and service the historical development that has occurred in the hamlet community. Hamlet design shall maintain and enhance the distinctive character of the hamlet, maintain and enhance a recognizable image for the hamlet and municipality, enhance the quality of life through appropriate design of commercial and public space areas, and promote greater economic vitality. Municipalities are encouraged to create and implement hamlet secondary plans with specific land use designations and hamlet design policies.

**Policy 4.H.1.5**

Hamlets and their boundaries are identified on Schedule A – Regional Structure of this Plan.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Policy 4.H.1.6</strong></th>
<th>Hamlets are shown on Schedule B – Agricultural Land Base to establish their relationship to the Agricultural and Rural communities. Hamlet boundaries are determined through Schedule A – Regional Structure.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Policy 4.H.1.7</strong></td>
<td>Hamlet Boundary expansions to accommodate forecasted growth shall only be considered as part of a municipal comprehensive review in accordance with the policies of this Plan. Policy 4.5 of Amendment 2-2009 is applicable in determining hamlet boundary adjustments.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **Policy 4.H.1.8** | Villages and Hamlets where additional development is to be permitted shall be designated and their boundaries defined in local official plans. They should have sufficient development capacity to accommodate supporting farm related uses and only a limited amount of non-farm related development. In areas identified as Good General Agricultural Areas an amendment to the Regional Policy Plan will be required to show the general location. This amendment will be reviewed according to the objectives and policies in this Plan and the detailed provisions in 6.C. New hamlets or expansions to existing hamlets should be identified only at the time of a comprehensive official plan review and only where it has been demonstrated that:  
  - Sufficient opportunities for growth are not available through intensification and redevelopment in urban areas;  
  - There are no alternatives that avoid Good General Agricultural Areas; and  
  - There are no reasonable alternatives on lower priority agricultural lands in Good General Agricultural Areas.  
Notwithstanding the above provisions, no new hamlets or expansions to existing hamlets are permitted in Unique Agricultural Areas. |
| **Policy 4.H.1.9** | The boundaries of new and expanded hamlets in Good General Agricultural Areas and in Rural Areas should be located so as to minimize and mitigate to the extent feasible the impacts on nearby agricultural operations. |
### 4.H.2 Hamlets in the Local Community Structure

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Policy 4.H.2.1</th>
<th>Hamlets shall be designated and their boundaries defined on a local Official Plan schedule showing firm hamlet boundaries in accordance with the Region’s Official Plan.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Policy 4.H.2.2</td>
<td>Hamlet mapping in local Official Plans shall include Natural Hazard mapping.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policy 4.H.2.3</td>
<td>Minor boundary corrections of existing hamlet boundaries shall be completed through a local municipal comprehensive review and without an amendment to this Plan subject to the following:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

i.   The correction complies with Policy 4.H.1.8 of this Plan

ii.  The correction is to address property boundary alignment such as split lots or property corrections/adjustments

iii. The property area is minor in nature

iv.  The property area does not create additional developable lots to accommodate forecasted growth

v.   Locally designated and/or listed heritage building(s) and/or features may be added to ensure their long-term protection; the heritage building and/or feature must be on property physically contiguous to the hamlet boundary and shall include the building(s) and/or feature associated with the designation or listing

vi.  The correction does not include lands in an environmental feature (EPA or ECA) unless the feature is part of a property already in the hamlet boundary

vii. The correction is implemented through Local Official Plan Five Year Review

viii. At the time the Local Official Plan Five Year Review is approved by Regional Council, the correction to the hamlet boundaries shall be updated in the Regional Policy Plan without an amendment to this Plan.

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**“Useable Lot Area”** Shall mean an area, generally contiguous on the lot, within the boundaries of a lot that is free of: non-developable natural heritage features, natural hazards, easements, right-of-ways, and protected archeological sites.
4.H.3 Hamlet Development Policies

Policy 4.H.3.1 Where Village and Hamlet boundaries have been established closer to an existing livestock operation than determined by the Minimum Distance Separation Formula in the Agricultural Code of Practice, new Hamlet or Village development must still comply with the Minimum Distance Separation Formula.

Policy 4.H.3.2 Development in Villages and Hamlets should preferably take place on the basis of secondary plans. The Region will co-operate and assist in the preparation and review of these secondary plans. The secondary plans should deal with issues which include:

i. population
ii. servicing
iii. road system
iv. land use
v. community facilities
vi. effect on surrounding lands
vii. implementation

Policy 4.H.3.3 Development in Villages and Hamlets will be permitted by plan of subdivision or by consent. Development will be encouraged in depth rather than in strips along roads. Provision shall be made to permit access at appropriate locations from the main road to second or third tiers of lots behind the existing development, where proposed. Wherever possible, the local municipality shall obtain such access in the course of considering plans of subdivision and consents for land severances.

Policy 4.H.3.4 Proposals for development will be carefully reviewed by both the local municipality and the Region to ensure that the development is orderly and well planned, that adequate services such as school bussing and fire protection can be provided, that the added development will not interfere with the operation of the arterial road system and that existing problems such as pollution, inadequate water supply or conflicting land uses will not be aggravated.

Policy 4.H.3.5 Development must be on lots having an adequate water supply and suitable for private waste disposal systems in accordance with the requirements of the Ministry of the Environment and the Medical Officer of Health. The minimum lot size for new lots in Villages and Hamlets should be 1 hectare unless it is determined through a hydrogeological study that a smaller lot size will adequately accommodate private water and sewage treatment facilities for long term operation. In all cases, a minimum of 1 acre of useable lot area for septic system purposes shall be provided.

Policy 4.H.3.6 Proposals for development within or expansion to areas designated Minor Urban Centre within the Niagara Escarpment Plan as amended from time to time on Niagara Escarpment Plan Area Map 1, are subject to Part 1.6, Minor Urban Centres, and the development criteria in Part 2.
4.1 Mixed Use Areas

Policy 4.1.1 The Region encourages the development of mixed use areas in Niagara. Mixed use areas should be planned to accommodate a variety of complementary land uses, including residential, commercial, employment, recreation, institutional, the Core Natural Heritage System, hydrological features and open space.

Policy 4.1.2 Mixed use areas should be planned to accommodate a variety of housing types, with an emphasis on providing opportunities for medium and high density residential development.

Policy 4.1.3 Mixed use areas should be planned to allow for the mixing of land uses at several scales. Land use could be mixed within neighbourhoods, blocks, parcels and buildings.

Policy 4.1.4 Mixed use areas should be planned to accommodate a variety of transportation modes, including walking, cycling and transit.

Policy 4.1.5 Mixed use areas should be located in both greenfield and intensification areas.

Policy 4.1.6 Local municipalities are encouraged to identify mixed use areas in their official plans and create a set of land use policies to guide development in these areas.

Policy 4.1.7 The planning of mixed use areas should direct particular attention to providing an attractive streetscape environment and public realm. A higher quality of public realm design is expected for mixed use areas compared to other residential areas, as mixed use areas often have a higher proportion of public space as compared to private space.
4. Urban Design and the Public Realm

Policy 4.1. The Region promotes urban design analysis, municipal beautification, streetscape improvements, public art and the establishment of public gardens to ensure our communities remain attractive places, enhance our quality of life, and encourage tourism.

Policy 4.2. The Region promotes adoption of its Model Urban Design Guidelines or similar community design guidelines by the local municipalities to support the development of a strong sense of place and an overall approach to development which considers design at a broader neighbourhood and/or community scale.

Policy 4.3. The Region encourages inclusion of urban design analysis in the preparation of local official plans, neighbourhood plans, secondary plans, community improvement plans, public works projects, and private development projects. In support of this initiative the Region also encourages use of enhanced visualization techniques to foster collaboration in design review.

Policy 4.4. The Region encourages complementary private realm site design that addresses public safety, active transportation, landscaping, and human scale in buildings facing public space.

Policy 4.5. The Region promotes the development of the public realm in a manner that supports vibrant social and cultural gathering spaces easily accessed by a variety of transportation modes. This principle is particularly important in planning for Niagara’s downtowns.