



managing  
growth

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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 Population, Household and Employment Projections

### 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:

Niagara Region, Population and Employment Forecast							
Population				Employment			
2001	2011	2021	2031	2001	2011	2021	2031
427,000	442,000	474,000	511,000	186,000	201,000	209,000	218,000
<i>Source: Schedule 3, Provincial Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, Ministry of Infrastructure (2006).</i>							

**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.

Municipality	Residential Intensification Target (percent of total annual development)
Town of Fort Erie	15%
Town of Grimsby	80%
Town of Lincoln	40%
City of Niagara Falls	40%
Town of Niagara on-the-Lake	15%
Town of Pelham	15%
City of Port Colborne	15%
City of St. Catharines	95%
City of Thorold	15%
Township of Wainfleet	-
City of Welland	40%
Township of West Lincoln	15%
<b>REGION OF NIAGARA</b>	<b>40%</b>

#### 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) Publically 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 14.1 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 Brock District Plan (ROPA 14)

The Brock District is a unique urban centre that straddles the City of St. Catharines and the City of Thorold with about half of the area comprised by Brock University. The District includes the four quadrants of Sir Isaac Brock Way and Merrittville Highway/Glenridge Avenue and extends from Highway 406 west to the westerly edge of Lake Moodie and from Decew Road and Lake Gibson north to the wooded slope of the Niagara Escarpment. A portion of the district is also subject to the provincial policies of the Greenbelt Plan and the Niagara Escarpment Plan.

The vision of the Brock District Plan is to leverage the unique economic driver of Brock University to transition the area from a lower density employment area to a higher density mixed use centre that is comprehensively and sustainably planned for social and economic success, and environmental sustainability.

The Brock District Plan sets a framework for the planning, design and development of an iconic strategic employment and residential growth area consisting of a vibrant complete university community set within a UNESCO World Biosphere Reserve. The vision focuses on higher education as a catalyst for economic prosperity. Brock University is the centre around which areas for new mixed use, higher density housing and employment are stitched together with an enhanced public realm including a network of tree lined streets,

urban open spaces and natural features, demonstrating sustainable design, green infrastructure and a walkable positive experience.

#### **4.G.13.A General Objectives**

**Objective 4.G.13.A.1** The Brock District Plan shall capitalize on the research, innovation and other activities at Brock University, build on the intellectual capital of the area and leverage the assets of Niagara Region to have a global impact in terms of opportunities to attract new students, new residents, new businesses, and new employees to the Brock District.

**Objective 4.G.13.A.2** The Brock District Plan shall build on the partnerships with local municipalities, Brock University and the Niagara Escarpment Commission to collaboratively implement the objectives and policies of the plan.

**Objective 4.G.13.A.3** The Brock District Plan is recognized as an area of major activity and an important catalyst for investment. The Brock District Plan shall capitalize on the opportunities and transform the concepts into reality.

#### 4.G.13.B Specific Objectives

- a) To ensure that the Brock District becomes a complete community by integrating current and new uses and spaces, with a revitalized public realm and dense, compact mixed use development supporting a blend of residential, retail, institutional, recreational and employment activities.
- b) To position the Brock District globally within a UNESCO World Biosphere Reserve and Region's Gateway Economic Zone to promote interdisciplinary solutions through research and innovation for the conservation of biodiversity; sustainable use; and managing changes and interactions between social and ecological systems.
- c) To ensure the protection and possible enhancement of existing natural features and systems within and outside the Niagara Escarpment.
- d) To ensure Gateways emphasize the prominence and boundaries to the Brock District.
- e) To ensure that the Brock District Plan is a leader in sustainability, low impact development, green building standards, transit oriented development and new technologies. The Brock District shall aspire to be a carbon neutral district by reducing and/or offsetting greenhouse gas emissions.
- f) To ensure that the Brock District is served by a safe, beautiful, comfortable, and connected active transportation network.
- g) To ensure that the Brock District strives to create beautiful and sustainable streetscapes with a network of publicly accessible open spaces. The Civic Park shall be a four season landscape that will be appealing and available to all.

## 4.G.13.C Policies

- Policy 4.G.13.C.1** A Regional Technical Advisory Committee shall be formed by the Region to develop an implementation framework as part of the ongoing commitment to the District Plan particularly with respect to the implementation tools in policy **4.G.13.C.2** and objectives of **4.G.13.B**.
- Policy 4.G.13.C.2** The following guidance material will be developed to transition the area to the District envisioned in the District Plan:
- a) Brock District Placemaking Manual
  - b) Brock District Green Energy Infrastructure Plan
  - c) Brock District Green Building Standard
  - d) Regional Headquarters Master Plan
  - e) Conformity review and updating of relevant local plans, policies and zoning by-laws
- Policy 4.G.13.C.3** The following locations shall be emphasized as Gateways to the District using design features such as natural landscaping, including native species, and other urban design components identified in the District Plan or through further study of the Technical Advisory Committee:
- a) The Niagara Escarpment gateway via Glenridge Ave;
  - b) The lake gateway via Merrittville Hwy; and
  - c) The 406 gateway via Sir Isaac Brock Way
- Policy 4.G.13.C.4** The Brock District Plan contains design guidelines for development in both the public and private sector. These guidelines reinforce the seven specific objectives in section **4.G.13.B**. The guidelines provide clarity with respect to built form, streets, parks, open space and parking for development in the Brock District. Development proposals shall consider these guidelines.
- Policy 4.G.13.C.5** An active transportation network shall be created, as illustrated on the Plan for Circulation Map in the Brock District Plan by ensuring local Plans incorporate a sidewalk on both sides of the streets, improved cycling infrastructure, safe marked crossings, a network of pathways and trails, improved transit and signage that is clear and informative.
- Policy 4.G.13.C.6** The Demonstration Plan Map as shown in the Brock District Plan shall be used as a guide only for the layout and design of permitted development within the District Plan Area.

- Policy 4.G.13.C.7** Local municipal Official Plans, Secondary Plans, and Zoning By-laws shall be updated to implement the vision, objectives, and policy direction of Brock District Plan, as required. Brock University shall have regard for the vision and objectives of the Brock District Plan through future review of their Campus Master Plan.
- Policy 4.G.13.C.8** Land use designations in local Official Plans shall be reviewed in the context of the Brock District Plan, as well as the Natural Heritage policies of section 7.B and the Niagara Escarpment Plan.
- Policy 4.G.13.C.9** The Brock District Plan shall be reviewed and updated every 10 years in consultation with stakeholders.
- Policy 4.G.13.C.10** Minor changes to the Brock District Plan may be permitted as a result of future planning study or technical review provided it is consistent with the overall vision and framework of the Brock District Plan.
- Policy 4.G.13.C.11** The Brock Master Plan Servicing Study (City of Thorold, 2014) and/or any other servicing strategy shall be reviewed to determine the servicing requirements and, if required, any upgrades as part of any future (re)development application within the Brock District Plan area.

## 4.H Hamlets

**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:

- a) Capital construction costs are borne by the development;
- b) 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.

- Policy 4.H.1.6** 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.
- Policy 4.H.1.7** 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.
- Policy 4.H.1.8** 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**

- Policy 4.H.2.1** 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.
- Policy 4.H.2.2** Hamlet mapping in local Official Plans shall include Natural Hazard mapping.
- Policy 4.H.2.3** 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:
- 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.

**“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 Hamlet boundaries have been established closer to an existing livestock operation than determined by the Minimum Distance Separation Formula, new Hamlet development must still comply with the Minimum Distance Separation Formula.

**Policy 4.H.3.2** Development in 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 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 Hamlets should be 1hectare 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.J Urban Design and the Public Realm

- Policy 4.J.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.J.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.J.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.J.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.J.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.