9. Transportation

At the time of preparation of this document, a large scale comprehensive transportation study embracing all of the Regions of Niagara, Hamilton-Wentworth and Haldimand-Norfolk is being carried out by the Provincial Ministry of Transportation and Communications. The primary purpose of this study is to establish needs and priorities for the Provincial highway system in the study area, and it includes an examination of goods movements and public transit. Although several local municipalities have conducted individual transportation studies, the Provincial study will be the first in-depth examination of the Region as a whole. The information derived from this study could be used as the basis for further, more refined studies of the Regional and local road systems on either a local or overall basis.

Also pending are decisions on such major facilities as the northerly and southerly extensions of Highway 406 and the proposed Niagara Freeway. Major proposals arising out of the Provincial study, policy decisions affecting freeway construction or increasing emphasis on alternative modes of transportation would significantly affect the Region’s transportation plans. It should therefore be recognized that the Plan must necessarily be flexible and subject to revision to meet changing conditions. There is also no question that, particularly in the urban areas, further traffic studies will be required in order to develop and refine traffic improvement programs.

9.A Objectives for Transportation

Objective 9.A.1 To promote and support safe, convenient, efficient, aesthetic and economical transportation systems for all modes of transport for the movement of people and goods.

Objective 9.A.2 To provide an arterial road system which, in conjunction with the Provincial and local road systems, will give convenient access throughout all parts of the Region and to adjacent areas.

Objective 9.A.3 To encourage the development of convenient and efficient public transit services throughout the Region.

Objective 9.A.4 To actively support the continuation and improvement of the railway system for the movement of both passengers and goods.

Objective 9.A.5 To actively support the provision of air services for both passengers and goods while minimizing the conflicts between airport and adjacent activities and land uses.

Objective 9.A.6 To ensure that transportation infrastructure contributes to the development of vibrant communities; recognizes the historical context within which it is developed and enhances the public realm by designing pleasing streetscapes and supporting active transportation.
9.B Policies for Transportation

Policy 9.B.1 The Region will:
   a) Ensure that corridors are identified and protected to meet current and projected needs for various modes of travel including active transportation.
   b) Support opportunities for multi-modal use where feasible, in particular prioritizing transit and goods movement needs over those of single occupant automobiles.
   c) Consider increased opportunities for moving people and goods by rail, where appropriate.
   d) Consider the separation of modes within corridors, where appropriate.
   e) For goods movement corridors, provide for linkages to planned or existing intermodal opportunities where feasible.
   f) Develop transportation demand management policies to be incorporated into the Regional Official Plan.

Policy 9.B.2 Planning for transportation systems and facilities should be sensitive to community values and the physical setting, embodying the principles of context sensitive design:
   a) Involving the public and stakeholders early and continuously throughout the planning process.
   b) Designing transportation systems to accommodate all desired modes of transportation.
   c) Balancing transportation safety, mobility, cost and community and environmental goals.
   d) Identifying and addressing community and environmental values and conserving or enhancing environmental, aesthetic, cultural, historic, economic and natural resources.
   e) Applying flexibility to tailor engineering standards to local conditions and values.

Policy 9.B.3 An Environmental Assessment for a transportation project should include consideration of:
   a) The opportunity to improve the living environment of existing residents adjacent to the street and within the adjacent neighbourhood. Such opportunities may include:
      i. Aesthetics such as street trees and plantings, lighting and underground wiring.
      ii. The provision of visitor parking.
      iii. Traffic calming.
      iv. Noise attenuation.
      v. Support for neighbourhood amenities such as parks and active transportation routes and facilities.
   b) The potential to support infilling and/or intensification adjacent to the road allowance.
   c) The opportunity to improve the pedestrian environment for both residents and visitors.
   d) The opportunity to provide for or improve other modes of transportation including transit and cycling.
e) The opportunity to improve the safety, efficiency and pleasure of all road users including drivers and their passengers, pedestrians and cyclists.
f) The accommodation of commercial and emergency vehicles.
g) The environmental policies in Chapter 7 of this Plan.

**Policy 9.B.4**
The Region shall continue to study and assess its transportation needs and shall revise or expand this Plan as necessary.

**Policy 9.B.5**
The Region will support the provision of improved transportation facilities south of the Niagara Escarpment, including an investigation of the need, alignment and timing for a mid-peninsula *transportation corridor* as a means to preserve unique agricultural lands and to encourage *development* south of the Escarpment.

**Policy 9.B.6**
The distribution of land uses, particularly the location of future large industrial and commercial areas, must take into account the availability of suitable transportation facilities.

**Policy 9.B.7**
The roads and other transportation components of local official plans shall conform to the Regional Plan and shall indicate which roads and other transportation facilities are a Regional responsibility.

**Policy 9.B.8**
The Region will seek the necessary legislative changes to permit the Region to issue licenses for public transit and trucking operations within Regional Niagara.

**Policy 9.B.9**
The Region and local municipalities shall develop policies to promote vibrant and walkable streets and bridges consistent with the Region’s Model Urban Design Guidelines on Regional and local roads, respectively.
9.C  The Regional Road System

The Regional Road System is a network of arterial roads providing access to and from all parts of the Region. It was initially composed of the road systems of the former counties of Lincoln and Welland, the urban arterial street networks and certain Provincial highways which were turned over to the Region. The roads that make up this system are the results of further changes in jurisdictions which may occur depending upon volume of traffic and road function.

Roads have three impacts: the movement of goods and people – traffic, the effect on the character of the area it traverses, and the influence it has on future development. Thus planning for roads involves a balance of these concerns which is reflected in the policies of this Chapter.

To maintain an appropriate standard of service, the Regional Road allowances must be of sufficient width for the lanes of traffic, bicycle and transit facilities, utilities, snow storage, drainage, sidewalks, and landscaping. Road allowance policies will establish clear and consistent requirements to protect and acquire needed road allowances, so that new development does not limit the Municipality’s ability to provide future services and utilities within these road allowances. Therefore to enable Niagara Region to protect and acquire land for Regional Road allowances and to enhance the areas they traverse, this Chapter identifies the Regional Road allowance widths required, policies for acquiring land for road allowances by dedications and purchase, guidelines for road allowance improvements, and the identification of roadways with attributes to be protected and enhanced.

Policy 9.C.1  The Regional Road system shall be a network of arterial roads providing access to and from various parts of the Region. This road network and allowance widths shall be determined based on the volume of traffic, road function, system continuity, existing land use, future development patterns, scenic and natural amenities, and respect for existing communities.

Policy 9.C.2  The Region will review its Road Network from time-to-time and will make such additions or deletions to the Network where warranted.

Policy 9.C.3  Where it is anticipated that a local street will ultimately be assumed as a Regional Road or where it is planned to extend Regional Roads, the rights-of-way shall be protected from development. In cases where such rights-of-way are required in growth areas, the development or subdivision plans shall make provision for these future roadways and all Regional requirements shall be adhered to. Where proposals are not finalized or alternatives are still under study, the protection must be maintained at least in and near urban areas until definite decisions are made. Road reserves identifiable at this time are shown on the accompanying map, "Interim Road Proposals". Provision shall also be made in local official plans to illustrate the location of these rights-of-way reserves and to protect them from any additional development. In addition, within the Niagara Escarpment Plan area, the policies of the Niagara Escarpment Plan shall be adhered to in considering right-of-way reserves.

Policy 9.C.4  The Region shall obtain lands to create or widen Regional Road allowances, hereafter called widenings, to provide a safe and efficient road system for people and vehicles and to accommodate vehicular traffic including bicycles, pedestrian movement, transit facilities, curbs, gutters, utilities, noise control measures, snow storage, drainage measures, fencing, landscaping and other matters deemed compatible with the road system.
Policy 9.C.5 The Region recognizes the importance of roads and their widenings for transportation, utilities, land service, and the character and quality of the urban and rural landscapes. The Region shall endeavour to make full use of all existing roadways and to minimize construction and right-of-way costs, property damage and undesirable community effects, and the impact of road improvements and reconstruction on the existing landscape brought about by road widenings.

Policy 9.C.6 The Region encourages and promotes the provision of adequate pedestrian and bicycling facilities in order to promote pedestrian safety, reduce pedestrian vehicle conflicts, and encourage bicycling. In undertaking road improvements, consideration shall be given to:

a) accommodating safe pedestrian movement, and
b) bicycling facilities as provided in Chapter 9.F.

The provision of sidewalks along Regional Roads is the responsibility of the local municipalities, although location and design requires Regional approval.

Policy 9.C.7 The widths for Regional Road allowances are designated in the Table titled “Road Allowance Widths”. Each Regional Road allowance which is not presently at its designated width is a highway to be widened.

Policy 9.C.8 The Regional Road allowances identified in this Plan shall be protected from encroachment by acquiring the lands if possible prior to or at the time of development or redevelopment of the adjacent lands and by ensuring that building setbacks abutting Regional Roads are adequate.

Policy 9.C.9 The Region shall minimize public expenditures by acquiring road allowance widenings as a condition of planning approval of development applications. The Region recognizes the direct benefits of road widenings to property that is developed.

Policy 9.C.10 Notwithstanding Policy 9.C.9, no land dedications will be requested where an application is in Agricultural Areas or for condominium approval that involves a transfer of tenure status from rental to ownership and if no new units, or increase in density, are involved.

Policy 9.C.11 Land to be dedicated for widenings pursuant to Policy 9.C.9 shall be conveyed at no cost to the Region, free of all encumbrances, encroachments and improvements unless otherwise agreed to by the Region.

Policy 9.C.12 Land for Regional Road widening normally will be required equally from both sides of the centreline of the designated Regional Road unless existing land uses, topographic features or other physical or environmental constraints necessitate taking greater widening on one side than the other.
Policy 9.C.13 The Region may require road widening dedications in addition to the designated road allowances indicated in the Table titled “Road Allowance Widths” without the need for amendments to this Plan for purposes such as the following:

a) Additional site triangles at intersections and entranceways necessary for traffic operational design purposes;
b) Turning lanes at intersections or to provide suitable access to major traffic generator developments;
c) Future grade separations of Regional Roads with other roads or railway lines;
d) Sites for traffic control devices and transit facilities (e.g. bus lay-bys);
e) Cut and fill requirements for road construction; and
f) Storm drainage requirements, including ditches, catch basins, culverts and headwalls.

Policy 9.C.14 Road widening requirements for site triangles and turning lanes are as follows:

a) The maximum length of the side of an additional triangle at an intersection or entranceway shall be 15 metres in an Agricultural or Rural Area and 4.5 metres along a road in an Urban Area. Some variations may occur in unusual circumstances;
b) To meet safety and design standards, additional land may be required for auxiliary turning lanes in front of major traffic generators. In most circumstances the additional land shall not exceed 4 metres in width; and

c) At each corner of a crossing of a Regional Road and a railway line the maximum length of the site triangle along the Regional Road shall be 17 metres and the maximum width of the site triangle measured from the Regional Road shall be 15 metres.

Policy 9.C.15 The Region may acquire at its own expense road allowance widenings where such widenings exceed those specified in the Table titled “Road Allowance Widths” without an amendment to this Plan.

Policy 9.C.16 An amendment to the Regional Official Plan shall be required for road widening requirements that are greater than indicated in this Plan and which are to be obtained as a dedication through the planning approval process for development. Criteria that shall be considered in the review of any amendment application include:

a) need in terms of both the existing and forecast traffic patterns and volumes;
b) required road design including safety, operational, and related requirements and utility standards;
c) limitations posed by existing land uses and natural features;
d) applicable federal and provincial acts and regulations;
e) cost of obtaining widenings; and
f) future growth areas.

Policy 9.C.17 The Region in conjunction with the local municipalities shall establish and require compliance to minimum setbacks, loading and parking facilities, access control, and design requirements and policies consistent with the function of Regional Roads.
Policy 9.C.18  The Region shall request and encourage the local municipalities:

a) to pass site plan control by-laws under the Planning Act that include lands adjacent to Regional Roads to be widened and to amend existing official plans policies to conform with those of the Regional Official Plan;
b) to circulate all development applications requiring planning approval to the Region to ensure that appropriate road widening dedications can be requested as a condition of development along any Regional Road;
c) to prevent encroachments upon proposed Regional Road allowances through appropriate protection policies in their official plans and zoning by-laws; and
d) to consider and improve the public realm along Regional Roads in community improvement plan areas by adding public art, street trees, benches, banners, sculptures, road murals and other sidewalk amenities.

Policy 9.C.19  The Region will review with the local municipalities the range and appropriateness of any uses that are exempted from site plan control along a Regional Road that is a highway to be widened based on traffic and land use concerns.

Policy 9.C.20  Lands transferred to the Region for road widening purposes may be used on an interim basis for landscaping or temporary uses in accordance with local municipal by-laws by agreement between the Region and the adjacent property owner.

Policy 9.C.21  Any lands that are not part of a designated Regional Road allowance may be retained or considered surplus. Retained lands shall be subject to a needs study. Surplus lands shall be disposed of in accordance with the Region’s land disposal policies.

Policy 9.C.22  The taking of any right-of-way widening shall not require the Region to undertake improvements to a particular roadway at a specific time. Improvements, if any, are subject to priorities, capital budgeting and land development needs.

Policy 9.C.23  Improvement of a Regional Road, including the widening of a traveled section of a road, may be subject to a Class Environmental Assessment under the Environmental Assessment Act, the Greenbelt Act or some other general or specific Act. A Niagara Escarpment Commission Development Permit may be required for road improvements of roads which are within the Niagara Escarpment Planning Area.

Policy 9.C.24  Consistent with the Regional Niagara Bikeways Master Plan, the Wine Route and other policies in this plan, specific roads and bridges that have a distinctive historical and cultural character should be recognized in the Regional and local municipal official plans and encouraged by the Region. Regional Roads with tourism attributes are: Regional Road 81 in Grimsby (Main Street East/ West), Lincoln (King Street) and St. Catharines (St. Paul Street West); Regional Road 24 north of Regional Road 81 in Lincoln (Victoria Avenue); Regional Road 39 (North Service Road) in Lincoln and St. Catharines; Regional Road 87 in St. Catharines (Lakeshore Road) and Niagara-on-the-Lake (Lakeshore Road); Regional Road 3 in Wainfleet (Lakeshore Road), Port Colborne (Main Street West) and Fort Erie (Garrison Road); and Regional Road 1 in Fort Erie (Dominion Road).
Policy 9.C.25
Along these Roads and where Regional Roads are adjacent to significant built heritage resources, the Region shall conserve the heritage attributes of the roadway and require measures to mitigate any negative impacts to roads or adjoining cultural heritage resources and will promote pedestrian-friendly and aesthetically pleasing streetscape design in accordance with the following: Road allowance changes and Class Environmental Assessments associated with proposed road improvements shall be reviewed giving a high priority to conservation and promotion of the scenic natural, and cultural amenities and character of the area while maintaining accessibility for farm vehicle traffic; The Region shall consider character appropriate and distinctive design treatments of Regional Road rights-of-way, including but not limited to: decorative paving, locally significant material, public art, traffic calming, unique signage and lighting features, sidewalk furniture and plaques or other means of permanent commemoration; and, The Region shall consider appropriate and desirable infrastructure for Regional Road rights-of-way, including street lighting, transit facilities, and cycling facilities, consistent with the other policies of this Plan.

Policy 9.C.26
The Region, in collaboration with the local municipalities will examine the best means of designing, planning, installing and maintaining Regional Road infrastructure and design treatments described in policy 9.C.25.

Policy 9.C.27
The Region of Niagara recognizes MTO’s jurisdiction at Regional Roads and Provincial Highways overpass/underpass and the need for consultation with the MTO, with regard to cultural enhancements/visual displays at these locations.

Policy 9.C.28
The Region encourages tree planting and other forms of landscaping along all Regional Roads and abutting private property to ensure aesthetically pleasing streetscapes. Wherever possible and within technical and budgetary constraints, the Region shall plant trees along Regional Roads and abutting properties as a means of achieving attractive treed avenues. The Region shall endeavour to minimize the removal of trees, and any damage to existing trees.

Policy 9.C.29
The Region shall promote aesthetically pleasing and culturally significant streetscape designs through the use of public art, benches and seating, banners, road murals, treed avenues, attractive sound barriers and decorative fencing, and appropriate land use design in community improvement plan areas.

Policy 9.C.30
The Region will consider desirable and feasible measures to control traffic noise from Regional Roads. Road traffic noise shall be assessed and sound levels predicted using guidelines provided by the Ministry of the Environment, as modified from time-to-time:

   a) For Regional Roads in developed areas, the Region shall establish criteria to assess the merits of traffic noise control measures;
   b) For Regional Roads in developing areas, all adjacent development applications requiring planning approval must be considered for traffic noise control features. The Region shall determine the need for a traffic noise study, the requirements for such studies, and the noise control features that are required as a condition of planning approval. The Region’s approval is required for all traffic noise control features external to the buildings identified in the development agreements. The local municipalities shall be responsible for enforcement of all traffic noise control features to be incorporated into the building construction; and
c) For a Regional Road that is new or to be widened, a traffic noise impact study is required to examine the effects on the existing and proposed residential communities or noise sensitive land uses that may exist along the Road. The Region shall establish criteria for acceptable noise levels and noise control measures.

Policy 9.C.31 In acquiring right-of-way for links in the Regional Road system consideration shall be given to the establishment of widths sufficient to permit the future inclusion of rapid transit facilities in addition to a roadway and to provide adequate buffering of adjacent lands. In addition, within the Niagara Escarpment Plan area, the policies of the Niagara Escarpment Plan shall be adhered to in the acquisition of rights-of-way for links in the Regional Road system.

Policy 9.C.32 The Region may require that a permit be obtained from the Region for any construction of new buildings/structures or additions along Regional Roads to ensure that the required setbacks are implemented to protect any proposed road allowance widenings identified in the Official Plan. This requirement shall be waived when suitable local regulations are in operation.

Policy 9.C.33 Where a road allowance widening dedication is required under Policies 9.C.9 or 9.C.13, or where a permit is issued under Policy 9.C.32, for development abutting a Regional Road, the developer/owner of these lands must provide the Region, at no cost to the Region, with a certificate of an Ontario Land Surveyor that all legal survey monumentation on the widened road allowance is in place as a condition of planning application approval under Policies 9.C.9 or 9.C.13, or on the setback as per a permit under Policy 9.C.32 when construction is completed.

Policy 9.C.34 A key design objective for Regional Roads is to develop context-sensitive solutions that balance safety, visual amenity, pedestrianism and the ability to move large volumes of traffic. The balancing of these issues may include permitting or removing on-street parking, allowing or limiting access to adjacent properties, and modifying the pavement width or other measures to facilitate traffic flow or calming while contributing to a positive appearance, sense of place, and community interaction. The Region will implement the approved “Model Urban Design Guidelines” or its successor to facilitate this balance of both traffic flow and community environments. Design guidelines shall also be prepared for Regional Roads in non-urban areas.

Policy 9.C.35 All signs and displays to be erected along Regional Roads shall be reviewed for acceptability by the Region.

Policy 9.C.36 A permit from the Region shall be required for the establishment of any new access to a Regional Road or for the modification of any existing access.

Policy 9.C.37 The Region shall develop and implement policies respecting necessary zoning provisions such as loading and parking facilities. Such provisions will apply to lands lying within 46 metres (150 feet) of a Regional Road and must be incorporated in local zoning by-laws. These requirements shall be waived when suitable local regulations are in operation.
Policy 9.C.38

All development proposals abutting Regional Roads will be closely reviewed by the Region. Developments which necessitate major road improvements to accommodate the anticipated traffic will be co-ordinated with the installation of such improvements.

Policy 9.C.39

Where an individual development such as a major shopping centre, industry, or high density residential complex requires special provisions for traffic such as channelization, turning lanes or traffic signals, the Region will require the developer to contribute to the cost thereof.

Policy 9.C.40

In order to reduce the impact of the removal of on-street parking on Regional Roads and to ensure that an adequate supply of parking is available where needed, local municipalities will be encouraged to make suitable provisions in their zoning by-laws and to develop and implement comprehensive off-street parking programs.

Policy 9.C.41

The Wine Route and the Victoria Avenue Market Greenway within the Twenty Valley/Jordan Tourism Area provide key functions related to tourism. Within the rights-of-way of these important routes, special provisions for alternative development standards and design treatments shall be established. The design of these roads will recognize existing development patterns, and may incorporate, where appropriate, permission for on-street parking, bicycle paths and enhanced landscaping. Key principles to be considered in the future improvement of these roads shall include:

a) develop a program of coordinated signage to identify and market the themes promoted along the Regional Roads;
b) enhance the visual appeal of the Regional Roads through culturally significant streetscape treatment which should include trees and other landscape upgrading, special lighting and banners;
c) encourage high quality redevelopment of properties along the Regional Roads. Buildings should be oriented to front, face and feature the road. Large parking areas should be located behind or at the side of buildings and, where visible from the road, must include substantial landscape treatment;
d) develop gateways, as shown on Schedule F, to define special precincts along the route, to disseminate information and to mark entrances to the Ball’s Falls Heritage Conservation Area, the Vineland CBD, Jordan Village and Prudhommes; and
e) discourage further right-of-way and/or pavement widenings, except to accommodate cycling facilities and/or on-street parking within identified “Urban Areas”.

Policy 9.C.42

Designated Regional Road allowances that are not yet owned by the Region shall be protected from development. In growth areas, development plans shall make provision for these road allowances and shall adhere to all Regional requirements. When new Regional Roads are added to the Regional Road Network appropriate road allowance widths will be added to the Table titled “Road Allowance Widths” by an amendment to this Plan. Where a road, or a section of road, is deleted from the Regional Road Network, it will be automatically eliminated from the above policies and will become the responsibility of the jurisdiction to which it has been transferred.
Policy 9.C.43 Within *Urban Areas*, the requirement for road reconstruction and rehabilitation and sewer and water works should be viewed as an opportunity to improve the public realm within the section of roadway under consideration. In this context ‘public realm’ is understood to mean the adjacent land uses as well as the area between the faces of the buildings on opposing sides of the street.

Policy 9.C.44 The Region will endeavour to make provision, where possible, for appropriate streetscaping and street furniture along Niagara Region Roads.
9.D Corridor Protection

Policy 9.D.1 The planning and design of highway corridors, and the land use designations along these corridors, will support the policies of this Plan, in particular those directing development to Urban Areas.

Policy 9.D.2 The Region shall protect corridors and rights of way for transportation and transit facilities to meet current and future needs and not permit development in such corridors that could preclude or negatively affect the use of the corridor for the purpose(s) for which it was identified or is actively being planned.

Policy 9.D.3 Local municipalities, in consultation with and the satisfaction of the Province, shall develop official plan policies that provide transportation/transit corridor protection to ensure that development applications will not predetermine or preclude the planning and/or implementation of provincial transportation/transit facilities.

Policy 9.D.4 The Region supports the development of a future transportation corridor linking Niagara with the western Greater Toronto Area as shown on Schedules 2 and 6 of the Provincial Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe.
Chapter 9

9.E Public Transit

Policy 9.E.1 Public transit will be the first priority for transportation infrastructure planning and major transportation improvements for moving people in Niagara.

Policy 9.E.2 The Region will make recommendations on transit planning according to the following criteria:

a) Using transit infrastructure to shape growth, and planning for high residential and employment densities that ensure the efficiency and viability of existing planned transit service level.

b) Placing priority on increasing the capacity of existing transit systems to support intensification areas.

c) Expanding transit service to areas that have achieved, or will be planned to achieve transit supportive residential and employment densities, together with a mix of residential, office, institutional and commercial development wherever possible.

d) Facilitating improved linkages from nearby neighbourhoods to the St. Catharines Urban Growth Centre and locally designated residential intensification areas.

e) Developing transit linkages among the Settlement Areas in Niagara and with settlement areas outside the Region.

f) Increasing the modal share of transit in Niagara.

g) Supporting multi-modal transportation where feasible.

Policy 9.E.3 It is the policy of the Region to encourage improved transit access to the Region from the GTA and to explore how transit facilities for tourists, employees and residents within Niagara can be improved.

Policy 9.E.4 The provision of local and long distance public transit facilities is presently the responsibility of other jurisdictions. The Region will support measures to improve all public transit services. Such support can include representation respecting routing, fares, subsidies, etc., to appropriate Provincial agencies, and on street improvements designed to facilitate transit operations on Regional roadways.

Policy 9.E.5 Planning of new development areas shall take into consideration bus route planning and pedestrian accessibility to routes.

Policy 9.E.6 Planning of major transportation corridors shall include serious consideration to future public transit potential and the provision of a separate right-of-way for such use within the highway right-of-way.

Policy 9.E.7 Local official plan studies and Regional and local transportation studies shall include consideration of short and long term public transit aspects.

Policy 9.E.8 The Region will take all possible steps to assist municipal Transit Commissions to obtain adequate Provincial financing for the purpose of improving bus services, equipment and terminal facilities and for experimental public transit systems.

Policy 9.E.9 As a means of co-ordinating and optimizing the use of public bus services, the Region will promote close co-operation between transit operators and local Boards of Education.
9.F  Active Transportation

The Niagara Region is committed to meeting the needs of cyclists as part of an overall strategy for transportation, active living, environmental sustainability, improved quality of life, energy conservation, tourism and land use management. This direction is supported by both National and Provincial policies such as Smart Growth initiatives, the Federal Gas Tax Fund, the Planning Act, the Provincial Policy Statement, and the Places to Grow Plan.

The Provincial Growth Plan contains policy directives that support and facilitate bicycle transportation in community planning. It calls for the creation of “complete communities”, a term that acknowledges the desire to provide residents with options for where and how they choose to live, work and play. The Plan also calls for the development of communities of the future that are more compact, transit friendly and pedestrian/cycling oriented. In addition, a key objective is to reduce traffic gridlock by improving access to a greater range of transportation choices. Bicycling is an important transportation option in the above context leading to positive, mutually supportive change.

The Niagara Region has demonstrated this commitment for cycling by:

a)  Preparing and adopting the Regional Niagara Bikeways Master Plan (August 2003) and its predecessor, the Regional Niagara Bicycling Study (1995);
b)  Forming the Regional Niagara Bicycling Committee to advise Regional Council on matters related to cycling;
c)  Developing and maintaining 255 lane kilometres of cycling facilities as of 2008;
d)  Promoting Niagara as a cycling destination for tourists; and
e)  Informing and educating Regional residents about the benefits and safe practices of cycling.

The following objectives and policies reflect the community’s aspirations and priorities as well as the Regional commitment to ensure cycling is maintained as a legitimate and viable form of transportation.

9.F.1  Objectives for Bicycling

Objective 9.F.1.1   To encourage cycling in Niagara and work towards a bicycle-friendly environment as part of an active living/active transportation strategy that improves community health and enhances the overall quality of life.

Objective 9.F.1.2   To promote safety and complimentary community behaviour through cycling education and enforcement initiatives.

Objective 9.F.1.3   To recognize and support cycling as a legitimate and environmentally sustainable form of transportation for all trip purposes, utilitarian as well as recreation.

Objective 9.F.1.4   To promote cycling as part of Niagara’s tourism experience in partnership with the Niagara Economic Development Corporation, private/public sectors and other agencies (e.g. Wine Route Network connections and facilities, and Niagara Bike Train support).

Objective 9.F.1.5   To continue to develop, support and evaluate on a five year basis, a region-wide on and off- road cycling network (as shown on Schedule E) and related infrastructure for a broad range of users and interests.
Objective 9.F.1.6  To ensure the region-wide on and off-road cycling network is planned, designed, constructed, and maintained according to recognized standards and/or guidelines.

Objective 9.F.1.7  To incorporate cycling considerations (e.g. supportive infrastructure, routes and modal connectivity) in the Region’s policies, land use and transportation planning activities.

Objective 9.F.1.8  To encourage and assist local municipalities:
   a) to incorporate and support cycling considerations (e.g. supportive infrastructure, routes, modal connectivity) and bicycle-friendly initiatives in municipal land use and transportation planning policies and activities.
   b) to develop bicycle facilities which connect with the region-wide on and off-road cycling network (e.g. Greater Niagara Circle Route).

Objective 9.F.1.9  To encourage and help ensure the integration of other cycling initiatives and facilities with the region-wide on and off-road cycling network including but not limited to the Waterfront Trail, the Greater Niagara Circle Route, the Trans Canada Trail and other networks outside of Niagara.

Objective 9.F.1.10  To maximize the annual infrastructure improvements for cycling with the aim of completing the region-wide cycling network in a timely manner over the next 15 years.

Objective 9.F.1.11  To inform and educate the travelling public about being both respectful and sensitive to the needs of farmers carrying out normal farm practices in agricultural and rural areas (e.g. slow moving farm vehicles on roadsides, farm spraying operations, bird bangers, etc.).

9.F.2 Policies for Bicycling

Policy 9.F.2.1  The Niagara Region will ensure timely implementation, monitoring and updating of the overall Bicycling Network shown on Schedule E, where it follows Regional, municipal and other on and off-road routes, and facilitate implementation elsewhere, with continuous and safe linkages through the Niagara Region’s Capital Works programs and related programs of other agencies and partnerships (i.e. Waterfront Regeneration Trust, Niagara Parks Commission, Ministry of Transportation, International Bridge Authorities, Railways, Transport Canada and other jurisdictions).

Policy 9.F.2.2  Where the Niagara Region Bicycling Network is proposed on a local municipal road, the Regional Municipality will be responsible for funding of the bicycling facility, subject to annual review, prioritization, funding limits and Regional Council approval. If these funds are not available, the local municipality is encouraged to seek other funding for the bicycle facilities and if unsuccessful may proceed with capital works without the bicycling facility.
Policy 9.F.2.3  The Niagara Region will:

a) Provide the Regional Niagara Bicycling Committee with the approved annual Regional roads rehabilitation and construction program as well as the capital works program for sewer and water works to examine and to provide recommendations on bicycling-related works subject to overall considerations (e.g. budgetary, stakeholder, property) identified by the Niagara Region Planning and Development Services, and Public Works Committee.

b) Where the approved capital works program identifies sewer and/or water works or road construction or rehabilitation on urban Regional roads not identified on the Bicycling Network; and where such roads serve, in whole or part, to support and facilitate connections or linkages to the Bicycle Network; Regional Council may consider providing bicycle routes and facilities as part of any infrastructure development or improvements on those roads after assessing the economic, social and environmental implications of the project.

Policy 9.F.2.4  The Niagara Region will minimize the risk to pedestrians, cyclists and motorists by adopting provincially and/or nationally recognized engineering standards as guidelines to assist in the planning, design, maintenance and operations of safe bicycle facilities on the Bicycling Network. Prior to the design and construction of a bikeway or facility, safety and operational matters, including agency and utility requirements, will be considered as well as the cultural, scenic and other environmental attributes through which the designated routes pass. The impact of adjacent agricultural operations on cyclists and impacts from cyclists on adjacent agricultural operations and infrastructure also will be considered. Off the Bicycling Network, the current practice of providing an extra 0.5 to 1.5 metres of paved shoulder along Regional roads will be continued where possible.

Policy 9.F.2.5  The Niagara Region will co-ordinate and promote the development and connectivity of the Niagara Region Bicycling Network with local and adjacent municipalities other agencies and other modes of transportation. Furthermore, request these jurisdictions to plan and develop their own supportive policies and bicycle infrastructure through planning documents and associated capital works programs.

Policy 9.F.2.6  The Niagara Region will support and assist in the protection of abandoned rail and other linear corridors for off-road trails; and recommend that local municipalities and other stakeholders consider various means to protect and/or acquire such corridors. Off-road trail facilities are completely separate from the travelled portion of a roadway with surface treatments that may vary according to the needs of recreational or utilitarian cyclists.

Policy 9.F.2.7  The Niagara Region will request minimum provisions for safe and secure bicycle parking and end-of-trip change facilities in high activity areas, such as work places and public facilities in Regional and local policies and regulations.

Policy 9.F.2.8  Local municipalities are strongly encouraged to integrate bicycling and transit for utilitarian and recreational purposes by allowing users to access both modes of transportation through intermodal opportunities. Some strategies that might be considered include: allowing bicycles on transit vehicles during off-peak periods, bicycle racks on buses, bicycle lockers at major transit stops, and sheltered/secure bicycle parking facilities at public and institutional workplaces and for bike and ride recreation trips.
Policy 9.F.2.9  The Niagara Region will recognize that cycling facilities located on private property will only remain open with the approval of the property owner.

Policy 9.F.2.10  The Niagara Region will support the promotion and delivery of cycling tourism in the region (e.g. Niagara Bike Train, Wine Route network connections and facilities, route signage strategy, mapping and web site), as well as educational activities and initiatives designed to improve cyclists’ and motorists’ skills and safety. This also will include information that addresses sharing the road with agricultural vehicles and the need to recognize normal farm practices in the agricultural areas.

Policy 9.F.2.11  The Niagara Region will require all proposed developments and infrastructure undertakings at the environmental assessment and planning approval stages, to provide facilities for cycling, including extensions and improvements to the bikeway network in keeping with the provisions of this Official Plan and the Regional Niagara Bikeways Master Plan, where feasible. In particular, public sector projects will be expected to show leadership by incorporating facilities and infrastructure for bicycling in their planning and design decisions. Local municipalities are encouraged to include in their planning documents development standards, and implementation tools and incentives, to secure bicycling infrastructure and facilities.

Policy 9.F.2.12  The Region and the local municipalities will ensure that pedestrian and bicycle networks are integrated into transportation planning to:

   a) Provide safe, comfortable travel for pedestrians and bicyclists within and between existing communities and new development.

   b) Provide linkages between intensification areas, adjacent neighbourhoods, and transit stations, including dedicated lane spaces for bicyclists on the major street network where feasible.

   c) Encourage provision of appropriate and sufficient bicycle parking facilities at major transit nodes and public and private facilities.
9.G Complete Streets
9.H Goods Movement

9.H.1 General Policies

Policy 9.H.1.1 The Region and the local municipalities will provide for the establishment of priority routes for goods movement, where feasible, to facilitate the movement of goods into and out of areas of significant employment, industrial and commercial activity and to provide alternate routes connecting to the provincial network.

Policy 9.H.1.2 Local municipalities will plan for land uses in Urban Areas adjacent to, or in the vicinity of transportation facilities, such as inter-modal facilities, rail yards, airports, ports and major highway interchanges that are compatible with and supportive of, the primary goods movement function of these facilities.

Policy 9.H.1.3 It is the policy of the Region to work with appropriate levels of government to improve all modes of transportation infrastructure including cross-border connections, upgrades to the Welland Canal and other maritime facilities, improved capacity for rail services and road improvements, such as the extension of Highway 406 to Port Colborne, improvements to Netherby Road between Welland and Douglastown, and development of the Niagara to GTA corridor as well as continuous upgrades and improvements to the QEW.

9.H.2 Railroads

Policy 9.H.2.1 The Region will support the continued improvement of rail facilities for the movement of passengers and goods throughout the Region.

Policy 9.H.2.2 Where desirable, the Region will initiate studies of the rail system to develop proposals for their future use and to resolve current problems. Such studies would include consideration of:

a) the possible removal of rights-of-way from urban centres,
b) a rail system and terminals for long-term development for both passengers and freight,
c) the elimination or protection of grade level crossings,
d) the possible use of existing rail lines for rapid transit,
e) the feasibility of using rail rights-of-way for other uses such as pipelines, hydroelectric transmission lines, or new roads,
f) the feasibility of using abandoned rights-of-way for other uses; and
g) the possible integration of abandoned railway lines that form part of a cultural heritage landscape into new development as a tribute to the past.
9.H.3 Airports

Policy 9.H.3.1 The Region will encourage the development of aircraft facilities to serve Regional commercial, recreation and private air transportation needs which are compatible with all the other policies of this Plan.

Policy 9.H.3.2 In the development or evaluation of airport proposals, the prime considerations will be appropriate land use, adequate access and a minimum of interference with the natural and community environment.

Policy 9.H.3.3 The Region will encourage and promote consultation among the various levels of government in the planning of future airport facilities.

9.H.4 Welland Canal

The channels and locks of the Welland Canal are operated as a major transportation artery of national and international importance. The Region recognizes this larger role but will seek liaison with the St. Lawrence Seaway Authority to minimize conflicts between the national purpose and the objectives of the local municipalities along the Canal corridor.

Regional land use planning policies recognize the “barrier” influence of the Canal channel on development areas and the movement of land traffic.

Policy 9.H.4.1 The Region will seek a formal liaison role with the St. Lawrence Seaway Authority and other Federal and Provincial agencies involved to identify mutual interests and to act on behalf of the local municipalities. The intent of this liaison role is to achieve the objectives of the local municipalities, the Niagara Region and the St. Lawrence Seaway Authority without interfering with the basic function of the Canal.

Policy 9.H.4.2 The Welland Canal plays and important role in the economy of Niagara Region and beyond. Employment land development adjacent to the Welland Canal within designated settlement and rural employment areas is the priority for capitalizing on the goods movement function of the Welland Canal.

Policy 9.H.4.3 The Region recognizes the right of the St. Lawrence Seaway Management Corporation to seek operational efficiencies and innovation and improvements to the Canal in accordance with its corporate mandate.
9.1 Transportation Demand Management

Policy 9.1.1 Local municipalities are encouraged to develop transportation demand management policies to be incorporated into local official plans.