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employment

3. Employment

3.A Niagara Economic Gateway

3.A.1 General

The *Niagara Economic Gateway* comprises:

- a) the *Gateway Economic Zone* which includes all *settlement areas* within Niagara Falls and Fort Erie as shown in Schedule G1;
- b) the *Gateway Economic Centre* which includes all *settlement areas* within Thorold, Welland and Port Colborne as shown in Schedule G1;
- c) the rural employment lands within the *Niagara Economic Gateway* as shown in Schedule G2;
- d) existing port *infrastructure*, particularly in the Cities of Port Colborne, Welland and Thorold;
- e) the five border crossings to the United States including the Queenston-Lewiston Bridge, the Whirlpool Bridge, the Rainbow Bridge, the Peace Bridge and the rail crossing between Fort Erie and Buffalo;
- f) the QEW Corridor between Fort Erie and Niagara Falls;
- g) the Welland Canal including linkages between the *Urban Growth Centre* in St. Catharines and Thorold, Welland and Port Colborne;
- h) Highway 406 and Highway 140, including linkages between the *Urban Growth Centre* in St. Catharines and Thorold, Welland and Port Colborne;
- i) the major road network including improvements that may be initiated from time to time, particularly to the Netherby Road corridor between Welland and the QEW, and the Niagara to GTHA corridor;
- j) major rail *infrastructure* in Thorold, Welland, and Port Colborne as well as rail *infrastructure* connections to the United States and other parts of Canada;
- k) transit services including possible improvements such as creating new intercity transit corridors within Niagara and better GO and passenger rail links between the GTHA and Niagara which could create nodes in the region where both high density employment uses and housing could be established;
- l) major tourist destinations; and,
- m) major educational support facilities such as Brock University and Niagara College.

3.A.2 Objectives for the Niagara Economic Gateway

Objective 3.A.2.1 To implement Provincial, Regional and local plans and policies.

Objective 3.A.2.2 To strengthen Niagara's economy through strategic long range planning and economic diversification.

Objective 3.A.2.3 To support local municipal planning and economic development efforts through leadership and coordination.

Objective 3.A.2.4 To attract private sector investment to existing and emerging *employment lands* and *employment areas* within the *Niagara Economic Gateway*.

Objective 3.A.2.5 To promote cross-border trade and the efficient movement of goods.

Objective 3.A.2.6 To promote the efficient use of *infrastructure*.

Objective 3.A.2.7 To protect *employment lands* and *employment areas* from unwarranted conversion to incompatible land uses.

Objective 3.A.2.8 To promote planned, orderly, efficient *development* of *employment lands* that balances *development* with natural heritage.

Objective 3.A.2.9 To promote attractive urban design and sustainable *development* for employment uses within the *Niagara Economic Gateway*.

Objective 3.A.2.10 To promote the *intensification* of *employment lands* and the *redevelopment* of *brownfield sites*.

Objective 3.A.2.11 To support appropriately located tourism facilities while maintaining the broader *employment land* focus of the *Gateway Economic Zone* and *Gateway Economic Centre*.

Objective 3.A.2.12 To provide a framework for implementation.

3.A.3 Policies for the Niagara Economic Gateway

Policy 3.A.3.1 The *Gateway Economic Zone* and *Gateway Economic Centre* consists of those *employment lands* within the *settlement areas* of the Cities of Thorold, Welland, Port Colborne, Niagara Falls, and the Town of Fort Erie. *Employment land* investment is to be concentrated in Strategic Locations for Investment including:

- a) lands within the Brock Business Park in Thorold;
- b) lands adjacent to Highway 406 in Welland;
- c) lands adjacent to the Welland Canal in Thorold and lands adjacent to the Welland Canal and Highway 140 in Welland and Port Colborne;
- d) lands within the Fort Erie Industrial Park in Fort Erie;
- e) lands near the Whirlpool Bridge border crossing in Niagara Falls; and,
- f) lands adjacent to the QEW in Niagara Falls.

Policy 3.A.3.2 Lands within the *Niagara Economic Gateway* municipalities and within *settlement areas* shall also be a focus for *employment lands* and *development*. The Strategic Locations for Investment are a focus for financial incentives through Community Improvement Plans. Other areas

of employment within local municipalities and their official plans that are within a *settlement area* shall be recognized as *Gateway employment lands*. The lands of the Canadian Motor Speedway, should the required official plan amendment be approved by the Ontario Municipal Board, shall be considered part of the *Gateway Economic Zone*.

Policy 3.A.3.3 The *Region* recognizes the St. Catharines *Urban Growth Centre* as the location for *major office* land uses. Office uses within the *Gateway Economic Zone* and *Gateway Economic Centre* are to be limited in size and scope to ensure the *major office* function of the St. Catharines *Urban Growth Centre* is maintained and enhanced.

Policy 3.A.3.4 The concept for the Brock Business Park Revitalization is to capitalize on market opportunities for research and *development* and the close proximity to Brock University and Highway 406 by transforming the area into an integrated, mixed-use, campus-style setting which caters to incubators, innovator, limited office uses, and related uses.

In order to address the challenges, capitalize on opportunities and transform the concept into reality, the following tools will be utilized:

- a) preparation of a joint secondary plan to coordinate *development* and refine the concept;
- b) preparation of a public realm improvement program to re-energize the area and attract new investment;
- c) preparation of supporting plans for servicing and transportation (including *active transportation* and transit);
- d) preparation of urban design guidelines; and,
- e) updating relevant local plans, policies, and zoning by-laws.

Policy 3.A.3.5 The concept for the Highway 406 Economic Gateway is to capitalize on proximity and access to Highways 140 and 406 by attracting industries in transportation, logistics, warehousing, food processing, advanced manufacturing and wholesale trade activities and other uses set out in the local official plan.

In order to address the challenges, capitalize on opportunities and transform the concept into reality, the following tools will be utilized:

- a) preparation of a master plan or secondary plan to coordinate *development* and refine the concept;
- b) preparation of supporting plans for servicing and transportation (including *active transportation* and transit);
- c) preparation of urban design guidelines;
- d) preparation of an investment strategy to attract target industries; and,
- e) updating relevant local plans and policies.

Policy 3.A.3.6 The concept for the Welland Canal Green Manufacturing and Assembly Zone is to capitalize on proximity and access to the Welland Canal and

relative proximity to the 400 series highway network and rail lines by identifying a location for large scale green manufacturing and assembly industries and other heavy industries which require specialized transportation modes. Recognizing the servicing constraints, the *Region* is supportive of a transitional approach to *development*, which might include dry industrial *development* as an interim use.

Land use compatibility with planned residential *development* in the Dain City area of the City of Welland is to be achieved and will be assessed as part of specific applications for *development* of site(s) in the Welland Canal Green Manufacturing and Assembly Zone. The Land Use Compatibility Guidelines of the Ministry of Environment (Ontario) will be the basis for determining compatibility and required mitigative measures; land use compatibility studies will be required for lands in the vicinity of the Dain City community in the City of Welland.

In order to address the challenges, capitalize on opportunities and transform the concept into reality, the following tools will be utilized:

- a) preparation of a master plan or secondary plan to coordinate *development* and refine the concept;
- b) preparation of supporting plans for servicing and transportation including any Environmental Assessment to provide water and wastewater services to these lands and including *active transportation* and transit;
- c) preparation of urban design guidelines;
- d) preparation of an investment strategy to attract target industries; and,
- e) updating relevant local plans and policies.

Policy 3.A.3.7

The concept for the Fort Erie Industrial Park is to capitalize on market opportunities for advanced manufacturing, cross-border trade, transportation and warehousing industries. In order to address the challenges, capitalize on opportunities and transform the concept into reality, the following tools will be utilized:

- a) implementation of the Master Servicing and Development Strategy/Environmental Assessment for the Fort Erie Industrial Park and updating/preparation of the following as needed to implement the Master Servicing and Development Strategy:
 - i. preparation of a master plan or secondary plan to coordinate *development* and refine the concept;
 - ii. preparation of supporting plans for servicing and transportation (including *active transportation* and transit);
 - iii. preparation of urban design guidelines;
 - iv. preparation of an investment strategy to attract target industries;
 - v. preparation of a study area-wide Environmental Impact Study to assess potential opportunities for wetland restoration, enhancement and compensation in coordination with

- development* of the lands and the environmental policies of this Plan; and,
- vi. updating relevant local plans, policies and zoning by-laws.

Policy 3.A.3.8 The concept for the Niagara Falls Priority Investment Area is to capitalize on market opportunities for cross-border trade by identifying a location for secure storage, warehousing and logistics facilities in close proximity to a border crossing. These lands include the areas within the Niagara Falls Community Improvement Plan Pilot Project Area.

In order to address the challenges, capitalize on opportunities and transform the concept into reality, the following tools will be utilized:

- a) preparation of a master plan or secondary plan to coordinate *development* and refine the concept;
- b) preparation of supporting plans for servicing and transportation (including *active transportation* and transit);
- c) preparation of urban design guidelines;
- d) preparation of an investment strategy to attract target industries;
- e) updating relevant local plans, policies, and zoning by-laws.

Policy 3.A.3.9 The concept for the Niagara Falls QEW Business Park is to capitalize on long-term opportunities for business and services in close proximity to 400 series highways focusing on manufacturing, warehousing and other *employment land* uses.

In order to address challenges, capitalize on opportunities and transform the concept into reality, the following tools will be utilized:

- a) preparation of a master plan or secondary plan to coordinate *development* and refine the concept;
- b) preparation of supporting plans for servicing and transportation (including *active transportation* and transit);
- c) preparation of urban design guidelines;
- d) preparation of an investment strategy to attract target industries;
- e) updating relevant local plans, policies and zoning by-laws.

Policy 3.A.3.10 Where appropriate, the *Region* encourages *intensification* on existing occupied *employment lands* through:

- a) expansion to existing employment uses and/or land operations;
- b) conversion or reuse of existing buildings into new employment uses;
- c) infilling of vacant lots within *employment areas*;
- d) severance or subdivision of larger employment properties to accommodate new employment uses.

Policy 3.A.3.11 The *Region* recognizes the role that the market plays in determining where and how reinvestment on *employment lands* will occur.

Accordingly, the *Region* will promote *intensification* of its *employment lands* by:

- a) where possible, directing denser forms of *development*, including limited office type uses, into strategic nodes and corridors and revitalization areas;
- b) ensuring that employment-supportive uses remain accessory to the principle use and focus of an area as set out in this Plan;
- c) where appropriate, maintaining and protecting *employment land* designations on *brownfield sites* from inappropriate conversion;
- d) enhancing the attractiveness of existing *employment lands* through strategic improvements to Regional *infrastructure*, transportation, urban design and the public realm; and,
- e) working with the local municipalities to develop strategies for the *development* of *employment lands* that include policies for *intensification*.

Policy 3.A.3.12 The principle tool for implementation shall be local official plans and zoning by-laws. Local official plans shall be updated to reflect the vision, strategy and action plan articulated in this Plan. It is expected that the *Region* and local municipalities will also undertake a variety of implementation items, including, but not limited to, Community Improvement Plans, secondary plans and master plans and *infrastructure* studies and plans.

Policy 3.A.3.13 In most cases, more detailed secondary and master planning has been recommended to facilitate change and *development*. The *Region* will work with local municipalities and support secondary planning efforts within the *Niagara Economic Gateway*. The terms of reference for new secondary plans or master plans should be prepared jointly, in a coordinated manner to ensure that key areas, including land use, urban design, the environment, phasing of *development*, *infrastructure* and transportation are adequately addressed.

Policy 3.A.3.13 The *Region* will prepare a Gateway-specific Community Improvement Plan to attract investment within the *Niagara Economic Gateway*. The *Region* encourages local municipalities to develop Community Improvement Plans in accordance with the *Region's* Community Improvement Plan to maximize incentives and provide consistent opportunities for investment.

Policy 3.A.3.14 The Development Permit System is an additional implementation tool that may be used to achieve the *Region's* goals, objectives and policies of this Plan and the local municipal official plans. The Development Permit System is a flexible planning tool which combines zoning and site plan control and minor variance into one process and is administered by the *local municipality*. The *Region* supports the use of the Development Permit System in the *Niagara Economic Gateway* and will develop local model Development Permit System policies for the Gateway.

- Policy 3.A.3.15** The *Region* recognizes the importance of all *employment lands* in the region. Accordingly, the *Region* will work on an Employment Area Strategy for all *employment areas* and *employment lands* within and outside of the *Niagara Economic Gateway*.
- Policy 3.A.3.16** The conversion of lands within *employment areas* to non-employment uses are not permitted except pursuant to section 4.E “Employment Conversion”.
- Policy 3.A.3.17** The *Region* will identify transportation improvements and upgrades required to support the Niagara Gateway Employment Lands Strategy. Transportation improvements should be identified through a comprehensive Gateway-specific transportation plan which examines the needs for:
- a) road and highway *infrastructure*;
 - b) rail *infrastructure*;
 - c) border and bridge crossing *infrastructure*;
 - d) the major port as identified in the Provincial Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe;
 - e) the Welland Canal and port *infrastructure*;
 - f) transit; and,
 - g) *active transportation*.
- Policy 3.A.3.18** The *Region* will confirm the Regional *infrastructure* improvements and upgrades required to support the Niagara Gateway Employment Lands Strategy. Improvements to *infrastructure* were generally identified through the Gateway Employment Lands Study, but should be confirmed through the *Region’s* Master Servicing Study and examine:
- a) water supply;
 - b) Regional water distribution network;
 - c) sanitary supply (wastewater);
 - d) Regional sanitary sewer distribution network;
 - e) stormwater; and,
 - f) opportunities to apply sustainable and green *infrastructure* solutions.
- Policy 3.A.3.19** Local municipalities will develop phasing strategies for vacant, un-serviced *employment lands*. Phasing strategies should be prepared at the time of either local official plan reviews or *infrastructure* master plan updates and also be part of broader servicing strategies which examine phasing for *development*. Priority will be given in phasing plans for first, lands within the *urban area* that are fully or partially serviced, subject to full servicing being provided. The second priority will be for vacant, un-serviced lands within the *urban area*.
- Policy 3.A.3.20** The *Region* and local municipalities will align its capital planning for new *infrastructure* and transportation with the Strategic Locations for Investment identified in section 3.A.3.1 “Policies for the Niagara

Economic Gateway”. An acceptable financial strategy must be prepared and approved by Regional Council for the provision of Regional *infrastructure*.

- Policy 3.A.3.21** The *Region* will encourage cross-border trade through:
- a) strategic improvements to Regional *infrastructure*;
 - b) working with the *Province* and the Federal government to improve and upgrade border crossing *infrastructure*;
 - c) preparation of a Regional Goods Movement Study;
 - d) examining issues and opportunities for cross-border trade with the United States; and,
 - e) examining issues and opportunities for a Niagara Free Trade Zone / Export Distribution Zone within the *Niagara Economic Gateway*.
- Policy 3.A.3.22** The *Region* will continue to work the Federal, Provincial and local governments, the private sector and other agencies to attract investment into the *Niagara Economic Gateway*.
- Policy 3.A.3.23** Tourism uses and tourism economic development is a priority for the *Gateway Economic Zone* and *Gateway Economic Centre*. Tourism focused lands are not identified on a map as they are broadly through the *Gateway Economic Zone* and *Gateway Economic Centre* in such areas as the Niagara River Parkway, the Niagara Falls tourist area, tourism areas in Fort Erie, and along the Welland Canal. Transit opportunities for strengthening the tourism economy will be pursued.
- Policy 3.A.3.24** Land use compatibility within the *Gateway Economic Zone* and *Gateway Economic Centre* is a primary focus of this Plan. Tourism uses within the *Niagara Economic Gateway* municipalities shall be located to ensure the planned function of employment uses on *employment lands* shall be maintained and enhanced.
- Policy 3.A.3.25** The *Region* will monitor implementation of the *Gateway Economic Zone* and *Gateway Economic Centre* and report on land *development* and job creation within the *Niagara Economic Gateway*. Every five years, the *Region* will undertake a review of section 3.A.3 “Policies for the Niagara Economic Gateway” to assess growth, *development*, land budget, and policy implementation.

3.B Rural Employment Lands

Within the *Niagara Economic Gateway*, rural employment lands have been identified on the basis of existing local municipal official plans and are shown on Schedule G2. The rural employment lands designation is intended for lands that by the nature of their existing *development* are outside the *urban areas* boundaries of the *Region's settlement areas* yet have existing employment uses or clusters of existing employment uses.

3.B.1 Objectives for Rural Employment Lands

Objective 3.B.1.1 To identify a strategy for rural employment lands that supports agriculture as the primary non-urban land use.

Objective 3.B.1.2 To support the rural economy and the agricultural economy through limited rural employment lands that balance job creation across Niagara with sustaining the non-urban land base.

Objective 3.B.1.3 To support *sustainable private services* of rural employment lands.

Objective 3.B.1.4 To ensure that rural employment lands are limited in size and scale to maximize support for agricultural and rural lands in the long-term.

3.B.2 Policies for Rural Employment Lands

Policy 3.B.2.1 Rural employment lands may only be identified through an amendment to this Plan and must be specifically identified on Schedule G2. The addition of new rural employment lands shall only be considered as part of the *Region's* municipal comprehensive review.

Policy 3.B.2.2 Rural employment lands shall be considered “dry industrial” and are to be serviced through *sustainable private services* only.

Policy 3.B.2.3 Detailed land uses shall be identified in the local official plan by way of amendment to the local official plan. In all cases, uses shall be compatible with adjacent *agricultural uses*, planned *agricultural uses* and shall not negatively impact normal farm operations.

Policy 3.B.2.4 Rural employment lands are not part of a *settlement area*.

Policy 3.B.2.5 The environmental policies of this Plan shall apply to the *development* of rural employment lands.

Policy 3.B.2.6 The lands designated in the City of Port Colborne as “Rural Employment Lands - Gateway Special Policy Area” on Schedule G2 are subject to the following policies:

- a) The transportation *infrastructure* of Highway 140 is a unique characteristic of transportation service for these lands.
- b) Uses shall be only those which are considered to have minimal water and wastewater requirements. The lands may be eligible for

future *municipal water and wastewater systems* subject to the completion of the ongoing Environmental Assessment for the Welland Canal Green Manufacturing Zone area.

- c) Functional servicing reports and hydrogeological reports, at a minimum, shall be required to support these uses. Additional studies, as outlined in the complete application policies of this Plan, shall also be required.
- d) The lands shall be subject to site plan control and the Region will be circulated all site plan control applications.
- e) The lands are in the vicinity of the Dain City area in the City of Welland and the applicable portions of section 3.A “Niagara Economic Gateway” regarding land use compatibility requirements shall apply.
- f) Lands that comprise the Babion Woodlot will be subject to an Environmental Impact Study which will confirm the boundaries of the woodlot and the Provincially Significant Wetlands. Upon approval of the Environmental Impact Study, the woodlot and *wetlands* will be designated as “Environmental Protection Area” in this Plan without further amendment to this Plan. The balance of lands shall be designated “Rural Employment Lands – Gateway Special Policy Area” without further amendment to this Plan.
- g) Should the land budget completed as part of the *Region’s municipal comprehensive review*, at a future five year review of the Regional Official Plan, establish the need for additional urban *employment lands* in the *Niagara Economic Gateway*, priority will be given to the Gateway Special Policy Area lands that are physically contiguous to urban *employment lands* in the *Gateway Economic Centre* to be included in the *urban area* and to be eligible for urban servicing.
- h) Should the lands immediately west of the rural employment lands, in the vicinity of the Welland Canal, cease to be owned by the Federal government, the designation of “rural employment lands” shall apply.

Policy 3.B.2.7

Lands shown on Schedule G2 as *employment lands* that are outside the *urban area* in the City of Thorold as well as Special Policy Area “8” as identified in the City of Niagara Falls Official Plan, shall be classified as rural employment lands. In this regard, the following policies will apply:

- a) Uses shall be only those which are considered to have minimal water and wastewater requirements.
- b) Functional servicing reports and hydrogeological reports, at a minimum, shall be required to support these uses. Additional studies, as outlined in the complete application policies of this Plan, shall also be required.
- c) The lands shall be subject to site plan control and the Region will be circulated all site plan control applications for rural employment lands in the *Niagara Economic Gateway*.

- Policy 3.B.2.8** New rural employment lands will only be added to this Plan by way of an amendment to implement the *Region's* municipal comprehensive review.
- Policy 3.B.2.9** Should the land budget completed as part of the *Region's* municipal comprehensive review, at a future five year review of the *Region's* Official Plan, establish the need for additional urban *employment land* in the *Niagara Economic Gateway*, priority will be given to rural employment lands that are physically contiguous to urban *employment lands* in the *Gateway Economic Zone* and *Gateway Economic Centre* may be considered to be included in the *urban area* subject to the policies of this Plan and appropriate Provincial Plans and the Provincial Policy Statement.
- Policy 3.B.2.10** Applications for new or the expansion of rural *development* that contribute to the *Region's employment land* base shall demonstrate that the use cannot be located within the *urban area* owing to the land use compatibility issues and/or specific locational requirements, including proximity to key transportation *infrastructure*, that cannot be accommodated within the *urban area*, and/or the proposed use is related to the management or use of a resource and is required to be in close proximity to it.

3.C Employment Lands

- Policy 3.C.1** The *Region* and the local municipalities will ensure economic competitiveness by:
- a) Providing an appropriate mix of employment uses on *employment lands*.
 - b) Providing opportunities for a diversified economic base, including maintaining a range and choice of suitable sites for employment uses which support a wide range of economic activities and ancillary uses, and take into account the needs of existing and future businesses.
 - c) Planning for, protecting and preserving employment for current and future use.
 - d) Incorporating the policies of section 4.E “Employment Conversion” in local official plans.
 - e) Ensuring that the necessary *infrastructure* and services are provided to support current and forecasted employment needs including transit and *active transportation* facilities. This will include undertaking discussions with telecommunications providers regarding the feasibility of servicing existing and future *employment areas* with telecommunications services, including broadband technology, to attract knowledge-based industries and support the technological advancement and growth of existing businesses.
- Policy 3.C.2** Local municipalities should designate and preserve lands within *urban areas* which are adjacent to or in close proximity to existing *major goods movement facilities and corridors* including highway interchanges, *airports, marine facilities, or rail facilities* as employment lands providing for manufacturing, warehousing, transportation and associated retail, office and ancillary employment uses, where appropriate.
- Policy 3.C.3** The *development of sensitive land uses, major retail uses or major office uses* will, in accordance with Provincial guidelines, avoid, or where avoidance is not possible, minimize and mitigate adverse impacts on industrial, manufacturing or other uses that are particularly vulnerable to encroachment.
- Policy 3.C.4** The *Region* strongly supports local and Regional efforts to develop clusters of associated economic activities including protecting lands within and adjacent to *major goods movement facilities and corridors* for employment and associated supportive uses.
- Policy 3.C.5** Section 3.C “Employment Land” policies should be read in conjunction with section 3.A “Niagara Economic Gateway” policies and section 3.E “Employment Areas”.

- Policy 3.C.6** Retail and office uses will be directed to locations that support *active transportation* and have existing or planned transit.
- Policy 3.C.7** The retail sector will be supported by promoting *compact built form* and *intensification* of retail and service uses and areas and encouraging the integration of those uses with other land uses to support the achievement of *complete communities*.
- Policy 3.C.8** In planning for employment, surface parking will be minimized and the *development* of *active transportation* networks and *transit-supportive* built form will be facilitated.

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3.D Commercial Areas

Policy 3.D.1 The *Region* will undertake a Regional Commercial Systems Study to ensure that the overall supply of commercial space is sufficient to provide for healthy competition without endangering the quality and character of existing shopping facilities, particularly in the downtowns.

Policy 3.D.2 Local municipalities are encouraged to develop policies which carefully balance the supply of commercial space with the demand for commercial goods and services, placing a particular emphasis on commercial retail goods and services.

Policy 3.D.3 The *Region* encourages local municipalities to plan for commercial uses and commercial space on the basis of a hierarchy of commercial areas.

Policy 3.D.4 Local municipalities are encouraged to develop policies which support the use of Market Impact Studies and peer reviews for major commercial applications. Market Impact Studies and peer reviews should consider:

- a) the need for the proposed use;
- b) the location, size and scale of the proposed *development*;
- c) the potential for compatibility issues;
- d) the potential market impacts on existing and planned commercial areas, including downtowns and other shopping nodes;
- e) the potential for negative impacts on the natural environment;
- f) the adequacy of the existing transportation *infrastructure*, including pedestrian and cycling *infrastructure*, serving the proposed use;
- g) the adequacy of the existing water and waste water *infrastructure* and other municipal services; and
- h) the intent of the policies of this Plan.

Where the trade area for a Market Impact Study extends beyond the boundary of the *local municipality* in which the proposed commercial facility would be located, the *local municipality* should consult with the other municipalities within the trade area.

Policy 3.D.5 The *Region* promotes and will facilitate the revitalization of downtowns and the *redevelopment* of *brownfield sites*, *greyfields*, and commercial areas into mixed-use areas that include a variety of employment, institutional, entertainment, recreational and residential uses.

Policy 3.D.6 The *Region* encourages local municipalities to revise planning policies and zoning by-laws to support the *redevelopment* of *greyfields* into mixed-uses areas. The *Region* strongly supports such *redevelopment* as an alternative to the establishment of new commercial areas.

- Policy 3.D.7** The *Region* promotes the “Main Street” form of commercial *development*, with building facades closer to the street, an efficient use of land, a mix of uses in both new and established areas, and support and access for *active transportation*.
- Policy 3.D.8** The *Region* recognizes neighbourhood commercial activities as an integral part of Niagara’s residential areas.
- Policy 3.D.9** The *Region* supports local food producers by encouraging farmers markets, urban agricultural projects and community vegetable gardens. Local municipalities are encouraged to revise official plans and zoning by-laws to make provision for the above-noted specialty uses.
- Policy 3.D.10** New commercial *development* or *redevelopment* should be assessed in relation to community character and be appropriately located to serve as part of the neighbourhood’s existing or proposed fabric. Assessment in relation to community character could include:
- a) the scale of the activity;
 - b) the orientation of the *development* to adjacent land uses; and
 - c) the capacity of the *development* to operate compatibly with housing.
- Policy 3.D.11** Commercial *development* and *redevelopment* projects should be designed to be transit and *active transportation-friendly*.
- Policy 3.D.12** Parking requirements for commercial uses should be carefully considered and evaluated to ensure that an adequate, but not excessive, amount of parking space is provided. Parking requirements should include provision for secure and sheltered bicycle parking and pedestrian walkways. Municipalities are encouraged to study, assess and develop updated parking standard for commercial areas.
- Policy 3.D.13** Phasing provisions for the retail outlet centre *development* permitted through Amendment 4-2011, located in the Glendale Community of the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake, shall be contained within the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake Official Plan. The developer shall pay for its proportionate share of all off-site *infrastructure* required for the *development*.

3.E Employment Areas

- Policy 3.E.1** Niagara's *employment areas* are shown on Schedule G3.
- Policy 3.E.2** The *Region*, in consultation with local municipalities, will designate all *employment areas* in official plans and protect them for appropriate employment uses over the long-term. For greater certainty, *employment area* designations may be incorporated into the Regional Official Plan by amendment at any time in advance of the *Region's* next municipal comprehensive review.
- Policy 3.E.3** The *Region* and local municipalities will promote economic development and competitiveness by:
- a) making more efficient use of existing *employment areas* and vacant and underutilized *employment lands* and increasing employment densities;
 - b) ensuring the availability of sufficient land, in appropriate locations, for a variety of employment to accommodate forecasted employment growth to the horizon of this Plan;
 - c) planning to better connect areas with high employment densities to transit; and
 - d) integrating and aligning land use planning and economic development goals and strategies to retain and attract investment and employment.
- Policy 3.E.4** The *Region* will plan for *employment areas* by:
- a) prohibiting residential uses;
 - b) prohibiting *major retail* uses; and
 - c) limiting other *sensitive land uses* that are not ancillary to the primary employment use.
- Policy 3.E.5** Local official plans and zoning by-laws shall contain provisions that provide for an appropriate interface between *employment areas* and adjacent non-employment areas to maintain land use compatibility.
- Policy 3.E.6** The *Region*, in consultation with local municipalities, will establish minimum density targets for all *employment areas* within *settlement areas* that:
- a) are measured in jobs per hectare;
 - b) reflect the current and anticipated type and scale of employment that characterizes the *employment area* to which the target applies;
 - c) reflects opportunities for the *intensification* of *employment areas* on sites that support *active transportation* and are served by existing or planned transit; and
 - d) will be implemented through official plan policies and designations, and zoning by-laws.

- Policy 3.E.7** *Major office* and appropriate major institutional uses will be directed to the St. Catharines *Urban Growth Centre*, *major transit station areas*, or other *strategic growth areas* with existing or planned *frequent transit* or *higher order transit* service.
- Policy 3.E.8** Existing *office parks* will be supported by:
- a) improving connectivity with transit and *active transportation* networks;
 - b) providing for an appropriate mix of amenities and open space to serve the workforce;
 - c) planning for *intensification* of employment uses;
 - d) ensuring that the introduction of non-employment uses, if appropriate, would be limited and not negatively impact the primary function of the area; and
 - e) approaches to *transportation demand management* that reduce reliance on single-occupancy vehicle use.
- Policy 3.E.9** The *Region*, in consultation with local municipalities, the *Province*, and other appropriate stakeholders, will undertake a co-ordinated approach to planning for large areas with high concentrations of employment that cross municipal boundaries and are *major trip generators*, on matters such as *transportation demand management* and economic development.
- Policy 3.E.10** The conversion of lands within *employment areas* to non-employment uses are not permitted except pursuant to section 4.E “Employment Conversion”.

3.F Provincially Significant Employment Zones

- Policy 3.F.1** The Minister may identify *provincially significant employment zones* and may provide specific direction for planning in those areas to be implemented through appropriate official plan policies and designations and economic development strategies.
- Policy 3.F.2** Lands in a *provincially significant employment zone* shall not be considered for conversion to a non-employment use except as part of the *Region's* next municipal comprehensive review.
- Policy 3.F.3** Local municipal official plans shall contain policies that prohibit conversion of any part of an *employment area* identified within a *provincially significant employment zone* until the *Region's* next municipal comprehensive review.

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4.E Employment Conversion

- Policy 4.E.1** The conversion of lands within *employment areas* to non-employment uses may be permitted only through the *Region's* municipal comprehensive review where it has been demonstrated that:
- a) there is a need for the conversion;
 - b) the lands are not required over the horizon of this Plan for employment purposes for which they are designated;
 - c) the municipality will maintain sufficient *employment lands* to accommodate forecasted employment growth to the horizon of this Plan;
 - d) the proposed uses would not adversely affect the overall viability of the *employment area* or the achievement of the minimum *intensification* and density targets in this Plan, as well as the other policies of this Plan; and
 - e) there are existing or planned *infrastructure* and *public service facilities* to accommodate the proposed uses.
- Policy 4.E.2** Notwithstanding section 4.E.1, until the *Region's* next municipal comprehensive review, lands within existing *employment areas* may be converted to non-employment uses, provided the conversion would:
- a) satisfy the requirements of section 4.E.1 a), c), and d);
 - b) maintain a significant number of jobs on those lands through the establishment of development criteria; and
 - c) not include any part of an *employment area* identified as part of a *provincially significant employment zone*.
- Policy 4.E.3** Outside of *employment areas*, development criteria should be established by the *Region* and local municipalities to ensure that the *redevelopment* of any *employment lands* will retain space for a similar number of jobs to remain on site. Development applications shall satisfy all applicable development criteria.
- Policy 4.E.4** For the purposes of section 4.E "Employment Conversion", *major retail* uses are considered to be non-employment uses and are not permitted in *employment areas*. Development applications for the conversion of employment uses to *major retail* uses may only be considered as part of the *Region's* next municipal comprehensive review, and are subject to the policies of section 4.E "Employment Conversion".

4.G Urban Growth

Policy 4.G.12.1 The detailed policies for section 3.A “Niagara Economic Gateway” are incorporated in section 3 “Employment” of this Plan. section 4.G “Urban Growth” policies of this Plan must be read in conjunction with section 3.A “Niagara Economic Gateway” policies for the respective local municipalities.

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definitions

Definitions

Brownfield Sites

are undeveloped or previously developed properties that may be contaminated. They are usually, but not exclusively, former industrial or commercial properties that may be underutilized, derelict or vacant. (PPS, 2014)

Gateway Economic Centre

means *settlement areas* identified in this Plan, as depicted on Schedule G1 that, due to their proximity to major international border crossings, have unique economic importance to the region and Ontario. (Based on the Growth Plan, 2019 and modified for this Plan)

Gateway Economic Zone

means *settlement areas* identified in this Plan, as depicted on Schedule G1 that, due to their proximity to major international border crossings, have unique economic importance to the region and Ontario. (Based on the Growth Plan, 2019 and modified for this Plan)

Employment Area

means areas designated in this Plan for clusters of business and economic activities including, but not limited to, manufacturing, warehousing, offices, and associated retail and ancillary facilities. (Based on the PPS, 2014 and modified for this Plan)

Employment Land

means lands that are designated in local official plans or zoning by-laws for employment uses. *Employment lands* may be within and outside of *employment areas*.

Major Retail

means large-scale or large-format stand-alone retail stores or retail centres that have the primary purpose of commercial activities. (Growth Plan, 2019)

Major Office

means freestanding office buildings of approximately 4,000 square metres of floor space or greater, or with 200 jobs or more. (Growth Plan, 2019)

Office Parks

means *employment areas* or areas where there are significant concentrations of offices with high employment densities. (Growth Plan, 2019)

Niagara Economic Gateway

means the total geographic area of the local municipalities a part of the *Gateway Economic Centre* or *Gateway Economic Zone*.

Provincially Significant Employment Zones

means areas defined by the Minister in consultation with affected municipalities for the purpose of long-term planning for job creation and economic development. *Provincially significant employment zones* can consist of *employment areas* as well as mixed-use areas that contain a significant number of jobs. (Growth Plan, 2019)