

**AMENDMENT NO. 9  
TO THE OFFICIAL PLAN  
FOR THE NIAGARA PLANNING AREA**

**PART “A” - THE PREAMBLE**

The preamble provides an explanation of the Amendment including the purpose, location, background, and basis of the policies, and implementation, but does not form part of this Amendment. The Preamble includes:

- Title and Components
- Purpose of the Amendment
- Location of the Amendment
- Background
- Basis for the Amendment
- Implementation

**PART “B” – THE AMENDMENT**

The Amendment describes the additions and/or modifications to the Official Plan for the Niagara Planning Area, which constitute Regional Official Plan Amendment No. 9.

- Schedule Changes
- Text Changes

**PART “C” – THE APPENDICES**

The Appendices provide information, public participation and agency comments relevant to the Amendment, but do not form part of this Amendment.

## **PART “A” - THE PREAMBLE**

### **TITLE AND ITS COMPONENTS:**

This document, when approved in accordance with Section 17 of the Planning Act, 1990, shall be known as Amendment 9 to the Regional Official Plan of the Niagara Planning Area. Part “A” – The Preamble, contains background information and does not constitute part of this Amendment. Part “B” – The Amendment, consisting text and map changes, constitutes Amendment 9 to the Regional Official Plan of the Niagara Planning Area. Part “C” – The Appendices, does not constitute part of the Amendment. These Appendices contain information related to public involvement and agency comments associated with the Amendment and do not form part of this Plan.

### **PURPOSE OF THE AMENDMENT**

The purpose of this Amendment is to update the Regional Official Plan employment policies. Specifically, this Amendment is intended to:

1. Implement the recommendations of the Phase 2 Employment Lands Strategy and complete the development of Niagara’s first comprehensive employment land strategy.
2. Implement Policy 3.A.3.16 of the Regional Official Plan.
3. Conform to the applicable policies of the Provincial Policy Statement (2014), the Provincial Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe and the Greenbelt Plan. Specifically, this Amendment is intended to implement policies 2.2.6.1, 2.2.6.2, 2.2.6.6 and 2.2.2.10 of the Growth Plan.

### **LOCATION OF THE AMENDMENT**

This Amendment applies to the entire Niagara Planning Area.

### **BACKGROUND**

In 2012, the Region amended its Official Plan to include a series of area specific policies for the Niagara Economic Gateway. The Niagara Economic Gateway includes the designated employment areas within the settlement areas of the City of Welland, City of Niagara Falls, City of Port Colborne, Town of Fort Erie and the City of Thorold. This exercise has become known as Phase 1 of Niagara’s Employment Lands Strategy. Regional Official Plan Policy 3.A.3.16 states that the “Region recognizes the importance of all employment lands in the Region. Accordingly, the Region will prepare a similar strategy for lands outside of the Gateway lands”.

In 2013, the Region completed a background study for all of the employment lands outside of the Gateway municipalities, including lands within the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake, Town of Pelham, Township of Wainfleet, City of St. Catharines, Town of Lincoln, Township of West Lincoln and Town of Grimsby. Collectively, the employment lands within these seven municipalities were assessed against a variety of metrics, including transportation access, access to servicing, access to transit, highway visibility, parcel size and permitted uses. A market review of opportunities was also undertaken. The results of the assessment were published in a 2014 Report entitled “Niagara Employment Lands Strategy, Phase 2”

In 2015, the Region initiated the process to amend its Official Plan and implement the recommendations of the Niagara Employment Lands Strategy, Phase 2.

### **BASIS FOR THE AMENDMENT**

1. This Amendment provides strategic direction for the development and redevelopment of employment lands within the seven local municipalities that are outside of the Niagara Economic Gateway. The Amendment establishes the land use vision for intensification within several priority areas and also provides specific implementation recommendations to support development and redevelopment of the lands.
2. This Amendment is consistent with, and implements the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (Places to Grow (2006)), the Provincial Policy Statement (2014), Greenbelt Plan (2005), and Niagara’s Growth Management Strategy (Niagara 2031) – Amendment 2-2009 to the Official Plan for the Niagara Planning Area. The changes proposed are also in conformity with the Niagara Escarpment Plan (2011) (NEP).
3. This Amendment also includes minor modifications to existing employment policies that are intended to improve the structure and organization of Chapter 3 of the Official Plan.

### **IMPLEMENTATION**

Chapter 14, Implementation of the Official Plan for the Niagara Planning Area, shall apply where applicable.

## **PART “B” - THE AMENDMENT**

### **Amendment 9 To The Official Plan for the Niagara Planning Area**

#### **\*Note to the Reader\*:**

**Policies that are in a black text box are in force and effect and not part of this amendment. They are shown for continuity purposes only.**

#### **Schedule Changes**

- i. “Schedule G1 Niagara Economic Gateway” is renumbered as **“Schedule G2 – Niagara Economic Gateway”**
- ii. “Schedule G2 – Niagara Economic Gateway Employment Lands” is renumbered as **“Schedule G3 – Niagara Economic Gateway Employment Lands”**
- iii. Appendix 1 “G1 – Employment Lands” is added to the Plan as **“Schedule G1 – Employment Lands”**

#### **Text Changes**

The Official Plan for the Niagara Planning Area is amended as follows:

#### **Part I – Renumbering of Existing Chapters and Policies**

1. Chapter 3.A - Niagara Economic Gateway and its corresponding policies are renumbered as **“Chapter 3.B Niagara Economic Gateway”**.
2. Chapter 3.B – Rural Employment and its corresponding policies are renumbered as **“Chapter 3.D – Rural Employment”**.
3. Chapter 3.C Employment Lands and its corresponding policies are renumbered as **“Chapter 3.A – Employment Lands”**.
4. **Policy 3.D.12 is moved to Chapter 3.D**

#### **Part II – New Policies**

1. The following policies are added to Chapter 3.A Employment Land:

#### **“3.A Employment Lands**

## OBJECTIVES

1. Promote economic development and economic competitiveness
2. Provide opportunities for a range of employment land opportunities
3. Promote intensification, redevelopment and re-investment on existing employment lands
4. Encourage transit-supportive and compact forms of employment land development
5. Protect designated employment areas for the long term
6. Ensure that there is a sufficient supply of designated and serviced employment lands
7. Ensure compatible development of lands in and around employment areas

## POLICIES

**Policy 3.A.1** Employment lands are those areas designated in Official Plans which allow for:

- a) manufacturing uses;
- b) warehousing uses;
- c) office uses;
- d) retail uses that are associated with uses mentioned in clauses (a) to (c); and
- e) facilities that are ancillary to uses mentioned in clauses (a) to (d).

In accordance with Policy 4.E.1.2 of this Plan, major retail uses are not permitted within designated employment lands.

**Policy 3.A.2** Designated employment lands within the Regional Municipality of Niagara are depicted on Schedule G1 and also on Schedule G2 and G3 (Gateway Employment Lands).

**Policy 3.A.3** The Region and the local municipalities will ensure economic competitiveness by:

- a) Providing an appropriate mix of employment uses, including industrial, commercial and institutional uses to meet long term needs.
- 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 areas for current and future use.
- d) Incorporating employment area conversion policies implementing Chapter 4.E 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.A.4** Local municipalities should designate and preserve lands within Urban Areas which are adjacent to or in close proximity to existing major highway interchanges, ports or rail yards as employment areas providing for manufacturing, warehousing, transportation and associated retail, office and ancillary employment uses, where appropriate.

**Policy 3.A.5** Where new sensitive land uses are proposed adjacent to or in proximity to employment areas, analysis is required to assess any constraints the introduction of such uses will have on the types of uses which could locate within all or portions of the employment area and/or on any existing employment uses.

**Policy 3.A.6** The Region strongly supports local and regional efforts to develop clusters of associated economic activities.

**Policy 3.A.7** The Employment Land policies of Chapter 3.A should be read in conjunction with the Economic Gateway policies of this Plan.

**Policy 3.A.8** The Region will maintain a supply of designated employment lands over the long term. In some instances, this may result in the need to protect designated employment land beyond a 20-year planning horizon.

**Policy 3.A.9 REGENERATION AREAS**

**Policy 3.A.9.1** The Region encourages local municipalities to identify opportunities for employment area regeneration. *Regeneration Areas* shall be defined

through a local municipal comprehensive review that examines municipal-wide, long-range needs for employment lands. Candidates for Regeneration should include employment areas that may have the potential to support non-employment uses, such as:

- a) Brownfield areas
- b) Older industrial areas which are in transition and exhibit high vacancy rates
- c) Lands which are in close proximity to major transit station areas
- d) Employment Areas with historic and/or pervasive land use compatibility issues

**Policy 3.A.9.2** When identifying opportunities for Regeneration, local municipalities shall consider:

- a) Long range supply and market demand for employment and non-employment uses
- b) Land use compatibility
- c) The existing transportation network and necessary improvements
- d) Existing Infrastructure and required improvements
- e) The existing built form, public realm and opportunities for improvement
- f) Need for Implementation tools, such as master planning, secondary plans, development permit systems and community improvement plans
- g) Development phasing

**Policy 3.A.9.3** *Regeneration Areas* should be planned to promote mixed use development, and where possible, maintain an employment function (as defined in this Plan)."

2. The following policies are added to Chapter 3.C Additional Strategic Locations for Investment:

### **"3C Additional Strategic Locations for Investment**

#### **CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES**

In addition to the employment lands in Niagara that form the Economic Gateway, Niagara also possesses employment lands in Grimsby, Lincoln, West Lincoln, St. Catharines,

Niagara-on-the-Lake, Pelham and Wainfleet. Generally, the majority of employment lands outside of the Gateway are approaching build-out. These employment clusters have their own unique advantages and opportunities: some areas have good access and visibility along the QEW corridor; others are well located to capitalize on future Provincial transit investments; some lands maintain a number of established large scale anchor tenants; and, some areas while not fully developed, have detailed secondary planning in place to promote development. At the same time, there are also a number of challenges and issues: some clusters lack basic support amenities and could benefit from a range of public improvements, including active transportation, transit and public realm improvements; some spaces are in close proximity to residential development and could benefit from buffering and other measures which would reduce potential for land use conflict; and other lands require municipal servicing improvements.

## **THE VISION**

The vision for Niagara's strategic employment areas are to attract investment by promoting employment lands intensification, development and redevelopment.

## **OBJECTIVES FOR STRATEGIC LOCATIONS FOR INVESTMENT**

1. Promote employment land intensification
2. Provide guidance for public sector investment
3. Make best use of existing infrastructure and provide a framework for infrastructure renewal
4. Articulate a policy framework for supporting community regeneration
5. Support Regional and Provincial investments in transit by ensuring there are opportunities for employment land intensification and other supportive uses in close proximity to future *major transit station areas*.

## **POLICIES FOR STRATEGIC LOCATIONS FOR INVESTMENT**

**Policy 3.C.1** Employment land investment and development is a strategic priority for Niagara Region. The following locations, shall be the focus for employment land investment:

- a) Grimsby QEW Corridor Employment Lands
- b) Beamsville Industrial Park
- c) Glendale Business Park
- d) Eastchester Industrial Area
- e) West St. Catharines Employment Area
- f) Port Weller Industrial Area



The Region will work with the local municipalities to identify the boundaries of the strategic locations for investment.

**Policy 3.C.2**

The Grimsby QEW Corridor Employment Lands are established and contain a collection of mixed industrial uses. The concept for the Grimsby QEW Corridor Employment Lands is to promote development and re-development for advanced manufacturing, food processing, research and development, light manufacturing and warehousing uses. The intention is to maintain and support the Town of Grimsby's QEW Corridor Employment Lands, promote intensification, and leverage future redevelopment opportunities associated with Provincial infrastructure investments.

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

- a) Preparation of a Transit Station Study in and around the vicinity of the future GO Transit Rail Station containing strategies to promote intensification and transit supportive redevelopment.
- b) Preparation of a public realm improvement program to enhance the profile of prestige employment uses along the QEW corridor.
- c) Connections to Lake Ontario and the GO Transit Hub, including Active Transportation.
- d) Where appropriate, the preparation of Community Improvement Plans to support intensification opportunities.
- e) Examination of opportunities to provide enhancements to buffers to ensure industrial and residential areas are adequately separated.

**Policy 3.C.3**

The Beamsville Industrial Park contains a mix of employment uses and is situated close to the QEW. The concept for the Beamsville Industrial Park is to support opportunities for agribusiness which is of an industrial nature, food processing, light industrial development, warehousing and logistics type uses. Over time, depending on the timing of future Provincial transit investments, there may be expanded market opportunities for office and other prestige employment uses.

In order to address the challenges and capitalize on market opportunities, the following tools will be utilized:

- a) Preparation of a Transit Station Study in and around the vicinity of the future GO Transit Rail Station containing strategies to promote intensification and transit supportive redevelopment.
- b) Connections to Lake Ontario and the GO Transit Hub, including Active Transportation.
- c) Preparation of a public realm improvement program to enhance the profile of activities along Ontario Street.
- d) Preparation of Community Improvement Plans to support intensification opportunities.

**Policy 3.C.4**

The Glendale Business Park is one of Niagara's premier prestige business parks. The concept for the Glendale Business Park is to leverage proximity to Niagara College and the QEW corridor by designating lands for business park development. The Glendale Business Park has an approved secondary plan in place that provides the detailed development vision for the area. To support the implementation of the Secondary Plan, the Region will work with the Town to ensure that:

- a) Municipal servicing and planned transportation improvements are in place to accommodate the planned development.
- b) An appropriate development phasing strategy is in place.
- c) A progressive marketing program is developed for the Glendale Business Park.

The Region encourages the Town to develop a monitoring program for the Glendale Secondary Plan area, and where required, update the Secondary Plan as needed.

**Policy 3.C.5**

The Eastchester Industrial Area contains several well established industrial uses and has access to the QEW in St. Catharines. The concept for the Eastchester Industrial Area is to support existing businesses and capitalize on opportunities for transportation, warehousing and logistics, as well as opportunities for light and

advanced manufacturing. In order to address the challenges and grow this area, the following tools will be utilized:

- a) Preparation of a community improvement plan to promote small and medium sized business retention and attraction, and also to address any existing land use compatibility issues with interface lands.
- b) Preparation of a public realm improvement program, including streetscaping, enhancements to public spaces, signage and way-finding and other elements which would help to revitalize the area.
- c) Assessment of the existing transportation network to identify any potential transportation improvements, including transit, goods movement and active transportation improvements, which would help to improve goods movement.
- d) Connections to the Welland Canal, Public Transit Service and Active Transportation networks.

**Policy 3.C.6**

The West St. Catharines Employment Area is generally located in one of the City's last remaining clusters of vacant greenfield land. It is in close proximity to the St. Catharines General Hospital, the CN Rail Corridor, and are relatively close to Brock University. The concept for the West St. Catharines Employment Area is to promote development and redevelopment of uses related to research and development, medical and bio-medical manufacturing, bio-sciences and other complementary uses. In order to address the challenges and promote development and re-development, the following tools will be utilized:

- a) Preparation of a market attraction study to confirm the potential for biomedical and health related development opportunities
- b) Preparation of a public realm improvement program, including streetscaping, enhancements/addition of public spaces, signage and way-finding and other elements which would help to revitalize the area
- c) Assessment of the existing transportation network to identify potential transportation improvements

- d) Assessment of the existing municipal water, sewer and stormwater infrastructure to determine and plan for necessary improvements

**Policy 3.C.7**

The Port Weller Industrial Area is located at the north end of the City of St. Catharines, along the Welland Canal. The area is located near existing residential uses and could also benefit from improved transportation connectivity. In order to address the challenges and capitalize on market opportunities, the following tools will be utilized:

- a) Preparation of a market attraction study to confirm the potential for marine industrial activities
- b) Preparation of a master plan and/or community improvement plan to address land use compatibility issues
- c) Preparation of a transportation study to examine potential connectivity improvements to enhance access

**Policy 3.C.8**

The Region will deliver a comprehensive marketing program to promote intensification and redevelopment for Niagara's employment areas.

**Policy 3.C.9**

The Region will report on the progress of the implementation activities on an annual basis to Regional Council. Strategic priorities shall be identified through the annual budgeting process. The report shall also include progress related to the policies in Section 3.B of this Plan.

**Policy 3.C.10**

Where required, detailed infrastructure and transportation assessments should be included within the scope of Regional and local transportation master planning processes and servicing master plans (water/wastewater)."

**3D Rural Employment**

1. The following policy is added to Chapter 13.D Rural Employment:

**"Policy 3.D.12**

The Region supports the proactive development of Wainfleet's rural and agricultural economy in accordance with the policies of this Plan."

**PART “C” – THE APPENDICES**

**Appendix 1 – Schedule G1 – Employment Lands**

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