



A Connected & Mobile City

Discussion Paper

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The Planning Partnership + Nethery Planning

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An Introduction to “Our Niagara Falls Plan”

The City of Niagara Falls is creating a new Official Plan - “Our Niagara Falls Plan,” a long-term vision to 2051 that guides us through a future of unprecedented growth while providing a high-quality living experience for our residents and our visitors from around the world.

The Official Plan is a high-level, visionary document that guides and shapes the future of a community identifying where, and under what circumstances, specific types of land uses can be located. The Provincial *Planning Act* requires that all local public works projects, official plans, zoning by-laws, related amendments, and all future development must conform to an approved Official Plan.

Our Niagara Falls Plan is going to define a vision for the City in 2051 – how we are going to create a complete community

Our Niagara Falls Plan will serve a broad range of community and municipal objectives. In addition to establishing appropriate land uses, it also establishes the goals, objectives and policies related to all of the essential components of making and sustaining a complete community. It sets policy requirements on how to create attractive and livable communities with a variety of housing and employment opportunities. It specifies means to protect, conserve, and enhance the city’s cultural and natural heritage and agricultural land base. It identifies locations for new growth to make the most efficient use of land and infrastructure. It outlines the structure around parks and open space, and how to acquire and grow such spaces. It directs

how to move people and goods in and around a city. It details how to plan and provide for community needs such as schools, recreation centres and libraries.

It provides all of this in a way to ensure that Provincial and Regional policy is implemented, as required by law. To this end the Official Plan must conform (to be consistent with terminology commonly used by the City and around the Region) to the Provincial Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe and Niagara Escarpment Plan, and the Niagara Region Official Plan, and “consistency” with the Provincial Policy Statement. This is done while also providing the critical local context and input, to ensure implementation happens in the manner Niagara Falls intends it to occur, to address the unique needs of our community.

1.1 A Little Bit About Niagara Falls

Niagara Falls is an international landmark and destination for visitors, residents, businesses and employees alike. It is a high growth municipality, forecasted to take on the largest share of growth in Niagara Region over the next 25 years. Identified as one of Southern Ontario's 29 large and fast growing municipalities in the draft 2024 Provincial Planning Statement, Niagara Falls Council has pledged to build 8,000 new homes by 2031. It hosts two international crossings, the Rainbow and Whirlpool Bridges, with the major Queenston-Lewiston Bridge just north of the city limits—together, responsible for 3.6 million vehicle crossings in 2023.¹ It hosts a significant concentration of hydro-electrical generation facilities. The Niagara Parks Commission is a major partner agency in Niagara Falls, founded in 1885 and overseeing over 16 square kilometres of parkland and lands along the Niagara Parkway connecting Niagara-on-the-Lake with Fort Erie. Niagara Parks Commission facilities welcomed just under 3.0 million visitors from April 2022 through March 2023.²

Transportation Access. Niagara Falls is bisected by the Queen Elizabeth Way (QEW) divided freeway connecting Buffalo and the Niagara Region to the Golden Horseshoe, including Toronto. Highway 420 crosses through Niagara Falls to connect the QEW to the Rainbow Bridge border crossing. Intercity and international rail service is provided by Via Rail and Amtrak, with more frequent commuter rail and bus connections to Hamilton and Toronto via Metrolinx/GO Transit. In 2023, Niagara Falls Transit's fleet

was transferred to Niagara Region Transit, who also support paratransit service and connections between the cities of Niagara Region.

Landmarks and Attractions. In addition to the Falls themselves, Niagara Falls is a tourist destination, with multiple hotels, convention space, observation towers, multiple theme parks and resorts, and entertainment destinations across the city, including the bustling Clifton Hill area. The Niagara Parks Commission operates with a mandate to manage and develop the many public spaces along the Niagara River shoreline, including entertainment and recreational facilities. A short trip along the Niagara River Parkway brings guests past the Flower Clock, Botanical Gardens, Butterfly Conservatory, Niagara Glen, the former Toronto Power Generating Station, Spanish Aero Car, and Queen Victoria Park. The river itself is a feature, with the Iron Scow shipwreck and International Control Weir part of the falls environment. Away from the falls are the Gale Centre, Firemen's Park, The Exchange, and an emerging culinary scene. It is easy for local landmarks to be overlooked, which are as core and foundational to creating a sense of place as the all-day buzz of the tourist areas. The city is home to a branch of the Niagara Health Hospital network (Greater Niagara Hospital). The new South Niagara Hospital is being constructed with a targeted in-service date of 2029, creating an opportunity for a new purpose for the existing hospital lands.

¹ As reported by the Bridge and Tunnel Operators Association and [South Niagara Chambers of Commerce](#)

² [Niagara Parks 2022/2023 Annual Report](#)

Commercial and Recreation Amenities.

Niagara Falls is serviced with a full range of local shopping amenities. Niagara Square is a former indoor mall that fully completed a transition into a power centre format in 2020. It is located at the southwest corner of the McLeod Road interchange and the QEW. A similar cluster of large format commercial uses can be found in the middle of the urban area, at the intersections of Morrison Street and Dorchester Road. Other commercial nodes can be found along Lundy's Lane such as the Canada One Outlets, in the Stamford neighbourhood, and the historic Downtown Niagara Falls, north of the main tourist area. Local-level commercial blocks are found throughout the city.

A recent cultural development is the opening of The Exchange, a 10,000-square-foot indoor/outdoor multipurpose event space with gallery and working studio facilities. schedule farmers market and supper market events, bring a variety of interest to this new community space.

The Niagara Falls History Museum, Battle Ground Hotel Museum, and Willoughby Historical Museum cater to those interested in documents pasts and historic preservation.

Niagara Falls has the Gale Centre (four-pad arena), Willoughby Memorial Arena, and the MacBain Community Centre with an indoor pool, gym, and multi-purpose rooms.

There are four locations of the Niagara Falls Public Library.

The City is in Growth Mode. According to the 2021 Census of Canada, the population of Niagara Falls was 94,415, with 44,600 having reported being in the labour market. The City's current Official Plan was approved by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs on October 6, 1993. The 1993 Plan was written to guide growth to the year 2011 and a population of 83,000. The planning horizon was extended in 2014 (three years beyond the original target) to guide growth to the year 2031, with an anticipated population of 106,800 and 53,640 jobs. At 7.2% population growth between 2016 and 2021, Niagara Falls is on pace to exceed that 2031 population forecast. The City has completed four urban boundary expansions since 1993, with three new expansion areas added through the 2022 Niagara Official Plan. Coupled with the targets mentioned in Section 1.1 above, it is evident that Niagara Falls is a growing and expanding community.

The Legislative and Policy Framework around Planning has Changed. Another major change since 1993 is the complete overhaul of the Provincial and Regional Planning Policy framework. There are new documents at both levels, whose directions need to be reflected in local policy. From an administrative perspective, the current Official Plan has been amended over 160 times over the past 30 years. The various edits have created an Official Plan with some internal conflicts and inconsistencies, duplications, some confusion in intent of policies—and, overall, an outdated planning vision that is in need of replacement.

1.2 Intent of the Discussion Papers and the Path to Our Niagara Falls Plan

To initiate the process of creating Our Niagara Falls Plan, the project team has prepared six “Discussion Papers”. These papers are about starting a conversation with the community about what the city will look like in 2051, what jobs will be here, how do we move in and around that community, how do we integrate nature and resiliency, how do we effectively manage growth and climate adaptation, and what infrastructure, features or amenities are needed for the community.

Community input is essential to delivering the Our Niagara Falls Plan. The Discussion Papers are intended to guide a conversation that will ultimately form the basis for policy.

The Discussion Papers have structured several contemporary issues in land use planning in Ontario into digestible sources of information in six thematic areas:

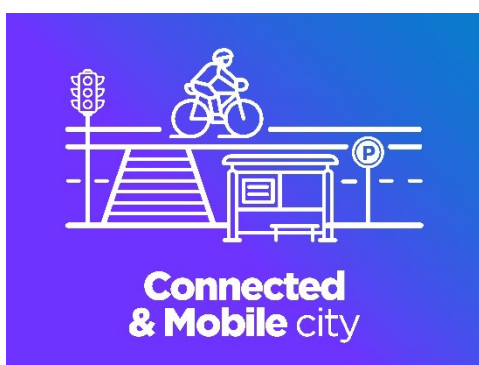


1. **A Growing City.** Niagara Region’s 2051 Land Needs Assessment forecasts Niagara Falls to add the greatest number of new housing units in the Region, even more than St. Catharines and its large assignment of apartment dwellings. Further infrastructure master planning work can look at growth beyond the 2051 planning horizon, opening a door for even longer-term planning. This means a considerable outlay of infrastructure and soft services will be required to support the building of complete communities connected through a resilient, layered mobility network. The new Official Plan must also ensure the infrastructure is available (planned or existing) to accommodate this growth, and will either accommodate or be ready to accommodate the outcomes of the City’s range of ongoing growth management projects and planning, the housing pledge to 2031, urban boundary expansions, affordable housing goal, and volume of development applications.



2. **An Attractive City.** Niagara Falls is a gateway to our country and a destination in its own right. Growth will need to build upon this foundation—more accurately, it will raise the bar for excellence in design and architecture, even in a world where exterior design elements cannot be completely regulated through Site Plan Control. This is achieved by comprehensively identifying landmark locations where priority design treatment is expected, while leveraging further placemaking opportunities through planning for a complete community.

3. **A Connected and Mobile City.**



Communities are grappling with how and where goods and people move through them. In addition to needing to serve the vehicle demands, the transportation system of a city is also a public good. This means it contributes to the overall quality of life for residents, contribution to

the economic well-being for businesses, and supports tourists and visitors to the area. Key to this is designing a transportation system that is premised on the principles of safety, equity, accessibility, and mobility for all users and modes. Our Niagara Falls Plan will aim to address these questions and be complemented with street design policies and guidelines.

4. **A Green and Resilient City.** The effects



of climate change are becoming known. Cities can and need to do more to prepare for and incorporate these new systems and patterns into growth and development. Whether that is through right-sized infrastructure, a comprehensive natural heritage system, low impact design techniques, sensitively designed community facilities, or increased expectations from private development, Our Niagara Plan should build upon City and Regional studies to incorporate the best elements in a manner that readies the community for adaptation to climate change. It must also consider the fiscal and economic implications of policies related to building a green and resilient city.



5. **An International City.** Our Niagara Falls Plan will incorporate design policies and community improvement principles and a framework for intensification that will maximize the opportunities for creating landmarks and physical presence at major locations to support the many places of entry to the city. Our Niagara Falls Plan needs to leverage its location, multiple attractions, and quality of life to continue encouraging tourism, new economic development, and a range of jobs to support overall well-being.



6. **A Cultural City.** Our Niagara Falls Plan will incorporate multiple goals, objectives, and policies to continue to build upon Niagara Falls' recent growth

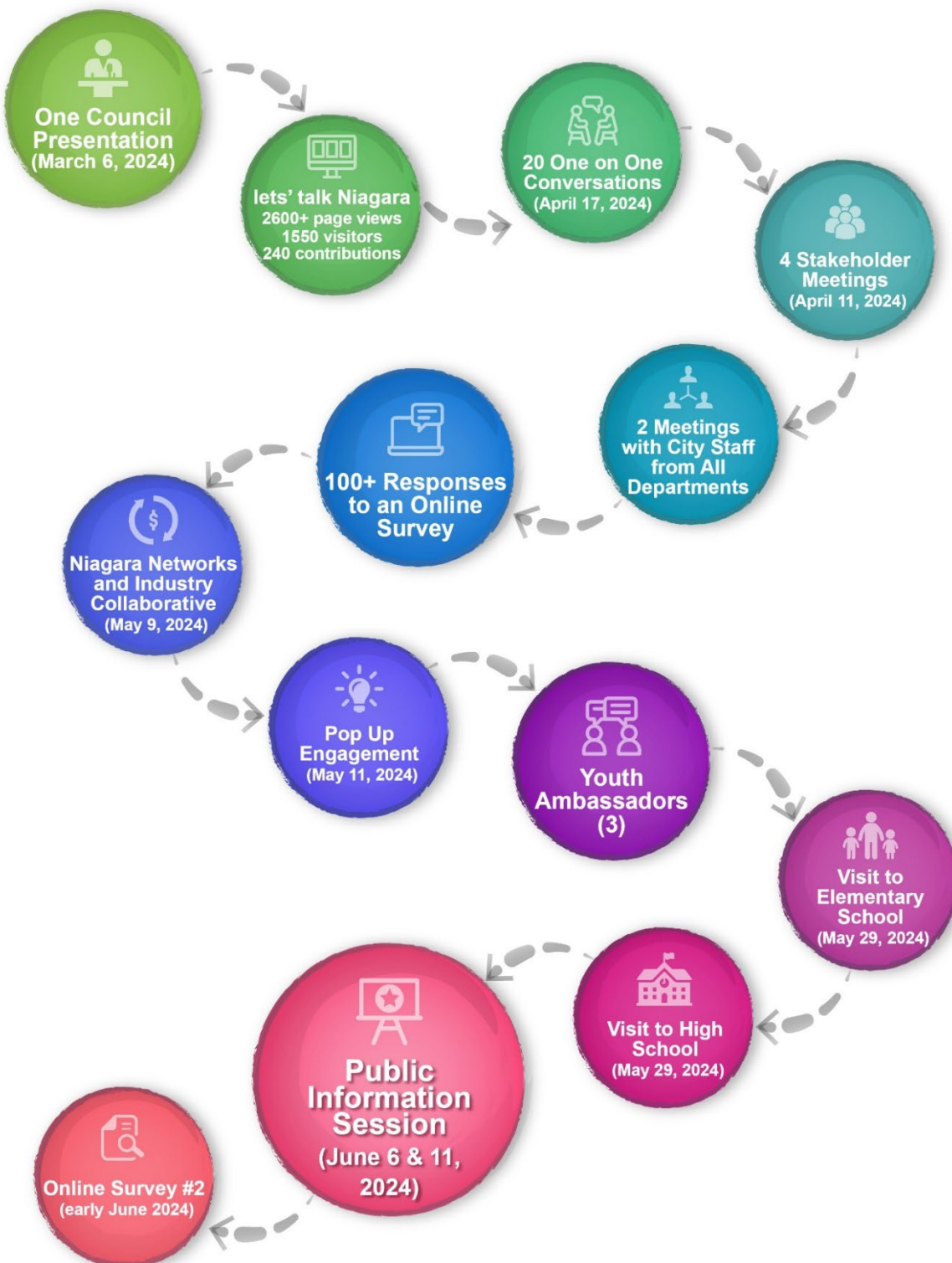
in diversifying cultural options. This is more than just the Falls area itself and must incorporate the entire city, providing the places and spaces necessary for an enriching social experience. There is a strong base of significant cultural heritage resources at a local and national scale in Niagara Falls, for which Our Niagara Falls Plan can work to conserve. This also requires planning for and providing community facilities to support a growing population.

The six Discussion Papers together represent a thorough, comprehensive and interconnected approach to initiating this discussion about the future of Niagara Falls. Each Paper contributes its own piece to this project. A further paper on Planning Policy Conformity and Implementation shall be prepared once current Provincial reform proposals are complete.

Project team staff are available at any time to answer questions about this project. All public input received will be summarized into a "What We Heard" engagement summary report throughout the process to prepare the new Official Plan.

1.3 Public Engagement So Far

This diagram illustrates the engagement that will be completed up to the end of June 2024. The following two pages summarize what we are hearing with respect to each one of the topics for discussion.



A Growing City

- The aim should be on growth that is orderly, cost-effective, and sustainable.
- Re-connect city's decision-making with the Official Plan.
- Planning priorities should be within the built boundaries
- Downtown should not be just for visitors - try to get people living in this area
- Plenty of room for growth south of McCleod near Garner South; Grassy Brook and Hospital site
- Tourist commercial across from residential – incompatible. Transition and buffer are important.
- Niagara Falls does not need densification: lots of space. Large number of rental units available, many houses for sale
- Should do more with what we have instead of taking over more green space.
- Need better facilities for residents, including those with addictions (e.g. shelters, long term treatment facilities)

“This city has potential to become a true beacon of education, natural beauty, job opportunities, and more. Niagara University seems like a good start, but one win after a mountain of disappointments means nothing if it leaves locals in the dust.”

- Diversify the local economy by drawing other industries beside tourism to the city
- Don't need more industrial parks but do need co-working spaces.
- Like to see something like University Village, Seattle: a shopping destination/village rather than large format shopping
- Currently, a lot of homeless, need single person residences; more apartments for baby boomers who give up their houses, and housing for seniors - but not stacked townhouses.
- Need to bring back good, permanent, year-round jobs - seasonal jobs contributing to local homelessness.

An Attractive City

- Niagara Falls is not the showcase I remember. We have to do a lot of work to do to bring us to a standard to welcome people back.
- Want to see better quality parks, cycling trails, no space between houses, more public places.
- Growth of short-term rentals causing issues in residential areas – needs some control.
- Niagara Falls has lots of beautiful parks – no complaints or recommendations, done a good job on parks.

“I hope for a city that focuses on keeping the city clean. There is a huge issue with litter - take a look at the side of major roads, off ramps, on ramps, and even city trails.”

A Green & Resilient City

- Love the McBain Centre – need more spaces like that where communities can gather.
- Green space very important, need to think about how to build urban green space as different kinds of landscapes. (Kansas City good model for green space revitalization.)
- Prefer planted medians – woodland boulevard is a great example of a suburban street, no bike lanes, but safe, with median with trees.
- Queen Street signs, sidewalks, - walking to Queen from e.g. Victoria library - walk is not good. Need to enhance the larger context.
- Planting street trees does not make up for removing a forest.
- Niagara Falls wetlands are mainly complexes, which should appear in the OP. Mapping of natural corridors is key to their protection. Ideally, should be under public ownership (e.g. the conservation authority).

“In 2051, my Niagara will have many public gardens for its residents to grow vegetables annually, positively impacting the lives of those in low income neighborhoods and teaching a skill that is transferrable. Teaching people how to grow their own food could be life saving to those who cannot afford fresh produce.”

“Our watershed and forests, wetlands and all remaining green areas are our assets to protect...Our Official Plan must reflect our respect, appreciation and gratefulness of being blessed with these magnificent natural features.”

- Need better language in the Official Plan about our remaining natural areas and woodlots to make environmental protection enforceable.
- Would like to see public gardens/vegetable gardens replacing some of the lawn area in parks

A Mobile & Connected City

- Niagara Falls should think about LRT as well as GO. The only semi-good public transportation are the WeGo buses, which almost exclusively serve Niagara Parks and the tourist districts.
- Need different measures to slow traffic, without speed bumps and stop signs.
- Investigate a new people mover system, LRT using CP rail corridor, and connect to train station.

“Niagara Falls 2011 Active Transportation Plan was to develop a robust bike lane network in the city. Looking back on this document in 2024, so few of these plans and ideas have actually been completed.”

- Traffic is bad. Roads to be expanded: Dorchester, Drummond, Thorold Stone Road - easily expanded, use their wide boulevards to create 3 lanes.
- Regional Transit system has resulted in a lot of vacant buses. Not getting value for money.
- Clifton Hill on a summer day - lots of people walking but not enough space. Need bigger, accessible, sidewalks, bike, and electric scooter rentals. (Kitchener Waterloo is doing a good job integrating cars, rentals, walking.)
- Stanley is another street that can be better planned, now a mini highway - opportunity for a better sidewalk connection.
- Lots of bike lanes that just stop. Love to see city with specific requirements for new build areas, things to make areas more pedestrian friendly, including bike paths through new builds/shopping areas.

An International City

- Niagara Falls is tourist town, but that's what makes the region unique. The city has "a community vibe" and whatever tourists use, locals will use.
- Transit issue: tourists don't have change; need better signage re: presto, no cards, cash.

"One thing Niagara Falls needs is an environment that attracts foreign visitors who want to slow down and enjoy the scenery. Bring some European style culture to Niagara Falls. NPC owns lots of land and they can designate areas for cafes and sit down space looking out over the falls or just as people walk about on the grounds. Let's make the Falls area not just a viewing opportunity but a refreshing experience."

A Cultural City

- Niagara Falls does not seem to care about history – razed historic neighbourhoods, demolish heritage-designated school to expand cemetery.
- Public buildings need to be maintained. The new Exchange location is not good and took away parking at the corner of Main and Central.

"Find out what features make us stand out from other cities around the world. Highlight the features that make the city worth traveling to. This can include unique cultural activities, historical landmarks, diversity welcoming places and cultural foods, different museums unique architecture, streets, and also attractive game zones for visitors."

"Let's spend less on fireworks and more on feeding Niagara's families. Let's make the city more fun and inviting for all with cultural events and attractions such as a state of the art children's museum, aquarium, theme park, hockey team, indigenous events, etc."

2

A Connected & Mobile City Overview

2.1 What is a Connected and Mobile City

The City of Niagara Falls envisions a connected and mobile city. This vision views the transportation network as a public good that should balance the needs of all users. This discussion paper seeks to provide direction for the development of a transportation system and network that accommodates pedestrians, cyclists, transit users, and vehicles, in a manner that improves safety, equity, accessibility, and mobility for all who engage with the transportation network.

The policies and direction for the Official Plan with respect to achieving a connected and mobile city will seek to reflect the direction and recommendations outlined within the City's ongoing *Transportation Master Plan (TMP)* and *Trails and Active Transportation Master Plan (TATMP)*. The directives arising from this discussion paper will be based on a review of sustainable or alternative transportation options, multi-modal opportunities, trails, transit corridors, transportation demand management strategies, parking options and opportunities, and active transportation.

2.2 Defining the Transportation System

Who Uses the System?

There are three groups of users of the transportation system each with its own expectations and needs; residents, businesses, and tourists. From a resident perspective, the transportation system needs to be functional to allow for commuting to work, day-to-day errands, and provide for active recreational uses. Businesses require the transportation system to efficiently move goods within the system. and to have the connectivity with outside markets. Tourists require convenient and direct access to tourist areas via transportation options and routes that are clear and easy to navigate. Overall, the transportation system needs to be flexible for all users to accomplish their goals and move efficiently throughout the city

using a variety of modes that meets their needs and abilities.

Who Operates the System?

Transit

With respect to transit, the City of Niagara Falls has unique transit operations. Several agencies operate within the city independently, providing inter- and intra-municipal travel, including:

- Niagara Region Transit operated by the Niagara Transit Commission
- GO Transit operated by Metrolinx
- WEGO operated by Niagara Parks
- VIA Rail operated by VIA Rail Canada

- Private operators such as Megabus Canada, Greyhound, FlixBus, Coach Canada, and other tourist operators

Where possible, transit service integration should be established between municipal transit agencies to provide a seamless transit experience for any users. Transit is a public good and should be a central feature in how settlement areas are developed, encouraging a higher degree of population density nearby concentrations of transit nodes.

Roadways

With respect to roadways, there are provincial, regional, and municipal roads under the jurisdiction of the Province of Ontario, Niagara Region, and the City of Niagara Falls, respectively. Additionally, the Niagara Parkway is under the jurisdiction of the Niagara Parks Commission. The City of Niagara Falls has two major border crossings

to New York State: the Rainbow Bridge and the Queenston Lewiston Bridge. The bridges and infrastructure surrounding the bridges are managed by the Niagara Bridge Commission and Canada Border Services Agency, which are federally mandated.

Recreational Trails

The trail system in Niagara Falls includes 33 trails between 15 m up to 4,780 m in length. These trails provide recreational opportunities for people in the city, and major connections along the Laura Secord Commemorative Trail (part of the Bruce Trail), Warren Woods Recreational Trail, NS&T Trail, Patrick Cumming Park Pathway, and Millennium Recreational Trail. Future trails will be reviewed as part of the ongoing Trails and Active Transportation Master Plan.

2.3 Guiding Principles

To develop a connected and mobile city through Official Plan policy, a number of guiding principles emerge. Transportation policies included in the Niagara Falls Official Plan should strive to improve the safety, equity, accessibility, and mobility of the transportation system and network for all modes and users, including residents, businesses (including industry), and tourists.

The guiding principles of safety, equity, accessibility, and multi-modal mobility will inform the policies to be implemented in Our Niagara Falls Plan and municipal plans and policies with respect to transportation. These principles consider the needs of all users and operators of the system.

Guiding Principle #1: Safety

Transportation policies for the city should strive to improve safety for all users, particularly those considered vulnerable and most at-risk of serious injury or death when

involved in motor vehicle-related incidents such as pedestrians, cyclists, school-aged children, and older adults aged 65 or older³. A connected and mobile city is one that can accommodate individuals of all ages and

³

<https://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2019/ie/bgrd/backgroundfile-134964.pdf>

mobilities to travel in a manner that is safe and comfortable.

The primary “Es” of safety commonly referenced in best practices and transportation movements such as *Vision Zero* include engineering, education, evaluation, and enforcement⁴. Policies under these themes are all important considerations to developing a safe transportation system. Our Niagara Falls Plan should therefore include supportive and administrative policies for implementation.

Engineering policies seek to improve safety of the physical network through operational solutions such as reduced speed limits along local streets, in residential areas, near schools, and where there are high levels of pedestrian activity, or design solutions such as speed bumps, physical separation between road users, and curb bump-outs incorporated into the roadway design⁵⁶. Educational policies include policies, programming, and partnerships aimed at educating road users on traffic safety, such as through social media campaigns or partnerships with local schools and organizations. Enforcement policies aim to curb dangerous or illegal driver behaviour through technology, such as speed or red-light cameras, or through the presence of law enforcement personnel. Evaluation policies aim to monitor and evaluate the network and where, when, and why collisions occur and can assist municipalities in planning for improvements and identifying hotspot areas

to focus engineering, educational, and enforcement efforts.

Guiding Principle #2: Equity

To become a connected and mobile city for all, transportation policies should strive to create an equitable transportation system that is accessible and affordable for all to use and travel within Niagara Falls and beyond. Areas historically underserved or less accessible by modes other than a motorized vehicle can lead to barriers for individuals to access employment, educational, cultural, social, and recreational opportunities and can create undue disadvantages for individuals who do not or cannot drive or own a vehicle⁷.

An inequitable transportation system can also exacerbate public health and environmental concerns by reinforcing automobile dependence and providing limited opportunities for individuals to access and utilize active and more sustainable modes of transportation.

A more equitable transportation system is one that supports access to various travel modes and destinations, where individuals can opt for healthier and more sustainable transportation choices such as walking, cycling, carpooling, or ridesharing, and where individuals do not require a personal vehicle to get around in a timely and convenient manner. Additionally, individuals should not face barriers to travel as a result of not being able to afford to do so.

⁴ https://www.edmonton.ca/public-files/assets/document?path=PDF/VisionZero_BuildingBlocks.pdf

⁵ <https://www.peelregion.ca/pw/transportation/residents/vision-zero.asp>

⁶ <https://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2023/ie/bgrd/backgroundfile-239909.pdf>

⁷ <https://www.smatstraffic.com/2021/08/31/transportation-equity/>

Official Plan Policies for Implementation should therefore include those aimed at removing or reducing barriers to accessing the transportation system, supporting public health and sustainability initiatives, and providing a system that is affordable for users based on the following themes: opportunities to access, supporting public health and the environment, and affordability.

Guiding Principle #3: Accessibility

Accessibility of the transportation system and network is paramount to creating a connected and mobile city where everyone can get around and access locations throughout the city. Accessible cities are inclusive and welcoming and accommodate individuals of all ages and mobilities. Global movements such as *8 80 Cities* demonstrate the importance of planning and designing for individuals of all ages and with varying degrees of familiarity with a given city and its transportation system, following the general principle that a city works when designed to work well for everyone⁸.

A connected and mobile city is one with established infrastructure that can be used by everybody at the same time. Ideally the infrastructure does not need to be designed in a way that will require mitigation or accommodation measures down the line, but rather infrastructure that is designed to accommodate all from the onset.

To this effect, an accessible city and transportation system is one that provides flexibility and ease of travel by various modes and that is simple and intuitive to get around or use, especially for first-time users. An accessible system also provides a tolerance

for error, where if someone makes a wrong turn or uses a service incorrectly there are solutions or alternatives available without incurring a significant financial or time loss. An accessible system is also one that provides adequate space and size to accommodate individuals of varying needs and abilities, such as those travelling with a stroller or using a mobility aid to travel along a sidewalk or pathway. The design of infrastructure and facilities should be undertaken with a “Universal Design” approach and adhere to and, where feasible, exceed the minimum design standards under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA)*, which outlines the design framework and mandates universal, accessible design of infrastructure, facilities, and communities in Ontario.

Official Plan Policies for Implementation should therefore include those that fall within the following themes and goals which seek to increase accessibility of the city’s transportation system: simple and intuitive, flexible and easy to use, tolerance for error, robust in size and space.

Guiding Principle #4: Multi-Modal Mobility

A connected and mobile city should provide viable options for residents, businesses, and tourists alike with respect to mode and route choice. Users of the transportation network should be able to travel by multiple modes of transportation to a variety of destinations in their day-to-day travel, regardless of vehicle ownership or place of residence.

A multimodal transportation system provides ease of access not only for the personal

⁸ <https://www.880cities.org/about-8-80-cities/>

vehicle, but for active modes such as cycling and walking, public transit, and ridesharing and carpooling. Strategies such as Transportation Demand Management (TDM) can be employed to improve mobility by supporting and encouraging individuals to travel in more active, sustainable, and efficient ways.

It is also important to consider that multi-modal mobility is not just limited to the movement of people to various places. In addition to people, the movement of goods and provision of services should be considered in the development of transportation policies and network improvements to support economic growth

and efficiency of the overall transportation system—both existing and planned corridors, for new construction or retrofits and redesigns.

Official Plan Policies for Implementation therefore should include those relating to the following modes, uses, and components of the transportation system to increase multi-modal mobility for users, goods, and services:

- Active Transportation, Goods Movement, Transportation Demand Management (TDM), Emerging Technologies, Transit.

2.4 Trends in Transportation

The recent trends in transportation planning generally reflect a broader shift towards incorporating more sustainable, efficient, and resilient transportation options into the overall network. These options tend to prioritize conscientious attention to environmental impact, social equity, and technological innovation. Some of the relevant trends for Niagara Falls include:

1. **Shared and Micromobility:** shared mobility refers to the participation within the transportation system but in a manner that doesn't require or subscribe to the traditional forms of ownership. This includes aspects like bike-sharing, and car-sharing. Micromobility focuses on modes of transportation that are often used for short-distance trips particularly in urban areas and can either be operated through individual ownership or through a shared model. Characteristic of micromobility modes are that they often include powered by power-assist or fully supported by electric propulsion.

Micromobility can form part of the “first and last mile” solution to a journey, serving trips that are typically less than 2km that may not be feasible or practical for all individuals to walk. When it comes to challenges for micromobility, it primarily exists in two manners; provision of parking and the provision of a dedicated space in which to operate. These systems can be implemented using either fixed parking facilities (i.e. stations) or as free floating dockless vehicles that can be left on a public sidewalk or other designated area. Some examples of systems currently being implemented on a pilot or permanent basis in Ontario are discussed below:

- **E-Scooters:** Ontario has implemented an e-scooter pilot program which is scheduled to run from January 2020 until November 2024. The program allows municipalities to opt-in and regulate e-scooter use within their jurisdictions.

Several municipalities have implemented e-scooter programs, including Hamilton, Guelph, Brampton, and Ottawa. As per the pilot regulatory requirements, users must wear a helmet while operating a scooter and a maximum speed of 24 km/h is permitted.

The Province will utilize feedback and information gathered from municipalities through the pilot program to assess whether e-scooter usage will be allowed permanently and to determine which operating rules will be required.

One major concern identified with e-scooters has been the potential for conflicts with pedestrians if e-scooters are ridden on sidewalks. This issue was identified during the initial stages of the Ottawa pilot program; based on this feedback, e-scooter operators have implemented sidewalk prevention technology that limit the ability of e-scooters to operate outside of designated areas.

E-scooters have emerged as a popular travel alternative in many cities across the world based on their convenience, low-cost, and low environmental impact relative to driving. However, implementation of an e-scooter program needs to be weighed against the potential drawbacks, which can include increased risk of collisions and “sidewalk clutter” obstructing pedestrian travel particularly for individuals with accessibility needs. As a result, an effective e-scooter system requires appropriate regulation of parking and operations to ensure it provides as a complementary service that enables active and transit travel in a safe and comfortable manner, as well as consideration towards dedicated infrastructure to separate pedestrians from e-scooters.



E-Scooter System

Source: CBC

- Bikeshare:** Bikeshare systems provide an additional mobility alternative to serve users who require occasional access to a bicycle or e-bike, are visiting a community, or who prefer not to own and store a personal bicycle. These systems have been widely adopted across the world, particularly in larger cities but also many smaller communities where sufficient demand exists to sustain their operations. E-bikes have increasingly been integrated within existing bikeshare systems or as a standalone service, offering benefits such as ease of riding, faster travel speeds, and assistance with climbing hills that are particularly helpful to elderly and mobility challenged users.

Hamilton's bikeshare system, named Sobi, was initially launched in 2015 and now includes over 800 bikes provided at 129 docking stations across the city. The system is operated by Hamilton Bike Share Inc, a local non-profit, and has been supported through government grants, community contributions, and advertising sponsorship. The service provides access through one-time passes along with monthly and seasonal memberships.

Industry research has indicated that bikeshare systems are associated with increased levels of physical activity and

some displacement of vehicle-based trips when implemented successfully. A well designed bikeshare system can be a highly complementary service that facilitates active travel by both residents and visitors of a community, offering a practical and accessible method of travelling by conventional bicycle or e-bike. A key consideration linked to successful implementation is the available cycling infrastructure within a municipality, given that a lack of protected or comfortable cycling facilities such as bike lanes or multi-use trails can be a major deterrent to use by new or inexperienced cyclists.



Hamilton Sobi Bikeshare

Source: Raise the Hammer

2. **Mobility as a Service and On-Demand Transit:** Mobility as a Service (MaaS) is an approach that integrates different transportation services into a single accessible and on-demand solution. This approach fundamentally differs from the concept of private ownership of travel modes such as personal vehicle or bike. Some key aspects of a MaaS approach include providing a unified interface that indicates available transportation options across both public and private operators, offering an integrated payment service, and facilitating travel planning to determine the most appropriate combination of modes for a particular trip.

Prominent examples of MaaS systems includes ride-hailing services such as Uber/Lyft and travel planning mobile apps such as Moovit and Transit. These services are becoming increasingly prevalent among users in Ontario as individuals opt for the flexibility of using different travel modes for each trip based on considerations such as cost, convenience, and expected wait times. As these services gain popularity, demand for vehicle parking may be replaced by the need to accommodate other end-of-trip facilities such as pick-up/drop-off zones, micromobility services, along with transit and bike infrastructure. As a result, streets may need to be redesigned to reflect a better allocation of boulevard and curbside space to serve the evolving needs of people travelling within Niagara.

On-demand transit is a related concept that is often as part of a MaaS system to facilitate transit trips that would likely otherwise be taken using a private vehicle. The most prominent example in Ontario has been the partnership between the Town of Innisfil and Uber through the creation of Innisfil Transit.



Recognizing the limitations and costs associated with implementing a fixed route bus service in a smaller community, Innisfil opted for the provision of an on-demand subsidized service that facilitates trips within the Town and provides a flat rate fare for travel to major civic destinations or GO station/bus facilities. The service is operated by Uber and available 24/7 to both residents and visitors travelling within the town boundaries.]

The initial implementation of Innisfil Transit has been widely deemed a success story, providing an accessible and affordable transportation option that did not previously exist within the community. However, due to financial constraints the Town has instituted a cap on the number of subsidized rides permitted each month, a reflection of the program's success but also an indication that it may not be feasible on a wider scale and could ultimately be more costly than providing a traditional transit service.

Within the Niagara Region, NRT OnDemand is available for Grimsby, Lincoln, Niagara-on-the-Lake, Pelham, Port Colborne, Wainfleet, West Lincoln, and Fort Erie from Monday to Saturday from 7:00 am to 10:00 pm. The service is offered as an alternative to fixed routes and requires less infrastructure to implement. However, the system faces constraints including wait times up to one hour long, cost containment, and the separation between NRT OnDemand and Niagara Specialized Transit.

3. **Autonomous Vehicles (AV):** Driverless vehicles are a topic of ongoing research and development within the transportation field, although there remain many barriers to their widespread adoption. If their potential is fully realized, autonomous vehicles could significantly improve road user safety by eliminating driver error and reducing both vehicle-vehicle and vehicle-pedestrian collision risk through advanced detection and collision avoidance systems. Driverless cars also have the potential to reduce travel costs and vehicle emissions if adopted in conjunction with electrification and a MaaS delivery model.

Although AV technology currently remains in the testing stage with limited deployment in select cities, it is an area of keen interest to policymakers given the wide ranging technical and safety considerations that will need to be addressed to secure the confidence of both users and non-users coexisting in the same space. Within Ontario, a 10-year AV pilot program was initiated in 2016 to allow for the controlled testing of driverless passenger and commercial vehicles, including a driverless shuttle service that is currently operating at the University of Waterloo.

4. **Evolving Travel Patterns:** The COVID-19 pandemic has had lasting implications on mobility patterns that remain persistent even as public health-related restrictions have been lifted, including the adoption of hybrid or work-from-home commuting patterns, higher use of online shopping and food delivery services, along with transit ridership largely remaining below pre-pandemic levels. These trends require a rethink of the traditional focus on transportation capacity being defined by the weekday peak periods, as travel activity is now more dispersed through a typical weekday and no longer defined by a rigid work schedule.

Similarly, the increased use of package and food delivery services, along with ride-hailing and other shared services requires the reallocation of curb space to better serve these uses to avoid haphazard or ad-hoc activity that can be disruptive to other road users.

Charging stations are of increased demand, generally being rolled out by choice of the consumer. The Provincial government has been rolling out charging stations at ONroute rest stops over the past several years.⁹ The City of Hamilton has been considering requiring electric-ready parking spaces as well.

⁹ <https://news.ontario.ca/en/release/1003146/ontario-expands-electric-vehicle-charging-stations>

5. **Parking:** There is also increased discussion around the role of minimum parking requirements for new development. In the draft 2024 Provincial Planning Statement, released for public comment on April 11, 2024, there is a proposal to no longer enable minimum parking requirements in Major Transit Station Areas—historic Downtown Niagara Falls is identified as such an area in the Niagara Region Official Plan. Many municipalities are rethinking how parking spaces can help or hinder good development in the overall context of building an attractive, affordable community. The City is currently undertaking a review of its parking requirements, which may inform recommendations for Our Niagara Falls Plan.

Many cities, like Edmonton and Buffalo, removed parking standards from development rules. Barrie's draft zoning proposes reducing parking requirements to below 1.0 space per unit on major transit routes, even those on the edge of the city.

3

Key Topics for Discussion

3.1 Mobility is More than Cars, Trucks, and Trains

Understanding mobility involves more than just physical movement. Individuals need to move throughout cities, sometimes out of desire, and often out of necessity. Mobility spans beyond the simplicity of origins and destinations. It can create a seamless, inclusive, and sustainable network that serves everyone through connected and protected networks to key destinations in the city. It involves people, places, and things, working together to create multi-modal linkages and foster a cohesive transportation system.

It is crucial to understand that the traditional modes of mobility may not be the same for everyone. The way a user can navigate one city might be completely different from another due to policy or available resources. To achieve stronger mobility practices in cities, many municipalities rely on Transportation Demand Management (TDM) strategies to maximize traveler choices. TDM strategies refer to a suite of services that influence how people travel and encourage people to use transit, ride-sharing, walking, cycling and even telework.

Understanding that mobility spans beyond the basic movement of vehicles on the road, is crucial to achieving a connected and mobile city. Building upon the guiding principles, policies in Niagara Falls should be tailored towards creating a multi-modal city providing a variety of viable travel options.

Transportation Demand Management (TDM)

Transportation Demand Management, or TDM, is a set of strategies that strive towards a more efficient transportation network by influencing travel behaviour. Transportation Demand Management can address transportation challenges by implementing infrastructure and programming that encourage active and sustainable travel¹⁰.

Typically, Transportation Demand Management strategies can be broken down in to hard and soft measures, and further categorized into five broad categories: promotion, active transportation, transit, parking and other TDM strategies (such as wayfinding, offering micromobility and transit on-request services, and telework)¹¹.

¹⁰ <https://mobilitylab.org/transportation-demand-management/further-reading/what-is-transportation-demand-management-actually/>

¹¹ <https://www.vaughan.ca/sites/default/files/City%20of%20Vaughan%20TDM%20Development%20Guideline.pdf?file-verison=1712072040314>

When thinking about the future of cities and how mobility can be better achieved, opportunities to incorporate Transportation Demand Management measure in new developments should be considered. The goal of these Transportation Demand Management measures is to enhance non-single occupant auto vehicle trips for future residents, businesses, and tourists. Measures can include providing priority parking spaces for electric vehicles, providing bicycle parking, discounted transit passes, providing safe access for pedestrians, and installing wayfinding and signage. When thinking about the Niagara Falls context, wayfinding and signage are important considerations as they assist people that are walking or cycling to navigate and locate transportation services. Tourists could benefit greatly from this measure, which would ultimately encourage tourists to choose non-auto modes of transportation.

Currently, as part of Niagara Falls development process, and within the Transportation Impact Assessment guidelines, it is recommended that developers consider the implementation of Transportation Demand Management measures within the development. However, to strengthen the mobility of the city, it is recommended that these measures be a requirement of developers to ensure all new developments encourage people to invest in alternative modes of travel. Policies should welcome Transportation Demand Management-supportive infrastructure and design features in all land development.

The City of Vaughan has recently created its *TDM Development Guidelines*, which gives initiatives to developers to design communities that support active and sustainable travel. Developments have increased marketability when they provide a variety of travel options. Notably, in the Vaughan Metropolitan Centre (VMC), developers have contributed to the evolution of the neighbourhood from a former suburban commercial area into a more walkable, cyclable, transit-accessible, mixed-use urban centre. The introduction of Vaughan's TDM Development Guidelines will further leverage development-led opportunities to realize the City's vision for the VMC, with VMC-specific metrics and guidelines for Transportation Demand Management that apply to new developments to support the continued expansion and promotion of walking, cycling, and transit infrastructure in the area.

Trends in the Falls

Data from the 2016 Transportation Tomorrow Survey (TTS) was extracted to identify the modal split of the Niagara Falls area. The TTS modal split is identified in the following table:

MODE	SPLIT
Auto Driver	71.3%
Auto Passenger	12.9%
Transit	9.1%
Walk	6.4%
Cycle	0.3%
Total	100%

Table 3-1: Modal Split

As seen in the table above, auto trips represent 84% of all trips made, transit trips represent 9% and active transportation represent 6%. Although this is a low non-auto modal split, the results indicate that there are individuals choosing to utilize non-auto modes of transportation in Niagara Falls. Based on this data, it is important to think about how the city can optimize demand for non-auto modes of travel. Services should be tailored to meet the community's needs versus simply inputting a generic system into the community. Are there affordability concerns? Does everyone have equitable access? Is it easy to purchase tickets and use the service? The goal of Niagara Falls should be to encourage a multi-modal city through a safety, equity, accessibility and mobility lens. The policies in the Official Plan should reflect these goals.



Things to Think About

1. Transportation Demand Management strategies employed at trip origins and destinations have the greatest impact on affecting change and travel behaviour for people living in a community as it changes the travel options available.
2. Providing incentives through preferential parking encourages a change in travel behaviour towards more sustainable modes as it increases the convenience and ease for people arriving at their destination.
3. Continual monitoring is an important tool in assessing the effectiveness of TDM measures as it provides quantifiable data to understand the impact TDM measures have in changing travel behaviour.
4. There is a proven connection between the provision of TDM measures and the reduction in parking demand. This relationship can be leveraged to reduce auto-dependency within municipalities.
5. Linkages from private developments to existing active transportation facilities enhance the cohesiveness, convenience, and comprehensiveness of active transportation networks. They also enhance the ease for user experience when choosing active transportation as a viable mode of transportation.
6. TDM measures encourage non-auto modes of transportation, making more efficient use of the transportation system.
7. Mobility and access to public transit services increases the viability of transit as a mode of choice.
8. Considering the needs of all residents with all abilities and socio-economic conditions in the planning and design of all aspects of the transportation network ensures that the network is designed for all and easy to use.
9. Improved active transportation networks encourages a shift towards walking and cycling. This also aids in the revitalization of business areas to encourage pedestrian activity, such as within the downtown core.

3.2 Trails

When thinking about mobility in cities, local municipalities that operate transit systems can promote increased transit ridership and reduce the need to make trips by automobile through developing a network of sidewalks, pedestrian trails and bicycle facilities that provide access to transit nodes and/or routes. Furthermore, trails can also provide alternative off-road routes for pedestrians and cyclists. It is important to think about what community infrastructure, like trails and multi-use pathways, are needed to accommodate growth and develop health and sustainable communities.

A succinct and robust trail network that includes pedestrian trails and cycling facilities can provide residents, businesses and tourists access to transit nodes throughout the city. They also provide a form of recreation that supports healthy active communities. A gap analysis through data collection would assist in the identification of missing links in the current active transportation system to update existing mapping and identify priority initiatives/projects. Undertaking gap analyses on the active transportation network on an ongoing basis facilitates the organic development of a comprehensive, connected, and cohesive active transportation network. Integrating trails into municipal policy ensures a healthier population, economic vitality, improved quality of life, and a stronger sense of community identity.



Things to Think About

1. Providing connections to active transportation networks within developments improves ease of use of the network and enhances attractiveness of walking as a viable mode of transportation.
2. Thoughtful implementation of a well-connected off-street system of multi-use trails encourages cycling for all ages and abilities as it creates a complete, cohesive, and comprehensive network that is separated from vehicles and trucks on the road.
3. Park access and use have a positive impact on community health and can increase physical activity.

3.3 First Mile/Last Mile

First Mile/Last Mile refers to the distance a passenger needs to travel from a transit stop to their destination, or vice versa. Niagara Region Transit is now a regional organization, and the Official Plan would not speak to its operational decisions. Our Niagara Falls Plan can certainly support Niagara Region Transit's work, including providing development policies to support those making the transition between modes.

Niagara Parks is currently reviewing proposals for a new visitor transportation system (VTS) connecting the GO/VIA Rail Station and tourist areas to address the First Mile/Last Mile challenge. Currently, Niagara Parks operates the Green Line of the WEGO visitor transportation system, running along the Niagara Parkway connecting visitors from Rapidsview Parking to the Botanical Gardens, with stops at the Bridge Street station and terminal. A new VTS is envisioned, to create a sustainable new transportation experience with significant tourism impact. This includes personalized rapid transit systems (PRTs). Several case studies on operational PRTs are presented in the table below.

	MORGANTOWN PRT AT WEST VIRGINIA UNIVERSITY		HEATHROW AIRPORT PRT BY ULTRA	SUNCHEON BAY PRT BY VECTUS
Operation Start	1975		2011	2014
Location	Morgantown, Virginia, USA	West	London, England	Suncheon, South Korea
Connection Type	Line		Spur	Line
Spatial Integration	Elevated and at-grade		Mostly elevated	Elevated entirely
Capacity (PPHPD)	4,800		-	1,280

PRTs could provide an extension to the existing VTS, allowing for the capacity of the system to be increased relative to the user/visitor demand. By establishing key station areas, for the PRTs, the transit-oriented development nodes can be developed. These nodes pose an opportunity to support not only visitor traffic but also the travel needs of the residents of Niagara Falls. It is important to design an urban structure and development policies that supports first mile/last mile connections within the City.



Things to Think About

1. Priority nodes established around transit systems inform urban development and densification in focused areas within the city. Transit-oriented development increases ridership of public transit, increasing the viability and sustainability of transit systems.
2. Cohesive active transportation linkages between a variety of nodes improves access to a variety of amenities between various user groups within the city without the need of a vehicle. This leads to more balanced mode choices, as non-auto modes of transportation become more attractive.
3. Staying at the forefront of new and emerging technologies provides an opportunity to capitalize on mobility solutions. These innovations may have impacts to health, safety, travel conditions, the environment, and the economy, and has the potential to enhance how the City achieves Official Plan goals related to safety, equity, accessibility, and multi-modal mobility.
4. Consideration of first and last mile strategies and solutions across the entire transportation network leads to larger catchment areas for transit ridership, as it improves the ease of access to and from transit facilities.

pedestrian islands¹⁴. This project serves as an excellent example of collaborative efforts between place-making roadway design and demand from residents and the business community can work together with municipal governments to enhance neighbourhood design and promote a multi-modal urban environment.

Safety, Equity and Accessibility

Safety, equity and accessibility are three of the guiding principles informing the Official Plan transportation policies and each relate to street design. Streets should be designed with something for everyone and one of the ways to achieve this is through complete streets. Thoughtfully designed streets can ensure all users can reach their destinations regardless of mode choice. When thinking about mode choice, street safety can be an issue of both equity and accessibility¹⁵. As mentioned in **Section 2**, strategies such as Vision Zero help communities set priorities to eliminate traffic fatalities and severe injuries. A well-connected transportation network for users of all modes of transportation can prioritize safe travel of people over hurried travel of motor vehicles¹⁶.

Policies in the Niagara Falls Official Plan should speak to specific commitments towards Vision Zero principles that reflect practices that prioritize safety. Cities like Toronto have implemented a Vision Zero Road Safety Plan (see the figure below) which recommends a set of initiatives aimed at eliminating serious injuries and fatalities¹⁷. Recently, the plan has been updated to renew the city's commitment to safety and focuses on actions such as a speed management strategy, road design improvements, addressing high-risk mid-block crossings, addressing turning collisions at signalized intersections, and creating an education and engagement plan. In the update, one of the action items directed by city council was reducing the speed limits along arterial, collector and local roads. Lower speed limits create safer environments for walking and cycling and create pedestrian-friendly streets. These actions each speak towards transportation elements of complete streets and highlight accessibility, equity and safety when thinking about street design.

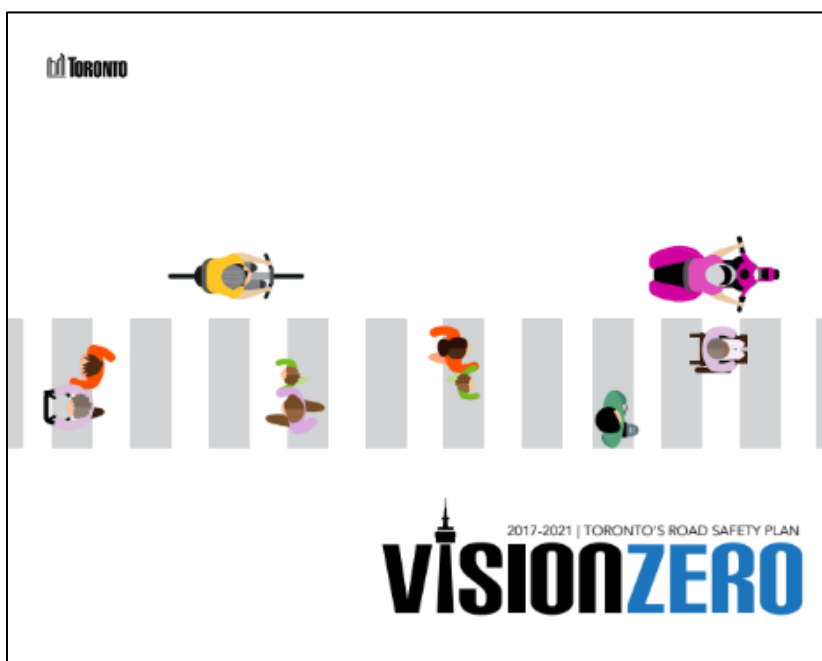


Figure 3-1: City of Toronto Vision Zero Road Safety Plan

¹⁴ <https://urbanmilwaukee.com/2014/09/27/bike-czar-wauwatosa-goes-green-with-bike-lanes/>

¹⁵ https://visionzeronetwork.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/Vision_Zero_Core_Elements.pdf

¹⁶ <https://visionzeronetwork.org/about/what-is-vision-zero/>

¹⁷ <https://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2023/ie/bgrd/backgroundfile-239909.pdf>

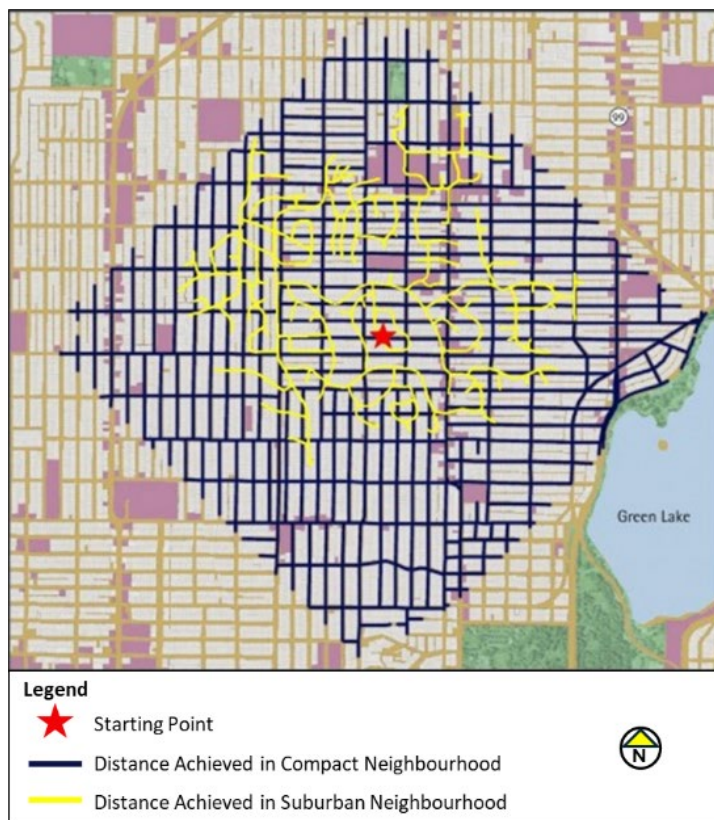


Things to Think About

1. Streets have a multi-faceted role within cities. Thoughtful implementation of street design can be used as a tool to emphasize the role of multi-modal mobility and ensure streets remain functional for winter maintenance and emergency vehicles.
2. Streets have a role in the desired characteristics of the public realm by responding to and influencing the built environment. Prioritizing universal accessibility and public safety fosters a strong sense of place, as this ensures streets are built for all. This should be balanced with context, as each community has different needs and desires in their use of adjacent streets.
3. Creating a balanced transportation network that does not favour one mode of transportation over the other improves the efficiency of the overall transportation network. This ensures that the network is responding to the needs of all user groups and provides options for travelling within the city.
4. Dedicated infrastructure for short-term parking and loading improves convenience, manages conflicts between vehicle and pedestrian movements, and reduces congestion along main rights-of-way.
5. In planning for and designing road corridors, coordination of infrastructure needs and requirements should be undertaken in pursuit of the narrowest corridor width possible. It reduces public sector land acquisition requirements, provided the co-location of utilities can occur in the least intrusive way possible.
6. Safety design guidelines provide consistent methodology in the design of transportation networks. Guidelines allow for a consistent and easy-to-use evaluation of development proposals. Additionally, they provide direction and best practices to developments in designing safer communities.
7. Communities that support safety through environmental design are safer and lead to improved wellbeing. The City may study the implications of lowering speed limits and enforcement solutions as one of many wants to support active transportation and creating streets that for safe for all ways to move around the city.
8. The principles of universal design maximize access for users of all ages and abilities. This ensures equitable access and opportunities for all modes of transportation, leading to a more inclusive street design.
9. The design of transportation networks benefit when input is received from all users. Engagement activities are a useful tool in breaking down barriers for public consultation access, particularly for typically underrepresented communities. Community safety meetings and outreach activities should engage with all members of the community in an equitable manner.

3.5 Street Connectivity

Street networks are the cornerstone of any community. Providing greater accessibility through direct routes increases the overall network efficiency for all modes of transport¹⁸. The figure to the right illustrates the distance one can walk in a compact neighbourhood compared to walking in a typical suburban neighbourhood, from the same starting point. As illustrated, when walking in a compact neighbourhood, users can reach more places compared to walking in a suburb. Prioritizing street connectivity and street grids to provide more direct routes and reduced travel time for people who walk and cycle are beneficial to all communities. Street connectivity is important as it reduces traffic congestion, promotes livability, creates healthier communities, and enhances mobility. Streets that are connected seamlessly enhance the overall quality of life and allow for users to navigate the city. As Niagara Falls is host to residents, businesses and tourists, the street network should enhance connectivity throughout. Planning streets for all modes of activity, such as ensuring that roads and multi-use paths are both connected to destinations efficiently can allow for increased mobility.



Street Hierarchy

¹⁸ [Street Networks 101 | CNU](#)



Things to Think About

1. Efficient transportation networks increase the attractiveness of active transportation, as finer grain networks provide multiple ways to travel, reduce travel time, allowing users to capitalize on a larger variety of amenities within walking and cycling distance.
2. Seamless connections between transit services improve the ease of use for passengers. The ability to transfer between local and regional transit

services creates a sense of cohesion across networks, ultimately increasing the destinations one can travel to via transit.

3. When facilitating the design of the roadway, it is important to understand the classification and need of each roadway and its intended use. Thoughtful consideration to the movement of goods and deliveries through the city maximizes the safety and efficiency of the road network.

3.6 Connecting the Transportation Network

It is important for cities to bridge the gap between modes of transportation. Users who take transit should be able to seamlessly exit the transit vehicle and utilize a sidewalk or cycle along a multi-use path to get to their destination. As mentioned in Section 3.3, the First Mile/Last Mile phenomena refers to the distance a passenger needs to travel from a transit stop to their destination, or vice versa. Prioritizing residents, businesses, and tourists' needs in designing mobility solutions is crucial in creating a more inclusive and equitable urban environment.

In the context of Niagara Falls, prioritizing multi-modal connections around the Niagara Falls train station is crucial in encouraging active transportation and transit as a viable method of transportation. The existing active transportation conditions surrounding the station are inadequate and are therefore limiting the available non-auto mode choices for users. The goals in Our Niagara Falls Plan should be to prioritize investments in public transit, cycling infrastructure and pedestrian-friendly spaces. Thinking about the proximity between residential, commercial, and recreational areas and how a well-designed mobility network can be beneficial to the tourists should be considered when proposing active transportation improvements.



Things to Think About

1. First and last mile solutions increase the attractiveness of transit as a viable mode choice as it allows users to seamlessly navigate to and from their desired destination regardless of origin.
2. Creating a more inclusive and equitable urban environment ensures all users can enjoy various mobility solutions.

3. Designing an urban structure with a strong sense of place creates environments where communities can thrive. Concentrating transportation investments around major transit station areas creates a more balanced transportation network with a wider variety of mode choices.

4

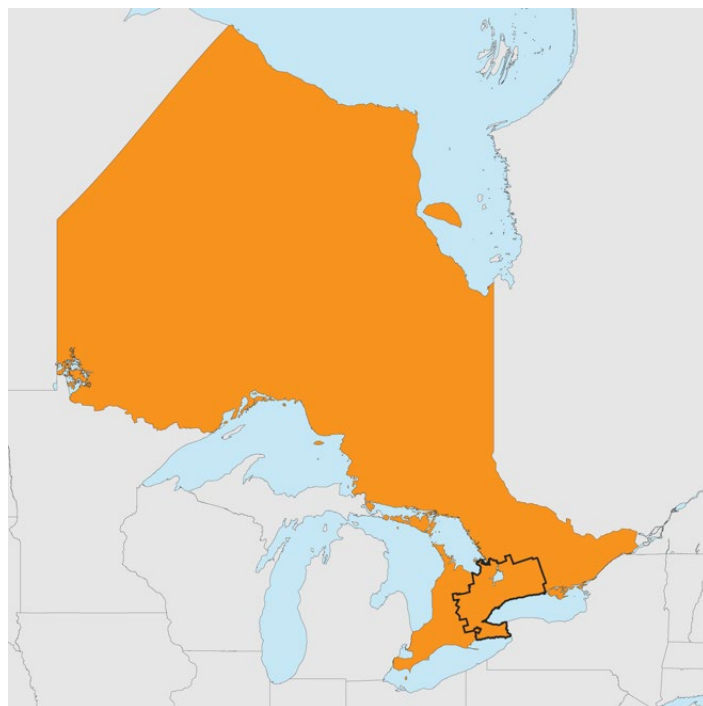
Policy Review

Planning and urban development in Niagara Falls is regulated and guided by a range of policy and strategy documents.

4.1 Provincial Policy Statement (2020)

POLICY REFERENCE: Section 1.1 (Managing and Directing Land Use to Achieve Efficient and Resilient Development and Land Use Patterns); Section 1.5 (Public Spaces, Recreation, Parks, Trails, And Open Space); Section 1.6 (Infrastructure and Public Service Facilities); Section 1.7 (Long-term Economic Prosperity); Section 1.8 (Energy Conservation, Air Quality and Climate Change)

The Provincial Policy Statement, 2020 (PPS 2020) provides policy direction on matters of provincial interest related to land use planning and development. The PPS 2020 sets the policy foundation for regulating the development and use of land. The Provincial Policy Statement is issued under the authority of Section 3 of the *Planning Act*. Section 3 of the Planning Act requires that decisions affecting planning matters “shall be consistent with” policy statements issued under the *Act*. Comments, submissions or advice that affect a planning matter that are provided by the Council of a municipality, a local board, a planning board, a minister or ministry, board, commission or agency of the government “shall be consistent with” the PPS 2020.



The PPS promotes healthy, active communities by planning public streets, spaces and facilities to be safe, meet the needs of pedestrians, foster social interaction and facilitate active transportation and community connectivity. Land use patterns within settlement areas shall be based on densities and a mix of land uses which support active transportation and are transit-supportive, where transit is planned, exists or may be developed.¹⁹

¹⁹ Policy 1.1.3.2

Transportation systems should be provided which are safe, energy efficient, facilitate the movement of people and goods, and are appropriate to address projected needs.²⁰ Efficient use should be made of existing and planned infrastructure, including through the use of transportation demand management strategies, where feasible.²¹ As part of a multimodal transportation system, connectivity within and among transportation systems and modes should be maintained and, where possible, improved including connections which cross jurisdictional boundaries.²² A land use pattern, density and mix of uses should be promoted that minimize the length and number of vehicle trips and support current and future use of transit and active transportation.²³ Transportation and land use considerations shall be integrated at all stages of the planning process.²⁴

The PPS supports long-term economic prosperity by providing for an efficient, cost-effective, reliable multimodal transportation system that is integrated with adjacent systems and those of other jurisdictions, and is appropriate to address projected needs to support the movement of goods and people.²⁵

Planning authorities shall support energy conservation and efficiency, improved air quality, reduced greenhouse gas emissions, and climate change adaptation through land use and development patterns which promote the use of active transportation and transit in and between residential, employment (including commercial and industrial) and institutional uses and other areas.²⁶

²⁰ Policy 1.6.7.1

²¹ Policy 1.6.7.2

²² Policy 1.6.7.3

²³ Policy 1.6.7.4

²⁴ Policy 1.6.7.5

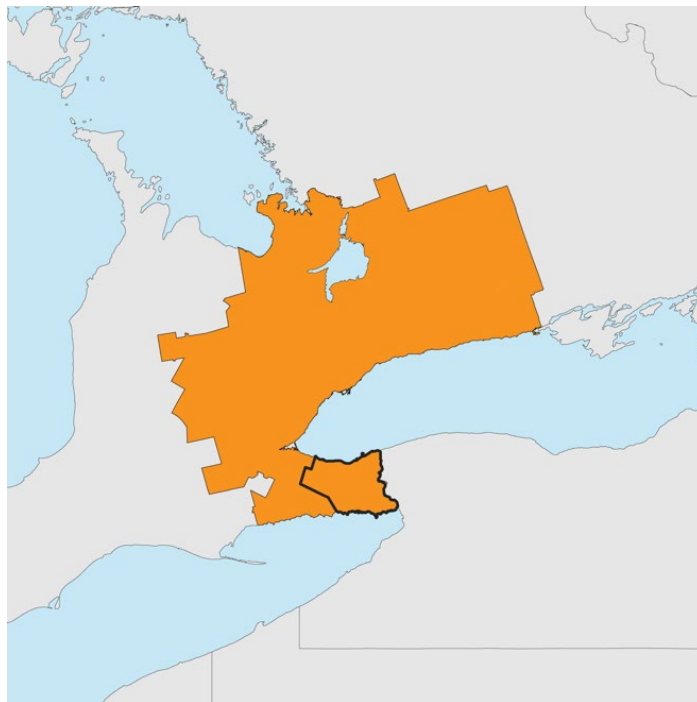
²⁵ Policy 1.7.1

²⁶ Policy 1.8.1

4.2 A Place to Grow: Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (2019)

POLICY REFERENCE: Section 3.2.2 (Transportation—General); Section 3.2.3 (Moving People)

A Place to Grow: Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, 2019 (Growth Plan), builds on the Provincial Policy Statement to establish a unique planning framework for the Greater Golden Horseshoe that supports the achievement of complete communities, a thriving economy, a clean and healthy environment, and social equity. It provides detailed policy direction across a range of issue areas, with an overarching principal being to support the achievement of complete communities that are designed to support healthy and active living and meet people’s needs for daily living throughout an entire lifetime. It does this by promoting intensification improving the integration of land use planning with investments in infrastructure and public service facilities, and providing for different approaches to manage growth that recognize the diversity of communities subject to this Plan. Comments, submissions or advice that affect a planning matter that are provided by the Council of a municipality, a local board, a planning board, a minister or ministry, board, commission or agency of the government “shall conform to” this Provincial policy document.



The Growth Plan indicates that the transportation system in the Greater Golden Horseshoe will be planned and managed to:

- Provide connectivity among transportation modes for moving people and for moving goods
- Offer a balance of transportation choices that reduces reliance upon the automobile and promotes transit and active transportation
- Be sustainable and reduce greenhouse gas emissions by encouraging the most financially and environmentally

appropriate mode for trip-making and supporting the use of zero- and low-emission vehicles

- Offer multimodal access to jobs, housing, schools, cultural, and recreational opportunities, and goods and services
- Accommodate agricultural vehicles and equipment, as appropriate and,

- Provide for the safety of system users²⁷

In the design, refurbishment, or reconstruction of the existing and planned street network, a complete streets approach will be adopted that ensures the needs and safety of all road users are considered and appropriately accommodated.²⁸ Municipalities will develop and implement transportation demand management policies in official plans or other planning documents.²⁹

Public transit will be the first priority for transportation infrastructure planning and major transportation investments.³⁰ Municipalities will work with transit operators, the Province, Metrolinx where applicable, and each other to support transit service integration within and across municipal boundaries.³¹

Municipalities will ensure that active transportation networks are comprehensive and integrated into transportation planning to provide:

- Safe, comfortable travel for pedestrians, bicyclists, and other users of active transportation.
- Continuous linkages between strategic growth areas, adjacent neighbourhoods, major trip generators, and transit stations, including dedicated lane space for bicyclists on the major street network, or other safe and convenient alternatives³².

4.3 Draft 2024 Provincial Planning Statement

On April 10, 2024, the Government of Ontario released the proposed Provincial Planning Statement 2024 (proposed PPS 2024). The proposed PPS 2024 would be a single, province-wide policy framework along with implementing legislative changes, which combines the PPS 2020 and Growth Plan into one consolidated policy. The changes proposed in the PPS 2024 represent fundamental changes in how growth planning is carried out in the province. At the time of writing this Discussion Paper, the public consultation stage had just closed (May 12, 2024). A number of elements of the proposed PPS 2024 will be discussed in each of the six Discussion Papers.

As it relates to transportation, this can be achieved through consideration of a number of proposed policies within the proposed PPS 2024. Specifically, the Province's vision proposes the following:

- Section 2.4.2.6:
 - a) All major transit station areas should be planned and designed to be transit-supportive and to achieve multimodal access to stations and connections to nearby major trip generators by providing, where feasible: connections to local and regional transit services to support transit service integration.

²⁷ Policy 3.2.2.2

²⁸ Policy 3.2.2.3

²⁹ Policy 3.2.2.4

³⁰ Policy 3.2.3.1

³¹ Policy 3.2.3.3

³² Policy 3.2.3.4

- b) infrastructure that accommodates a range of mobility needs and supports active transportation, including sidewalks, bicycle lanes, and secure bicycle parking.
- c) commuter pick-up/drop-off areas.
- Section 3.1.1:
 - a) Infrastructure and public service facilities shall be provided in an efficient manner while accommodating projected needs. Planning for infrastructure and public service facilities shall be coordinated and integrated with land use planning and growth management so that they: are financially viable over their life cycle, which may be demonstrated through asset management planning.
 - b) leverage the capacity of development proponents, where appropriate.
 - c) are available to meet current and projected needs.
- Section 3.2.1) Transportation systems should be provided which are safe, energy efficient, facilitate the movement of people and goods, are appropriate to address projected needs, and support the use of zero- and low-emission vehicles.
- Section 3.2.2) Efficient use should be made of existing and planned infrastructure, including through the use of transportation demand management strategies, where feasible.
- Section 3.2.3) As part of a multimodal transportation system, connectivity within and among transportation systems and modes should be planned for, maintained and, where possible, improved including connections which cross jurisdictional boundaries.
- Section 3.3.1) Planning authorities shall plan for and protect corridors and rights-of-way for infrastructure, including transportation, transit and electricity generation facilities and transmission systems to meet current and projected needs.
- Section 3.3.4) The preservation and reuse of abandoned corridors for purposes that maintain the corridor's integrity and continuous linear characteristics should be encouraged, wherever feasible.
- Section 3.9.1a) Healthy, active, and inclusive communities should be promoted by: planning public streets, spaces and facilities to be safe, meet the needs of persons of all ages and abilities, including pedestrians, foster social interaction and facilitate active transportation and community connectivity.
- Section 3.9.1b) Planning and providing for the needs of persons of all ages and abilities in the distribution of a full range of publicly-accessible built and natural settings for recreation, including facilities, parklands, public spaces, open space areas, trails and linkages, and, where practical, water-based resources.

4.4 Metrolinx 2041 Regional Transportation Plan

Metrolinx's 2041 Regional Transportation Plan serves as the overarching transportation planning document for The Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area (GTHA) which was developed to support the visions and goals set out in the Provincial Growth Plan.

The 2041 Plan outlines the comprehensive vision for regional and local governments, and transit agencies across the GTHA by providing them with the necessary framework to create an integrated transportation system that encourages multi-modal transit for a growing Region. The noted goals within the 2041 Plan include achieving strong connections, complete travel experience, and sustainable and healthy communities. There is alignment with the City's guiding principles of equity and accessibility by providing reliable, affordable transport particularly for older persons and low-income residents.

4.5 Niagara Region Transportation Master Plan (2017)

The purpose of the Niagara Region Transportation Master Plan is to assist with the growth and development of a sustainable Niagara Region by improving and addressing challenges to the transportation network through the implementation of long-term strategies and goals. The overall vision planned for Niagara Region in that document is to prioritize economic development, support population growth, and improve the Region's position globally.

The Regional Transportation Master Plan provides a critical framework for realizing the Region's vision through a discussion of the existing transportation network, the transportation needs/opportunities to ensure the desired outcomes, improvements to public and active transportation, goods movements, and an implementation plan. The Plan also focuses on a complete street approach which aligns with the aforementioned guiding principles by ensuring the public right of way is designed to be equitable, supportive of multi-modal transportation, and inclusive to people of all ages and abilities.

4.6 Niagara Region Official Plan (2022)

The Niagara Region Official Plan (2022) is a regional planning document which defines the goals and objectives of the region over a 30-year period. The goals and objective of the Regional Official Plan includes exceptional development and communities; a diverse array of housing types and employment opportunities; a thriving economy with an emphasis on agriculture and employment areas; and fostering resilient urban and natural areas against climate change.

The core Transportation policies within the Regional Official Plan are found in Part 5, Section 5.1. Transportation is a key component for the Region to accommodate forecasted population and employment growth through collaboration with local municipalities, partnering with agencies and various public entities to provide safe, accessible, and convenient transportation systems, and ensuring multimodal transportation system are affordable. The Regional Official Plan also recognizes the important role of transportation systems for improving social equity and economic

competitiveness, as well as reducing greenhouse gas emissions and addressing the impacts of climate change.

There are seven main objectives for the Region's multi-modal transportation systems:

1. Coordinating transportation systems planning, land use planning, and strategic investments in infrastructure;
2. Support a connected and convenient public transit network throughout the Niagara Region through the establishment of a Regional Transit Commission;
3. Enhance transit service to provide increased connectivity throughout the region;
4. Create and enhance interconnected active transportation systems;
5. Support the implementation of complete streets, with consideration for varying priorities and objectives at Regional and local levels;
6. Ensure Regional roads accommodate future growth and support diverse forms of transportation; and
7. Provide the safe and efficient movement of goods to support the regional economy.³³

Section 5.1.1 outlines how the Region's Transportation System will be implemented based on recommendations within the Region's Transportation Master Plan and other relevant provincial plans and policies and will also ensure the necessary infrastructure is available to support growth and adjust to climate change. The Region will collaborate with the Province and local municipalities to improve and protect planned corridors such as the Niagara-Hamilton Trade Corridor and the North-South Niagara Escarpment Corridor by ensuring development applications do not negatively impact their purpose.³⁴ Where the Federal government is involved, the Region will coordinate with them, the province and public stakeholders to improve connectivity between GO and Regional Transit, efficiency and safety of the Provincial Highway system, and create linkages between Regional Transit and the Niagara Park Commission's systems.³⁵

Regional transportation planning will prioritize public transit to address climate change, social equity, access to major transit station areas, and reduce car dependency. In support of population and employment growth the region will expand public transit and ensure the Region's Transit Commission is consulted on integrating land use planning and public transit. Public transit, where feasible, will service low-density areas and provide high order transit to service settlement areas, as well as promote intensification and connecting the population to the Greater Toronto Hamilton Area. Plans for establishing a West Niagara transit Terminal will be examined. To achieve public transit objectives, the Region recognizes the importance of collaborating with the province, local municipalities and Metrolinx.³⁶

³³ Section 5.1

³⁴ Sections 5.1.1.3, 5.1.1.4 and 5.1.1.17

³⁵ Sections 5.1.1.5, 5.1.1.6, 5.1.1.8 and 5.1.1.9

³⁶ Section 5.1.2

An interconnected active transit system is integral to a growing economy and will provide linkages between neighbourhoods and strategic growth areas, employment lands, transit stations, public institutions and facilities, and tourism areas. The Region will implement both the Strategic Cycling Network Plan and Niagara Bikeways Master Plan to support local municipalities by extending and connecting the regions bicycle network. The region will also work with the Ministry of transportation and the Niagara Parks Commission to provide and improve active transportation.³⁷

The Niagara Official Plan calls for a Complete Streets approach to be implemented within local municipalities to ensure transportation systems are safe and can accommodate all road users. The Niagara Region Complete Streets Design Manual and guidelines are to be used as a starting point for this work, or where local municipalities lack complete street guidelines. Local municipalities shall also maintain complete street elements and must include the Region's Complete Street Guidelines as documentation within Request for the Proposal process for Municipal Class Environmental Assessments.³⁸

The Region's is able, under the Planning Act, to acquire lands from landowners for future growth and to support diverse forms of transportation. This section also outlines guidelines for road widening, the studies and procedures needed for developing near regional roads, goods movement corridors, and how active transportation and public transit facilities are planned and protected. Regarding agriculture areas construction and expansion of transportation infrastructure require the preparation of an agricultural impact assessment as part of the MCEA.³⁹

In support of the Region's economic expansion major goods movement facilities and corridors shall be protected and development proposals near these facilities and corridors shall be subject to Policies 4.2.4.2 and 4.2.4.3 of the Regional Official Plan. The Region in partnership with the province and local municipalities will implement goods movement facilities and corridors adhering to guidelines notably the Region's Transportation Master Plan. Using the Goods Movements Study routes will be identified for goods movement to economic zones and employment areas while lands adjacent these routes are to avoid adverse impacts to goods movement facilities and corridors. Transportation systems will be implemented to accommodate agricultural vehicles while the Region will advocate for highway improvements to address trade demands.⁴⁰

4.7 Niagara Region Complete Streets Guidelines (2017)

The Niagara Region Complete Streets Guidelines build on the complete street objectives outlined in the Niagara Region Transportation Master Plan by providing a set of guidelines for the design, land use planning, and transportation planning of the Regions "Complete Corridors". Complete Corridors refer to Regional roads and adjacent land uses that are planned to accommodate overall vision of the Region. Similar to the Region's Transportation Master Plan, the Region's Complete

³⁷ Section 5.1.3

³⁸ Section 5.1.4

³⁹ Section 5.1.5

⁴⁰ Section 5.1.6

Street Guidelines reflect the ideals of a connected and mobile city by ensuring streets are designed to be equitably, support multi-modal transportation, and are age and ability inclusive.

4.8 Niagara Region and Niagara Falls Economic Development Strategies

The Region of Niagara 2022-2032 Economic Development Strategy entitled “Inspire, Invest, Grow”, sets out a 10 year roadmap to achieve its economic development initiatives. The 2024-2029 Niagara Falls Economic Development Strategy identifies place-based assets as an important feature of economic development. The “International City” Discussion Paper speaks more about this strategy. The “Attractive City” Discussion Paper speaks to the importance of quality-of-life matters. How people and goods move through and in the City is key to improving and maintaining a high standard of living here.

Both Strategies are extensively discussed in the International City Discussion Paper, and elevate the importance of well-developed transportation—to Niagara Falls and within Niagara Falls—as a key plank in a robust economic development strategy.

4.9 City of Niagara Falls Official Plan

The City of Niagara Falls Official Plan (1993) is a municipal planning document which defines the goals and objectives of the city over a 20-year period including growth directions, the development of urban areas, the protection and conservation of agricultural lands and natural heritage, and the infrastructure needed to accommodate both employment and population growth in a sustainable manner.

The core Transportation policies within the Official Plan are found in Part 3, Section 1.5. Transportation is a key component to the city achieving its growth objective through the promotion of car-mode alternatives such as public transit, walking, and cycling, and the development of a transit and pedestrian friendly city that focuses on sustainable design. The Official Plan supports the creation of a Mobile City by providing guidelines on how street systems should be built, and by reducing the dependency on passenger vehicles by supporting multi-modal transportation options for travel.

There are four components of the system:

1. Transportation corridors: rail corridors, provincial highways and the arterial road system. These corridors are the primary conveyors of goods and people within, into and out of the city.⁴¹
2. Public transit, with a direction to provide a system meeting the needs of residents and tourists including, “inner-city buses, inter-city bus rapid transit and a tourist peplemover.” The Plan set a modal share target for public transit of 3.2%.⁴²

⁴¹ Part 3, Sections 1.5.1 to 1.5.4

⁴² Part 2, Sections 1.5.5 through 1.5.11

3. Active transportation facilities, in the form of bicycle or shared use lanes, paved shoulders of rural roads, off-road recreational trails, bicycle parking facilities and sidewalks—to the extent that is financially feasible.⁴³ There is also a policy to, “endeavour to achieve connectivity of off-road trails with the goal of creating an inner-City trail system that links residential, employment and recreational areas.”⁴⁴ Sidewalks on certain roadways will be provided where required for the safety and convenience of pedestrians (and Council may undertake and continually update a detailed sidewalk construction and maintenance programs).⁴⁵ The dedication of trails may be required as a condition of development approval.⁴⁶ New development will be encouraged to provide bicycle parking and other facilities to accommodate active transportation, and the City will provide

bicycle facilities within its own buildings.⁴⁷

4. Collector and local road network. The City defines a hierarchy of roads and functions, including Provincial highways (under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Transportation), Niagara Parkway (under the jurisdiction of the Niagara Parks Commission), international crossings (having Federal and Provincial jurisdiction as appropriate, plus liaison with the peer American agencies), arterial roads (defined as moving high volumes of traffic between major land uses in the city), collector roads (defined as accommodate moderate to high volumes of medium distance traffic between arterial and local roads), and local roads (defined as providing access to abutting properties and carry traffic predominantly of a local nature).⁴⁸

The Plan also specifies dimensions and design requirements for these roads, and also for pedestrian or bicycle pathways and public transit rights-of-way, and the lands can be required to be dedicated to the City through a development application (plan of subdivision for the active transportation requirements).⁴⁹

Council shall cooperate with the Niagara Region to designate, maintain, monitor and improve truck routes to accommodate the safe and efficient movement of truck traffic while prohibiting the penetration of non-essential trucking into residential areas.⁵⁰ Development proposes shall have regard to the impact

The current Official Plan identifies two planned functions for roads in Section 1.5.20: an efficient, functional vehicular network and an attractive, pedestrian-friendly public space.

⁴³ Part 3, Section 1.5.12

⁴⁴ Part 3, Section 1.5.13

⁴⁵ Part 3, Section 1.5.14

⁴⁶ Part 3, Section 1.5.15

⁴⁷ Part 3, Section 1.5.16

⁴⁸ Part 3, Section 1.5.18 through 23

⁴⁹ Part 3, Section 1.5.24

⁵⁰ Part 3, Section 1.5.28

of such development on the established road system.⁵¹

Official plans also contain dimension and design requirements for road rights-of-way. There are over 200 individual right-of-way dimensions specified in the current official plan, in addition to daylight triangle requirements (for sightline protection at road intersections).⁵² The local road widths are set at 20 metres.⁵³

There are additional policies and design requirements contained in the multiple secondary plans in the city. For example, the Transit Station Secondary Plan covering the historic Downtown Niagara Falls has its own road classification hierarchy and right-of-way widths, which apply in place of the parent policies. The result is a wide variation of transportation-related policy requirements and standards applicable to different portions of the city.

The City of Niagara Falls has several ongoing transportation studies, including the Transportation Master Plan, Trails and Active Transportation Master Plan, Parking Strategy Plan, Downtown Parking Utilization Study, and Parking Rate/Zoning Review. As this project's work progresses, any recommendations from these ongoing City studies will be reviewed and incorporated as required.

⁵¹ Part 3, Section 1.5.29

⁵² Part 3, Section 1.5.34

⁵³ Part 3, Section 1.5.36

4.10 City of Niagara Falls Transportation Master Plan and Trails and Active Transportation Master Plan (2024)

The City of Niagara Falls is currently undertaking a Transportation Master Plan (TMP) and a Trails and Active Transportation Master Plan (TATMP). The TMP will focus on the multi-modal needs of the City, outline a strategic transportation vision, and provide recommendations to shape and support growth as the City expands.

The vision of the TMP is:

To support the development of a safe, connected, equitable, and accessible multi-modal transportation system that supports the local economy by improving intra-city travel and the tourist experience.

The TMP will follow Phases 1 and 2 of the Municipal Class Environmental Assessment Process and will provide recommendations for future projects. Several objectives were identified for the TMP, which include:

1. Promote network connections to areas of growth, neighbouring municipalities, and key economic corridors.
2. Enhance the experience in the Tourist Area by improving wayfinding, reducing congestion points, and ensuring many alternative modal choices are available.
3. Integrate it with other City initiatives and with the Region's strategic plans.
4. Promote a safe, equitable and accessible transportation network available to all.
5. Develop an improvement and implementation plan and schedule that meets with the City's capital programming schedule.
6. Ensure that the City staff have a monitoring program that allows for regular reporting of achievements from the TMP and for adjusting the implementation plan accordingly.

The vision for the TATMP is:

To cultivate a safe, connected, equitable, and accessible active transportation system that responds to the diverse needs of all users while supporting the local economy, enhancing the tourist experience, encouraging active modes of transportation, and ensuring connections to key destinations, contributing to a more vibrant, sustainable city.

Both Plans are currently ongoing, with final documents scheduled by the end of 2024. It is recognized that the multi-modal transportation system is comprehensively and regularly reviewed as part of the master plan process. The policies developed are intended to support and facilitate the actions and prioritized projects identified within the master plans. Transportation policies within the Official Plan should be reviewed to ensure that they are up to date and reflective of best practices and new technologies/initiatives as recommended by the master plans.

4.11 City of Niagara Falls Zoning By-laws

The City of Niagara Falls Zoning By-law is a policy document, which is a tool the city has to help them determine how land is used, where buildings and structures can be located, and what type of buildings and structures can be erected. The Zoning By-law also determines such things as lot sizes and dimensions, building heights and density, required setbacks from the street, and parking and loading requirements.

The City's four zoning by-laws each contains standards with respect to parking and loading spaces, as well as bicycle parking requirements. Barrier-free parking requirements are found in a stand-alone By-law 2009-44. The Niagara Region Official Plan identified Downtown Niagara Falls as a Protected Major Transit Station Area and Regional Growth Centre. Depending on the final form of the draft 2024 PPS, it may be that there shall be no minimum parking space requirement permitted in this area.

4.12 City of Niagara Falls Sustainable Transportation Master Plan (2011)

The 2011 Sustainable Transportation Master Plan is a planning document that outlines the long-term transportation vision of the City through a set of policy frameworks and strategies aimed at addressing and improving the mobility challenges facing persons. The vision outlined in the 2011 Transportation Master Plan is to create a city that is inclusive, thriving, and sustainable which aligns with the initial vision for Our Niagara Falls Plan of a connected and mobile city.

To realize this vision, the City's Sustainable Transportation Master Plan has outlined the following goals and objectives which includes:

- Optimize the Transportation System
- Promote Transportation Choice
- Foster a Strong Economy
- Support Sustainable Development and Growth

The 2011 Sustainable Transportation Master Plan provides a summary of the existing transportation conditions, future travel needs and opportunities of the city based on future travel demand, Transportation Demand Management programs to address travel needs, recommendations to enhance and create a more sustainable transportation network, and lastly implementation strategies.

4.13 City of Niagara Falls Tourism District Transportation Connectivity Study (2024)

The Tourism District Transportation Connectivity Study was developed by the City of Niagara Falls as a tool to support both the growth of the tourism industry and the objectives of industry stakeholders through the implementation of a Tourism Transportation System. The Study, which builds upon the Niagara Falls People Mover Environmental Assessment (2000), proposes that a new transit line should be constructed to improve visitor connectivity to GO Transit services, major tourist hubs such as Fallsview Casino, Casino Niagara, and Marineland, and WEGO bus transit services. The study also looks to improve pedestrian connectivity by identifying areas to implement pedestrian bridges to further encourage year-round travel.

Development of the Tourism Transportation System was guided by stakeholder engagement which included interviews, consultation workshops, and presentations. Based on stakeholder feedback and key assumptions gathered from the engagement process seven objectives were defined for the Tourism Transportation System:

1. Provide an affordable and enjoyable way to travel with iconic views, address congestion, and ensure transit vehicles and stations are seen as an attraction.
2. Connect the Tourism Transportation System to GO Transit services and the WEGO bus system to take more advantage of the Ontario Market.
3. Connect the Tourism Transportation System to tourist attractions and destinations/big events.
4. Support improved walkability at street level and facilitate indoor links to transit stops.
5. Ensure the Tourism Transportation System is accessible and inclusive with supportive staff to better serve the needs of visitors.
6. Support businesses by attracting investment and repeat visitors as well as provide connections to Lundy's Lane.
7. Ensure the proposed transit line assists in the city meeting its sustainability goals.

The Study further provided an assessment of the different alignment options for the proposed Tourism Transportation System, the technology the system would use such as a rail-based or Aerial Gondola technology, possible areas for maintenance and storage facilities, and a high-level analysis of the cost to each alignment option and transportation technology to be used.

In support of the Tourism Transportation System the Study presented improvements to both the existing transit network and provided a summary of the proposed pedestrian corridors that will connect the implemented transit line. Focus on the transit network involved an analysis of the WEGO bus network including possible route modifications and existing WEGO policies intended on improving the network's performance to decrease car dependency. The proposed pedestrian corridor in support of the Transportation System was also discussed which included potential station locations to serve key destinations, and enhancements to the streetscape.

4.14 City of Niagara Falls Climate Adaptation Plan

The City of Niagara Falls Climate Change Adaptation Implementation Plan was unanimously approved by City Council in September 2023. The vision of this Plan is Niagara Falls will reduce greenhouse gas emissions and be a resilient, climate-ready city working proactively to promote sustainable practices, preserve and enhance our natural beauty and assets, and take continued action to support residents and visitors to adapt to climate change.

The Plan identifies 41 climate goals and 89 sub-goals. This framework will offer a road map that will guide the City and its partners in the coming months and years to better prepare for and mitigate climate change effects in Niagara Falls.

While this Plan is summarized more fully in the Green and Resilient City Discussion Paper, a number of items do apply with respect to mobility, including:

- Updating historical intensity-duration frequency curves (describe the likelihood of a range of extreme rainfall events) to support infrastructure planning work (Action 7)
- Improve the resiliency and sustainability of transportation infrastructure (Action 10)
- Updating parking lot bylaws to reduce parking requirements and require a minimum amount of permeable surface and green infrastructure and trees in order to provide on-site stormwater management and shade, and promote alternative transportation (Action 14)

4.15 Niagara Parks Strategic Plan and Queen Victoria Park Concept Master Plan

The Niagara Parks Commission maintains a pair of plans with relevance to this Discussion Paper:

- The Niagara Parks Strategic Plan, a 10-year plan (2018-2028) with the mandate of preserving and promoting the cultural and natural history of the Niagara River and adjacent parklands while also supporting business opportunities through attracting investments, connection to local communities, job creation and economic well-being, and enhancing the user experiences, services and hospitality.
- The Queen Victoria Park Concept Master Plan (2018) provides a vision for Queen Victoria Park at the falls itself, as well as the area between Kinsgbridge Park to Rainbow Gardens. The Master Plan notes many opportunities for better pedestrian mobility, safe and secure areas, and improved pedestrian circulation which also aligns the envisioned guiding principles. (More on this Plan and its importance to the landscape of Niagara Falls is provided in the Cultural City Discussion Paper.)

Considerations to improve connectivity to the Niagara Parks has been outlined in the Strategic Plan which includes coordination between the various transportation actors such as WEGO, Metrolinx, VIA/Amtrak, Niagara Regional Transit, a reduction in car use to enhance the user experience, a

balanced approach to parking, and integration with the road network and airports. Likewise, the Queen Victoria Park Concept Master Plan identifies opportunities to expand the existing shuttle service, cycling infrastructure (including repair stations), and bicycle rental. It also identifies current pathways and opportunities for WEGO infrastructure improvements and intersection and drop-off improvements to support private vehicle circulation and pedestrian priority.

It is noted that access to and control over the road is under the jurisdiction of the Niagara Parks Commission. In the Queen Victoria Park Concept Master Plan, road cross-sections were identified for various segments of the Niagara River Parkway within the Park's borders. They show how the limited road corridor can support multiple forms of transportation.

5

Next Steps

The six Discussion Papers have been prepared as a basis for starting the process of public engagement and engaging stakeholder feedback on the path forward for Our Niagara Falls Plan. These papers are not intended to answer any questions—quite the opposite. The hope and goal for these papers is to stimulate discussion and generate ideas to consider when preparing the new Official Plan.

The project team will be preparing a “What We Heard” engagement summary report that captured the feedback received and discussion generated by this report.

The next product in this exercise is the Policy Options Report. Research generated by the project team plus the above public feedback will inform a deeper discussion on several issue areas that an official plan generally governs. The project team will be back later this year to engage on these questions and obtain more ideas to shape Our Niagara Falls Plan itself.