

4. Supporting Waterloo Region's Business Community

Much of Waterloo Region's high quality of life is attributable to its strong, diversified economy. Maintaining and enhancing economic strength in a globally competitive, knowledge-based economy demands that the Region collaborate with Area Municipalities and other private and public sector partners to ensure that Waterloo Region's economy is adaptable, innovative and creative. This effort will require on-going support not only for manufacturing, but also for sectors such as: high technology; post-secondary education; automotive; advanced manufacturing; business/financial; biotechnology and life sciences; environmental engineering, planning and management; agriculture and food processing; logistics and transportation; and construction.

The policies in this Chapter recognize the Region's traditional economic development support roles including: the planning and management of *infrastructure* to address the transportation, water supply, wastewater and waste management needs of the business community; ensuring that there are adequate quantities of strategically located *employment areas* available to accommodate forecast employment growth; advocating for Provincial and Federal government support assistance for key initiatives; and providing stable, long-term financial support for the world-wide marketing of Waterloo Region.

This Plan recognizes the important relationship between quality of life and economic prosperity. Communities that are vibrant, environmentally healthy and culturally diverse are not only great places to live, but they also attract people, jobs and new investment. This vision is reflected in this Plan through a broad range of policies that protect the environment, promote cultural heritage, coordinate *reurbanization*-oriented financial incentive programs and provide employment support services that help maximize the potential for employment and entrepreneurship.

Overall Goal – Collaborate with Area Municipalities, Canada's Technology Triangle Inc. and other stakeholders to foster a diverse, innovative and globally competitive regional economy.

Objectives:

Accommodate forecasted employment growth using a balanced approach to the provision and development of *employment areas* within both the Built-Up Area and Urban and Township Designated Greenfield Areas.

- 4.1 Ensure provision of required transportation *infrastructure* to accommodate forecasted growth, enhance the efficient movement of goods and improve access to employment and market opportunities for businesses and residents.
- 4.2 Ensure timely provision and maintenance of water supply, wastewater and waste management *infrastructure* to accommodate forecasted growth.

- 4.3 Provide a broad range of accessible employment opportunities throughout Waterloo Region, and maintain a competitive advantage in attracting and retaining people, jobs and investment.
- 4.4 Promote Waterloo Region as a leader in environmentally friendly business practices and as a centre of environmental consulting, products, research and services expertise.

4.A Employment Areas

- 4.A.1 The Region will plan to provide a supply of employment lands sufficient to accommodate the forecasted employment growth for Waterloo Region for the planning horizon of this Plan. Most of these lands will be located within existing employment areas and areas designated Prime Industrial/Strategic Reserve.
 - 4.A.2 The Region will continue to collaborate with Area Municipalities, the Grand River Conservation Authority and other stakeholders to undertake the planning and infrastructure studies necessary to support the strategic development of *employment areas* in the vicinity of the Region of Waterloo International Airport to ensure these lands are readily available for development upon justification being established to bring them into the Urban Area.
 - 4.A.3 Area Municipalities are encouraged to designate and preserve lands within the Urban Area and Township Urban Areas in the vicinity of existing major highway interchanges, rail yards, or the Region of Waterloo International Airport as *employment areas*, where appropriate.
 - 4.A.4 The Region and Area Municipalities will collaborate with the *Province* as required to identify provincially strategic *employment areas* to help maintain and enhance the Greater Golden Horseshoe's position in the global economy.
 - 4.A.5 Area Municipalities may permit redesignation of lands within existing *employment areas* to non-employment uses only through a *municipal comprehensive review* where it has been demonstrated that:
 - (a) there is a need for the redesignation;
 - (b) the Area Municipality will meet the employment forecast allocated to it pursuant to this Plan;
 - (c) the redesignation will not adversely affect the viability of the subject *employment area*, and achievement of the *reurbanization* target, density targets and other policies in this Plan;
 - (d) there is existing or planned *infrastructure* to accommodate the proposed redesignation;
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- (e) the lands are not required over the long-term for the employment purposes for which they are currently designated; and
 - (f) cross-jurisdictional issues have been considered.
- 4.A.6 Policy 4.A.5 only applies to existing *employment areas* that are not designated as an Urban Growth Centre, a Township Urban Growth Centre or areas identified by Area Municipalities as regeneration areas consistent with Provincial policies.
- 4.A.7 For the purposes of implementing Policy 4.A.5, non-employment uses will include *retail commercial centres*. Area Municipalities may establish policies in their official plans to further restrict the conversion of employment lands to non-employment uses.
- 4.A.8 The Region will facilitate the *reurbanization* of lands for employment uses through enhanced *development* review processes, financial incentive programs and the provision of physical *infrastructure* and *community infrastructure* that supports the Planned Community Structure of this Plan.
- 4.B Planning and Managing Physical Infrastructure**
- 4.B.1 The Region of Waterloo International Airport will be planned, managed and promoted as an integral element in moving people and goods to and from Waterloo Region.
- 4.B.2 The Region will continue to partner with the *Province* to plan for the provision of GO Transit and enhanced VIA Rail passenger service between Waterloo Region and the communities within the Greater Golden Horseshoe.
- 4.B.3 The Region will continue to advocate for the provision of high-speed rail passenger service between Waterloo Region and other communities in the Windsor-Quebec City Corridor.
- 4.B.4 The Region will continue to advocate for improvements to the *Provincial Highway* system to support more effective movement of people and goods within and beyond Waterloo Region.
- 4.B.5 The Region will continue to collaborate with agencies and transportation service providers to coordinate and optimize rail-based goods movement systems.
- 4.B.6 The Region will plan, build and maintain Regional Roads to support more effective movement of people and goods within and beyond Waterloo Region.
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- 4.B.7 The Region will plan to enhance transit service to key *employment areas*.
- 4.B.8 The Region will plan and manage water supply, wastewater treatment and waste management facilities and programs to ensure that they reflect existing and forecasted employment needs.

4.C Collaborative Partnerships

- 4.C.1 The Region will provide information, research, financial and in-kind support as appropriate to assist Canada's Technology Triangle Inc., in marketing Waterloo Region to the world.
- 4.C.2 The Region will work with other levels of government and private sector stakeholders on immigrant attraction and retention initiatives intended to further expand and strengthen Waterloo Region's workforce.
- 4.C.3 The Region recognizes that Conestoga College, the University of Waterloo and Wilfrid Laurier University support and enhance the competitiveness of the regional economy through research and development, innovation and the provision of skilled employees. Accordingly, the Region will support initiatives that strengthen these post-secondary education institutions and their linkages with the business community.
- 4.C.4 The Region, in collaboration with Area Municipalities, the business community, other levels of government and post-secondary institutions will, whenever feasible, help businesses adapt quickly and effectively to significant structural changes in the global economy and/or changes in international monetary or trade policy.
- 4.C.5 The Region will collaborate with Area Municipalities and the development industry in the planning and building of a range of housing, in terms of type and affordability, that supports the diverse needs of Waterloo Region.
- 4.C.6 The Region will support arts, culture and heritage initiatives that help make Waterloo Region a distinctive and unique place to live, work, visit and invest.
- 4.C.7 The Region will undertake and support healthy community initiatives that promote a healthy workforce.
- 4.C.8 The Region will provide pre-employment and employment programs that encourage inclusive employment opportunities for marginalized populations.

4.D Environment and Business

- 4.D.1 The Region, in collaboration with the business community, other levels of government and post-secondary institutions, will promote research and innovation in areas such as adaptation to climate change, water supply, efficient water use and re-use, air quality improvement, energy conservation, waste reduction and management, and ecological restoration.
- 4.D.2 *Employment areas* will, wherever possible, be designed and (re)developed to fully implement the overall goals, objectives and policies of this Plan.
- 4.D.3 New and existing businesses that use large quantities of water and/or discharge large amounts of wastewater requiring treatment will be discouraged from locating or expanding in Waterloo Region.
- 4.D.4 The Region will be a leader in corporate environmental *sustainability* through implementation of the Regional Environmental Sustainability Strategy and associated community outreach programs.
- 4.D.5 The Region will encourage new and renovated residential, office, industrial and commercial buildings and site design to be constructed to progressive environmental certification standards.
- 4.D.6 The Region will support the creation of an eco-business network with business and community stakeholders for the purpose of helping businesses share information as to how they can reduce their impact on the environment.