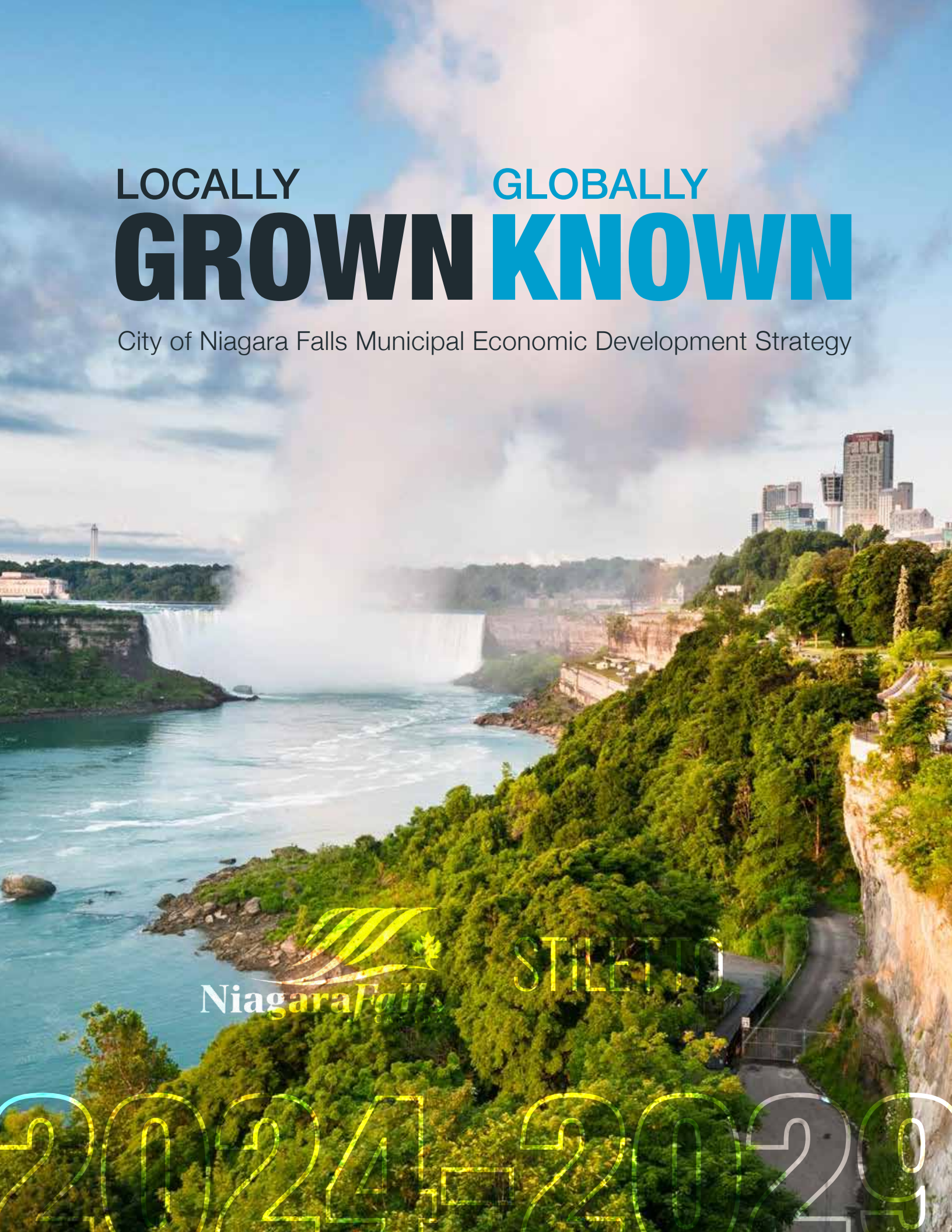


LOCALLY

GLOBALLY

# GROWN KNOWN

City of Niagara Falls Municipal Economic Development Strategy



STILETTO

2024-2029



## LOCALLY GROWN

A diverse and vibrant population drives the Niagara Falls economy, which is fuelled by local businesses, multinational companies, and a long tradition of agriculture and manufacturing in the region. An increasing focus on local entrepreneurship and innovation is attracting a new population that is eager to put down roots and contribute to the City's success.

## GLOBALLY KNOWN

Niagara Falls has a worldwide profile for its stunning beauty and many tourist attractions. Enhancing its international brand is its location on the US-Canada border, which is ideal for international trade, tourism, and education.

# INTRODUCTION

Niagara Falls has a global profile as a tourist destination that attracts millions of visitors each year. Beyond its well-known brand, the City of Niagara Falls offers local residents, business owners, and potential investors a community with cultural and economic strengths.

A valuable mix of natural resources, economic assets, and cultural and social diversity provide Niagara Falls with enormous opportunities to build on past successes and realize its potential as one of North America's most dynamic and successful cities. Working together with education, industry, and government stakeholders, the City can mobilize the full range of its assets towards a Niagara Falls that is Locally Grown and Globally Known.



The five-year Municipal Economic Development Strategy for the City of Niagara Falls identifies strategic opportunities and articulates a clear vision and focus for the City for 2024-29. The plan identifies priority sectors that reflect core strengths and emerging opportunities: tourism, advanced manufacturing (including EV batteries and other clean energy supporting technologies), ICT, and health (with a focus on health innovation). The plan leverages these sectors with activities in four pillars: Diversify Economy, Retain and Grow Existing Businesses, Strengthen Ecosystem, and Expand Niagara Falls. These pillars offer the City a compelling framework to structure its activities and accelerate its economic impact.



# PURPOSE

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The five-year Municipal Economic Development Strategy for the City of Niagara Falls identifies strategic opportunities and articulates a clear vision and focus for the City.

In each of the pillars, actions are proposed to seize, diversify, retain, and attract new investment, job creation and wealth generation in the City of Niagara Falls.

# VISION

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NEXT GENERATION

# Economic Development

The City of Niagara Falls is a thriving and prosperous city that is locally grown and globally known.

# **BUILDING THE NEXT GENERATION OF NIAGARA FALLS ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

The City of Niagara Falls Economic Development Strategy was created through a collaborative approach, including:

**236**  
STAKEHOLDERS  
CONSULTED

**185**  
SURVEY RESPONSES  
GATHERED

**4**  
FOCUS  
GROUPS  
COMPLETED

**26**  
INTERVIEWS  
COMPLETED

OVER  
**5,000**  
DATA  
POINTS  
COLLECTED

# WHY NOW?

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The City of Niagara Falls is at an important crossroads in its development. A changing social and environmental landscape, along with landmark health, clean technology, and postsecondary developments, will bring many opportunities for economic growth.

# RESPONDING TO COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic had a disproportionate effect on businesses and workers in the community. Between 2019 and 2020, the City's population saw significant decreases in employment income as a result of halted tourism activity. Workers in Niagara Falls were 56.7 percent more likely than other Canadians to lose 30 percent or more of their employment income.<sup>1</sup> As the

economy continues to bounce back, now is the time to stabilize the tourism sector with a broader range of products to support the overall resilience of the economy. The City will also increase its economic prosperity and its long-term sustainability by selecting priority sectors and building these up to add diversity to the City's economic portfolio.

## MAKING NIAGARA FALLS A MUSIC DESTINATION

The music sector in Niagara Falls makes significant contributions to the social and economic fabric of the City by providing a vehicle for cross-cultural expression, creating jobs, encouraging tourism, and strengthening the City's brand. To fully optimize the power of music as both a cultural asset and an economic engine, the City of Niagara Falls is working with Sound Diplomacy to develop a comprehensive strategy that will position the City as a music destination. The strategy aims to create a sense of community across the music industry in the City of Niagara Falls, develop an identity for the City as the "Entertainment Capital of Canada," and strengthen the music ecosystem with a framework of policies and funding that enhance music assets, grow tourism, increase career opportunities, and attract a young, diverse workforce to the region.



<sup>1</sup> "Changes in Income Before and After the COVID-19 Pandemic by 2019 Income Rank, Age, and Gender: Canada, Provinces and Territories, Census Divisions, and Census Subdivisions," Statistics Canada, December 15, 2022, <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/t1/tbl1/en/tv.action?pid=9810009101>



# SUPPORTING GREATER INCOME EQUALITY

As of 2020, close to half of City of Niagara Falls residents (46.3%) earned less than \$20,000 in employment income per year (among those receiving employment income).<sup>2</sup> By contrast, 12.8 percent of residents earned more than \$100,000 per year.<sup>3</sup> For comparison, in the same year (2020), only 34.0 percent of Canadians and 33.7 percent of Ontarians with employment income received less than \$20,000.<sup>4</sup> To

compare, in 2019, prior to the outbreak of COVID-19, the median employment income among recipients in Niagara Falls was \$31,200.<sup>5</sup> Through education, business, and employment initiatives, the Municipal Economic Development Strategy will help lift more residents out of poverty and foster a more equitable community across the City.

# PROMOTING ECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

The City of Niagara Falls will soon adopt key strategic pillars (2023-27), which include economic diversity and growth, along with sustainability. Providing strong support for these goals, the falls are one of the world's greatest sources of clean, renewable energy. Leveraging its natural resources and clean tech

expertise and assets, the City of Niagara Falls has been selected as the first Ontario site for large-scale hydrogen production.<sup>6</sup> The Niagara Hydrogen Centre, operated by Atura Power (a subsidiary of Ontario Power Generation), is expected to come online in 2024.

<sup>2</sup> "Profile Table Census Profile, 2021 Census of Population," Statistics Canada, December 6, 2022, <https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2021/dp-pd/prof/details/page.cfm?Lang=E&SearchText=Ontario&DGUIDlist=2021A00053526043,2021A00053526053,2021A000235&GENDERlist=1,2,3&STATISTIClist=1&HEADERlist=0>

<sup>3</sup> "Profile Table Census Profile, 2021 Census of Population," Statistics Canada, December 6, 2022, <https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2021/dp-pd/prof/details/page.cfm?Lang=E&SearchText=Ontario&DGUIDlist=2021A00053526043,2021A00053526053,2021A000235&GENDERlist=1,2,3&STATISTIClist=1&HEADERlist=0>

<sup>4</sup> "Profile Table Census Profile, 2021 Census of Population," Statistics Canada, February 1, 2023, <https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2021/dp-pd/prof/details/page.cfm?Lang=E&SearchText=Ontario&DGUIDlist=2021A000011124,2021A000235&GENDERlist=1&STATISTIClist=1&HEADERlist=10,9,8,7,11>

<sup>5</sup> "Profile Table Census Profile, 2021 Census of Population," Statistics Canada, December 6, 2022, <https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2021/dp-pd/prof/details/page.cfm?Lang=E&SearchText=Ontario&DGUIDlist=2021A00053526043,2021A00053526053,2021A000235&GENDERlist=1,2,3&STATISTIClist=1&HEADERlist=0>

<sup>6</sup> "Atura Power Selects Niagara for the Niagara Hydrogen Centre," Atura Power, April 7, 2022, <https://aturapower.com/news/atura-power-selects-niagara-for-the-niagara-hydrogen-centre/>

# LEVERAGING ANCHOR INSTITUTIONS

The City of Niagara Falls is fortunate to be the site of the South Niagara Hospital (opening 2027), and the University of Niagara Falls (opening 2024). These institutions (individually and jointly) can function as “anchor institutions,” supporting a wide variety of economic development activities in the Region.<sup>7</sup>

The City of Niagara Falls Business Development Department can maximize the positive impact of these organizations by establishing and enhancing

partnerships focused on achieving mutually beneficial outcomes (e.g., the City of Niagara Falls will benefit from having anchor institutions that prioritize local purchasing, employment, and education resources, and anchor institutions will benefit from the Niagara Falls business and community ecosystem that is highly invested in their success). Taking a proactive approach to building these institutions’ “anchor missions” during their early development will be important.

# ENHANCING POPULATION GROWTH

The City of Niagara Falls’ population is growing. Between 2016-21, Niagara Falls saw a greater number of people moving to the City than in the five-year period prior to the previous Census (2011-16). This share is 54.9 percent higher in 2021 than in 2016.<sup>8,9,10</sup>

Part of the City’s growing population is fuelled by newcomers. In fact, the City is out-performing St. Catharines and the Niagara Region in attracting

newcomer populations, an essential component of future social and economic development. Niagara Falls’ share of newcomers is actually 17.1 percent higher than that of the larger Niagara Region and St. Catharines.<sup>11,12,13</sup> Investing in supports for newcomers and raising awareness about the important role of immigration to the long-term success of the community will help ensure this growth continues.

<sup>7</sup> Nevena Dragicevic. “Anchor Institutions,” The Mowat Centre and the Atkinson Foundation, 2015, <https://anchorinstitutions.ca/>

<sup>8</sup> “Profile Table, Census Profile, 2021 Census of Population,” Statistics Canada, December 6, 2022, <https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2021/dp-pd/prof/details/page.cfm?Lang=E&SearchText=Ontario&DGUIDlist=2021A00053526043,2021A000235&GENDERlist=1,2,3&STATISTIClist=1&HEADERlist=0>

<sup>9</sup> “Profile Table, Census Profile, 2021 Census of Population,” Statistics Canada, December 6, 2022, <https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2021/dp-pd/prof/details/page.cfm?Lang=E&SearchText=Ontario&DGUIDlist=2021A00053526043,2021A000235&GENDERlist=1,2,3&STATISTIClist=1&HEADERlist=0>

<sup>10</sup> Stiletto Analysis, 2023

<sup>11</sup> “Profile Table, Census Profile, 2021 Census of Population,” Statistics Canada, December 6, 2022, <https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2021/dp-pd/prof/details/page.cfm?Lang=E&SearchText=Ontario&DGUIDlist=2021A00053526043,2021A000235&GENDERlist=1,2,3&STATISTIClist=1&HEADERlist=0>

<sup>12</sup> “Profile Table, Census Profile, 2021 Census of Population,” Statistics Canada, December 6, 2022, <https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2021/dp-pd/prof/details/page.cfm?Lang=E&SearchText=Ontario&DGUIDlist=2021A00053526043,2021A000235&GENDERlist=1,2,3&STATISTIClist=1&HEADERlist=0>

<sup>13</sup> Stiletto Analysis, 2023

An aerial photograph of Niagara Falls, showing the turbulent green water of the falls cascading over a rocky ledge. The surrounding city is visible, with residential houses, commercial buildings, and a baseball field. A suspension bridge is visible in the distance. The text 'BUILDING ON SECTOR STRENGTHS AND OPPORTUNITIES' is overlaid in large, white, outlined letters across the center of the image.

# BUILDING ON SECTOR STRENGTHS AND OPPORTUNITIES

# TOURISM



**Niagara Falls is a clear national leader in tourism, which is its major industry.**

The City is globally renowned as a tourist location, and, as of 2021, the sector employed 31.3 percent of the City's workforce, totalling 14,106 people.<sup>14</sup>

The sector's workforce share in the City was over

four times higher than the national average, while the share of businesses was 97.0 percent higher than the national average.<sup>15</sup> These were vastly higher proportions than the neighbouring city of St. Catharines, the broader Niagara Region, and the province of Ontario.

<sup>14</sup> Canada Business Counts provided by Niagara Region.

<sup>15</sup> Canada Business Counts provided by Niagara Region.



# HEALTH

The economic analysis indicated that there are opportunities to grow and better leverage Niagara Falls' health workforce by strengthening the health ecosystem in the City.

The addition of the Niagara South Hospital will be an important anchor institution within the health ecosystem and the City more broadly.

The estimated health sector workforce in Niagara Falls was 4,056, or 9.0 percent of the total workforce.<sup>16,17</sup> From a high-level perspective, the sector was relatively small compared to that in other jurisdictions. The sector's share of the workforce (working in the City) was 42.0 percent lower than the national average.<sup>18,19</sup>

However, the share of the City's residents with an educational background in health was over 50.0 percent higher than the size of the City's health workforce. The share of residents with a health-related education was also 10.0 percent higher than the national average.<sup>20</sup> These figures suggest that health workers may be commuting out of the City for work. In order to develop its health sector, the City may need a two-pronged workforce approach:

- Support more opportunity / capacity for health jobs within the City; and
- Attract and retain health workers who tend to have higher education and income levels than the City's average.

<sup>16</sup> Canada Business Counts provided by Niagara Falls

<sup>17</sup> Stiletto Analysis

<sup>18</sup> Canada Business Counts provided by Niagara Falls

<sup>19</sup> Stiletto Analysis

<sup>20</sup> Statistics Canada

# ICT

## INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY

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As a co-owner of Niagara Regional Broadband Network Limited (NRBN), the City has an important role to play in investing in infrastructure that will attract firms to the City, particularly in its key sectors.

Ensuring that the priorities and activities of NRBN and the City of Niagara Falls align will maximize benefits for City residents, visitors, and businesses.

The University of Niagara Falls has prioritized ICT in its degree offerings, which will be of substantive value to the City. An ICT-educated workforce will not only power traditional IT sectors and industry (such as broadband and Internet of Things), but it will also fuel IT occupations in key sectors such as health, tourism, and advanced manufacturing.

# ADVANCED MANUFACTURING

Advanced manufacturing is a sector poised for overall growth in the City of Niagara Falls, which has notable areas of advantage within the sector.

The sector workforce is an area for growth and development. With 1,500 workers, this sector's share of the workforce was below the national average by 18.0 percent.

As of 2021, the City was a leader in advanced manufacturing in three industries:<sup>21,22</sup>

**The largest workforce is in beverage and tobacco manufacturing (NAICS 312), with 560 workers.**

This industry's workforce share is over five times the national average, but there is further opportunity to develop this industry as its workforce share was below that of the overall Niagara Region (but still higher than that of Ontario).

**Chemical manufacturing (NAICS 325, 461 workers)** is another area of strength. With an employment share over twice the national average, the City is also a regional and provincial leader in this industry. This trend is similar to what is observed in the non-metallic mineral product manufacturing (NAICS 327) industry, which has an employment share over twice the size of the national share and larger than the share of employment in the Region and the province.

**Meanwhile, the City is also a national leader in machinery manufacturing (NAICS 333) with an employment share 17.0 percent higher than the national average.** However, this share is still well below that of the Niagara Region (46.0 percent higher than the national share) so there is further opportunity for growth here.<sup>23,24,25</sup>

<sup>21,22</sup> "Industry Groups by Class of Worker Including Job Permanency, Labour Force Status, Age and Gender: Canada, Provinces and Territories, Census Metropolitan Areas and Census Agglomerations with Parts," Statistics Canada, January 24, 2023, <https://doi.org/10.25318/9810044801-eng>

<sup>23</sup> Canada Business Counts provided by Niagara Region

<sup>24</sup> Statistics Canada

<sup>25</sup> Stiletto Analysis

# STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

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The strategic framework takes a next-generation approach to economic development in the City of Niagara Falls, leveraging the City's existing strengths to create impact across the economy.

A next-generation approach transforms economic sectors by viewing them through the lens of opportunities for diversification and cluster development. For example, tourism can be further diversified through Smart Tourism strategies (i.e., using technology such as a destination app to improve tourism planning experiences), and manufacturing can be strengthened with strong cluster development to encourage innovation, collision, and networking between industries within a sector.

Applying these notions of diversification and cluster development, the strategic framework focuses on generating impact in four pillars:

- 1 Diversify Economy
- 2 Retain and Grow Existing Businesses
- 3 Strengthen Ecosystem
- 4 Expand Niagara Falls

The strategic framework also aligns with and supports the City of Niagara Falls 2023-2027 Strategic Plan, which identifies two key priorities: sustainability (financial, environmental, and social) and exceptional customer service. These two priorities are reflected across the pillars and actions.



# STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

## VISION

### Next Generation Economic Development

The City of Niagara Falls is a thriving and prosperous city that is locally grown and globally known.

## MISSION

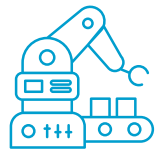
### Focus and Invest

Focus on priority sectors (tourism, advanced manufacturing, ICT, and health) and leverage two key differentiators to drive long-term growth: Smart Tourism (linking technology and tourism) and economic sustainability (fuelled by local growth, investment attraction, and economic diversification).

## PRIORITY SECTORS



Tourism



Advanced  
Manufacturing



ICT



Health

## PILLARS FOR IMPACT



Diversify  
Economy



Retain & Grow  
Existing Businesses



Strengthen  
Ecosystem



Expand Niagara  
Falls

# PILLAR ONE: Diversify Economy

Further diversifying the tourism sector and catalyzing cluster development potential in priority sectors will help the City of Niagara Falls expand its economic base.

## STRATEGIC APPROACH

**1. Strengthen priority sectors with business park and cluster development:** Tourism, manufacturing, ICT, and health represent important focus areas for economic development. Business park development is a major strategic initiative to drive and expand these sectors in the City. With a business park strategy, Niagara Falls can attract growing GTA businesses that need additional space at more affordable rates. Using sector-based tenant criteria, the City can target businesses in priority sectors, encouraging focused growth. In addition, two new institutions (Niagara South Hospital and the University of Niagara Falls) can be leveraged to anchor these development efforts. To enhance workforce capacities and business attraction in these sectors, the City can also consider potential cluster opportunities that would bring together industry partners in these sectors in a concerted effort to generate impact.

**2. Diversify tourism with new attractions, Smart Tourism, and other strategies:** To diversify within tourism, the City can prioritize the development of additional year-round attractions that will further strengthen its position as a global tourism leader. To support these efforts, the City can also adopt principles of Smart Tourism. This work can be led by those with expertise in the tourism industry and supported by the City and others. An important partner will be the HUB, as innovative start-ups are encouraged to think about and establish Smart Tourism solutions for the City. Partnerships will be essential as these tools are designed, promoted, implemented, and evaluated.<sup>26</sup> These tools and strategies can make it easier for tourists to plan, access, enjoy, and share their experiences. With Smart Tourism tools, business owners and the City can also gather rich data about tourist flows, helping them to improve services, extend lengths of stay, and increase return rates.

<sup>26</sup> Ulrike Gretzel, Lina Zhong, and Chulmo Koo, "Application of Smart Tourism to Cities," *International Journal of Tourism Cities* 2, no. 2 (2016), <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJTC-04-2016-0007>

# RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Enhance key sector cluster development.

2. Consider increasing density in existing industrial / business parks.

3. Diversify tourism by encouraging planning, investment, and promotion in new year-round attractions and activities.

4. Support and encourage new attraction investments and explore creative funding models for tourism initiatives.

5. Foster innovation in key sectors by leveraging the expertise and talents within the HUB and postsecondary partners.

6. Conduct Community Improvement Plan Review and Expansion.

7. Monitor, evaluate, and adjust progress for Pillar One recommendations.



## PILLAR TWO:

# Retain and Grow Existing Businesses

The City will continue to actively support, encourage, and enable growth for SMEs and multinational enterprises (MNEs) in Niagara Falls through strategic approaches that align with City priorities of sustainability and customer service.

## STRATEGIC APPROACH

**1. Continue to establish business development as an extension of SMEs:** The Business Development Department provides valuable support, resources, and connections for the City's businesses. Helping the community see the Department as an extension of small businesses will broaden the Department's reach and impact. The Department's website provides an ideal connection point that could be further advanced, and focused outreach efforts will solidify the Department's identity and positioning in the small business ecosystem. To promote relationship building with clear, consistent communication, the Department should consider hiring for a marketing position.

**2. Help SMEs advance their business goals by expanding and raising awareness of the digital tools, activities, and programs that the Business Development Department offers:** The City will actively work to expand its digital presence, enhancing

the Business Development website and expanding its local and global impact on social media. Through the Business Development website, the Department will prioritize the needs of local businesses to support their unique needs, including commercialization and R&D; and e-business solutions.

In order to continue to be an extension of SMEs in Niagara Falls, the Business Development Department must establish a consistent, collaborative, and dynamic marketing plan. This means supporting key sectors in their communication and marketing goals by elevating not only the activities of the Business Development Department, but also of industry itself in Niagara Falls. Currently, the Department does not have the resources to achieve the necessary marketing and community / industry engagement goals outlined in Pillar Two and therefore it is also a recommendation that a dedicated marketing staff position should be created.

# RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Enhance support for SMEs and entrepreneurship.

2. Focus business retention efforts in the key sectors: tourism, advanced manufacturing, ICT, and health.

3. Actively connect businesses with postsecondary partners.

4. Encourage local businesses to align their activities with the City's priorities.

5. Develop a communications and promotional strategy to support economic development plan and ongoing activities.

6. Expand training and skills development options and resources to small and medium businesses and their employees, in key sectors in particular.

7. Monitor, evaluate, and adjust progress for Pillar Two recommendations.



## PILLAR THREE:

# Strengthen Ecosystem

Fuelled by the City's priorities of sustainability, customer service, and economic diversification, Niagara Falls will strengthen synergies and networks within and across key sectors.

## STRATEGIC APPROACH

### 1. Develop key assets as anchor institutions:

The City of Niagara Falls Business Development Department, through the HUB, will maximize the positive impact of organizations such as Niagara South Hospital and the University of Niagara Falls, among others, by encouraging and facilitating strategic partnerships focused on mutual benefits.

### 2. Facilitate partnerships and connections between

**organizations:** The Business Development Department is an important connector in a network of support that includes government, industry, and academic assets. This connected ecosystem will allow partners across sectors to share resources, identify gaps, and work together to achieve common goals. A stronger ecosystem will also make the Region more attractive to new investors in priority sectors.

# RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Develop the University of Niagara Falls as an anchor institution.

2. Develop Niagara South Hospital as an anchor institution.

3. Consider other industry / institutional partners as possible anchor institutions.

4. Conduct a labour market assessment to establish a deeper understanding of current and future labour market needs and opportunities.

5. Build strategic partnerships in the GTA.

6. Monitor, evaluate, and adjust progress for Pillar Three recommendations.



## PILLAR FOUR:

# Expand Niagara Falls

A next-generation approach will inform two key strategies to build the Niagara Falls of the future: 1) Encouraging development in key sectors and 2) Focusing on cluster development.

## STRATEGIC APPROACH

### **1. Encourage development to support key sectors:**

Embracing the City's priority to diversify the economy, the City will plan innovative physical spaces including new business and industrial parks and innovation spaces that support economic development, particularly within the priority sectors.

### **2. Focus on business park development:**

The City will continue to pursue development of the Grassy Brook area, one of the last the last unplanned and unserviced greenfield areas in the City. In addition, the City can leverage the planned Niagara South Hospital to build a medical business park, which will support growth in the health sector.



# RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Invest in high-impact enhancements to public space and infrastructure.

2. Connect tourists with key assets across neighbourhoods.

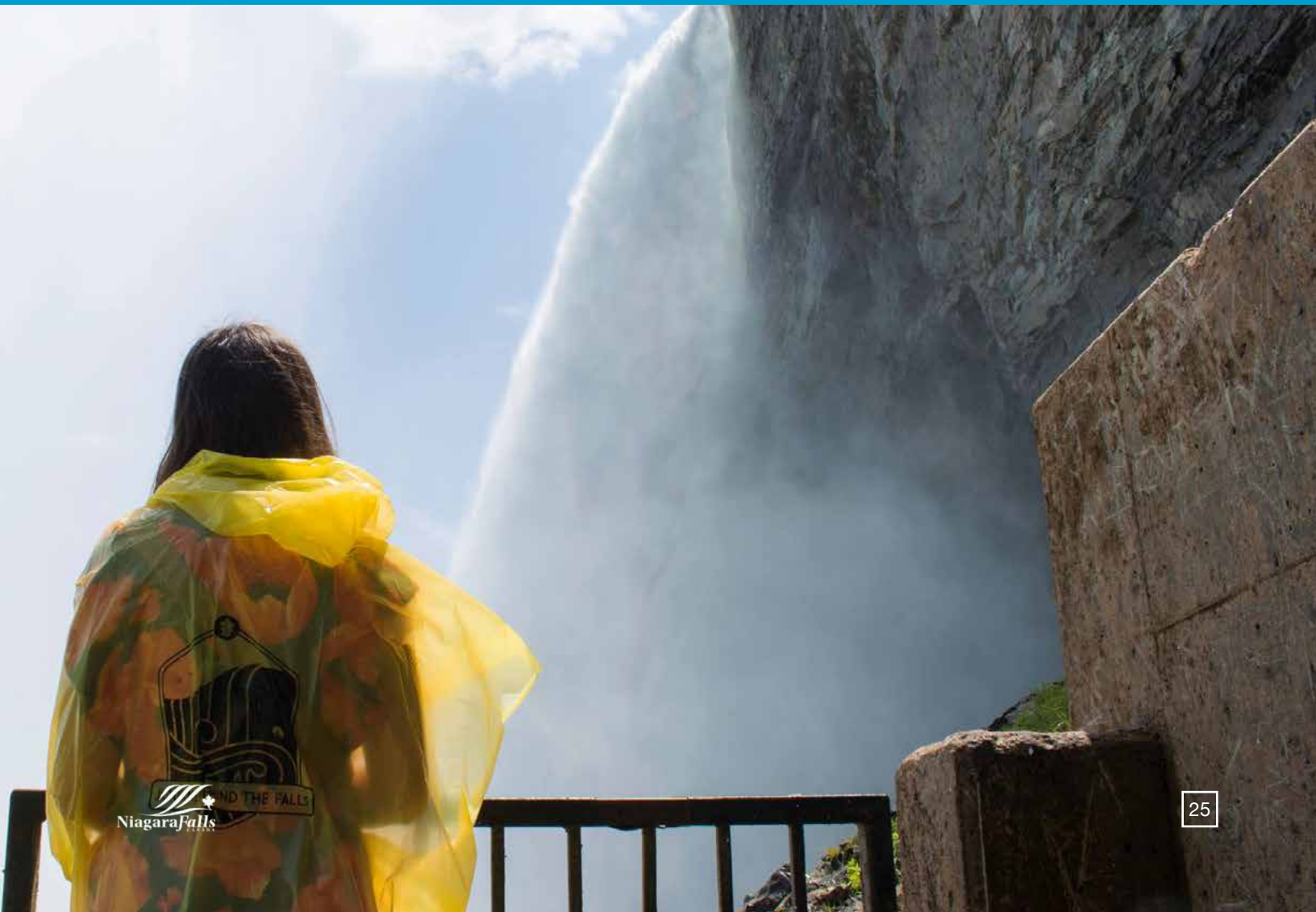
3. Continue to advance strategies of connected transit throughout City and Region.

4. Expand the Niagara District Airport.

5. Provide incentives that support economic sectors and priorities, including downtown, industrial and commercial land development, and mixed-use developments.

6. Connect business with opportunities for funding to help move development and expansions projects forward.

7. Monitor, evaluate, and adjust progress for Pillar Four recommendations.



# BUILDING ON STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

In addition to the pillars and proposed activities noted, it is important for the City of Niagara Falls to leverage where possible the eight landmark initiatives currently underway to maximize economic development outcomes.



**Music Strategy:** The City is currently undertaking a comprehensive Music Strategy focused on developing Niagara Falls as a music destination and supporting the City of Niagara Falls' vision to be the Entertainment Capital of Canada.

**University of Niagara Falls:** Welcoming students in 2024, the new university will be digitally focused and deliver programs targeted to meet labour market needs. The university will be a boost for the City's economy and provide valuable workforce development support.





**OLG Stage at Fallsview Casino:** This state-of-the-art facility, located in the heart of the Fallsview District, is hosting top acts and will attract an additional one million visitors to the City each year.

**Niagara South Hospital:** Once built, the new hospital is expected to have 469 beds and provide vital health care to the City. The hospital will replace aging facilities in the Region, offering leading-edge services, spaces, and equipment to meet changing needs.



**Weekday GO Train Service:** The Metrolinx weekday GO Train service to Niagara Falls began its operation in 2019 and plans have been approved by Niagara Falls City Council for a Downtown Niagara Falls GO Transit Station, which will create a vital transit hub in the heart of the City.



**Niagara District Airport Redevelopment:** To increase the connectivity of Niagara Falls, the City is seeking a third-party operator who can support capital investments and advance the long-term vision of the airport.

**MarineLand Redevelopment:** MarineLand sits on about 800 acres, with less than a quarter of it developed. This land is designated as open space, and thus can accommodate attraction development.



**Business Park Development:** The City's Montrose Business Park is sold out, with businesses developing this land. As other studies have recommended, the need for additional land can be filled through development of the Grassy Brook Area, approximately 495 hectares of land in one of the last unplanned and unserved greenfield areas in the City. Another potential project to establish a medical business park adjacent to the Niagara South Hospital offers the possibility of supporting further growth in the City's priority health sector.



INITIATIVE	DIVERSIFY ECONOMY	RETAIN AND GROW EXISTING BUSINESSES	STRENGTHEN ECOSYSTEM	EXPAND NIAGARA FALLS
Music Strategy	✓	✓	✓	
University of Niagara Falls	✓	✓	✓	
OLG Stage at Fallsview Casino			✓	✓
Niagara South Hospital and Medical Business Park	✓	✓	✓	✓
Weekday GO Train Service		✓	✓	✓
Niagara District Airport Redevelopment		✓	✓	✓
MarineLand Redevelopment	✓	✓	✓	✓
Business Park Development	✓	✓	✓	✓

# EVALUATING STRATEGIC EFFORTS AND MONITORING PROGRESS

Key performance indicators (KPIs) are an effective method to evaluate strategic efforts and monitor progress toward goals. Included here is a KPI template the Business Development Department can use to establish target metrics and measure progress

toward that goal.

Many of the recommendations and activities involve the support of other organizations (e.g., the HUB), and it will be important to involve those stakeholders as the metrics are established.

A	B
RECOMMENDATION	EXAMPLE KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS / METRICS
<b>Pillar One: Diversify Economy</b>	
<b>1. Enhance key sector cluster development</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li># of industry meetings where sector SWOT is discussed</li> <li>Establishment of labour market assessment committee and setting of timelines, goals, and resources required</li> </ul>

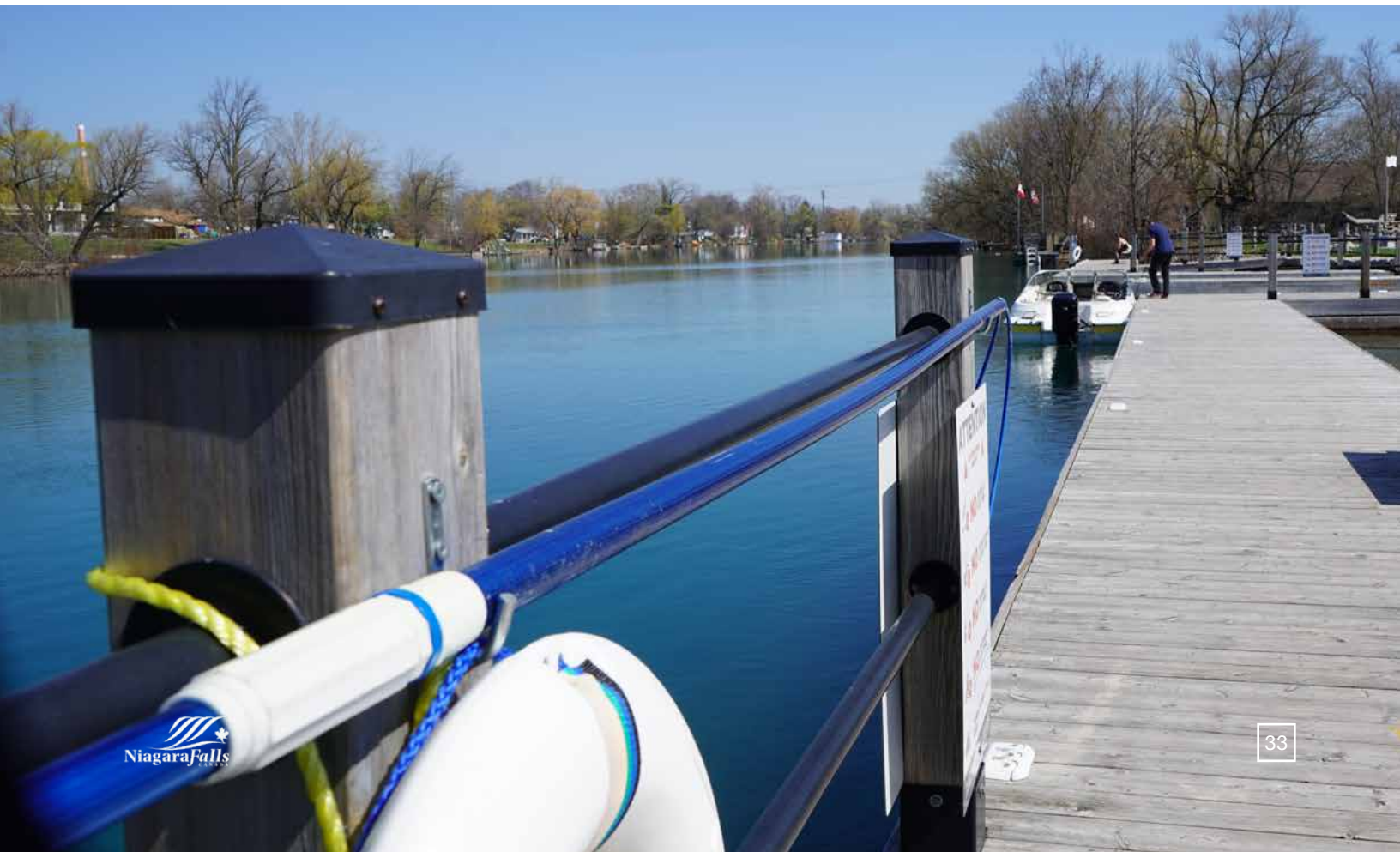
A RECOMMENDATION	B EXAMPLE KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS / METRICS
<b>1. Enhance key sector cluster development (cont'd)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• # of new key sector businesses attracted to Niagara Falls (total, by-sector):               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• tourism</li> <li>• advanced manufacturing</li> <li>• ICT</li> <li>• health</li> </ul> </li> <li>• # of new partnerships formed to support the attraction of new businesses into Niagara Falls from key sectors</li> <li>• Establish twice-yearly meetings with the HUB to review industry needs with Niagara College, Brock University, and the University of Niagara Falls to align academic programming with industry needs</li> <li>• HUB satellite location in the new medical park               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• # of health-related start-ups / incubations supported by HUB</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Increasing availability of health-related jobs for educated workforce:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• # of new businesses in health sector</li> <li>• # of jobs in health in Niagara Falls</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Establish plan to promote and market Grassy Brook’s status as shovel ready               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• # of new tenants confirmed</li> <li>• # of jobs located in the business park</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>2. Consider increasing density in existing industrial / business parks</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• # of tenants in priority sectors</li> <li>• % increase in park density</li> </ul>
<b>3. Diversify tourism by encouraging planning, investment and promotion in new year-round attractions and activities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• # of initiatives / incentives and opportunities for land severances etc. accessed to increase density               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• # of new incentives created</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Facilitate spa / wellness attraction:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• # of potential attraction vendors met with</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Partnering with postsecondary to create and establish private sector research projects based in tourism digital technologies:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• # of completed research projects</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>4. Support and encourage new attraction investments and explore creative funding models for tourism initiatives</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implementation of Music Strategy for the City of Niagara Falls:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create a Niagara Falls Music Office</li> <li>• Appoint a Music Officer</li> <li>• Develop a music marketing strategy for the City (Create a “Music Destination” campaign)</li> <li>• Create a Music Advisory Task Force</li> <li>• Create a directory / map of music resources</li> <li>• Support and promote the Niagara Falls Exchange building as a local cultural hub</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Establish a tourism-focused incubator within the HUB, and consider Niagara College and Brock University as potential partners               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• # of new tourism businesses established in Niagara Falls</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Actively promote and market film production in Niagara Falls:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• # of film permits granted</li> <li>• # of jobs connected to film industry</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

A RECOMMENDATION	B EXAMPLE KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS / METRICS
5. Foster innovation in key sectors by leveraging the expertise and talents within the HUB and post-secondary partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creation of ICT program</li> <li>• Health innovation and incubation space (run by HUB) in new medical park</li> </ul>
6. Conduct CIP Review and expansion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review completed</li> </ul>
<b>Pillar Two: Retain and Grow Existing Businesses</b>	
1. Enhance support for small business and entrepreneurship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• # of grant or other funding sources shared with small or start-up businesses</li> <li>• Total amount of funding received as a result of SBEC and / or HUB support</li> <li>• New jobs connected to funding</li> <li>• New equipment connected to funding</li> </ul>
2. Focus business retention efforts in the key sectors: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• tourism</li> <li>• advanced manufacturing</li> <li>• ICT</li> <li>• health</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• # of programs targeted to key sector start-ups and / or expansions</li> <li>• Level of satisfaction among businesses who use digital resources and feedback about additional needs for information and resources on the digital platform</li> <li>• # of times digital resources are accessed</li> <li>• # of small business success stories shared on digital channels</li> <li>• % of small business outreach within priority sectors</li> <li>• # of businesses involved in cluster development bi-annual meetings</li> </ul>
3. Actively connect businesses with postsecondary partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• # of employers within key sectors targeted to focus postsecondary partnership development efforts</li> <li>• % of targeted employers in key sectors engaged in work-integrated learning with PSE</li> <li>• # of events and participants targeted to the employers identified in the target list above</li> <li>• # work-integrated learning business case studies and impact assessments developed and communicated</li> </ul>
4. Encourage local businesses to align their activities with the City's priorities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• # of innovation summits</li> </ul>
5. Develop a communications and promotional strategy to support economic development plan and ongoing activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Marketing role established within Business Development <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Marketing plan created</li> <li>• Grow social media presence (i.e., % increase in followers, # of re-posts / digital engagement, etc.)</li> <li>• Create targeted sector marketing and specific business campaigns to promote business retention and attraction efforts</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
6. Expand training and skills development options and resources to small and medium businesses and their employees, in key sectors in particular	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• # of small and medium existing businesses that have engaged in training</li> </ul>

A RECOMMENDATION	B EXAMPLE KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS / METRICS
<b>Pillar Three: Strengthen Ecosystem</b>	
<b>1. Develop University of Niagara Falls as an anchor institution</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Anchor mission established and made transparent to the community</li> <li>With anchor institution, develop three KPIs that will hold each partner accountable to the mission statements made</li> </ul>
<b>2. Develop Niagara South Hospital as an anchor institution</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Anchor mission established and made transparent to the community</li> <li>With anchor institution, develop three KPIs that will hold each partner accountable to the mission statements made</li> </ul>
<b>3. Consider other industry / institutional partners as possible anchor institutions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li># of institutions explored as anchor institutions</li> <li># of institutions established as anchor institutions</li> </ul>
<b>4. Conduct a labour market assessment to establish a deeper understanding of current and future labour market needs and opportunities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Once completed, action items detailed within the labour market assessment: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li># of recommendations undertaken</li> <li># of recommendations completed</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>5. Build strategic partnerships in the GTA</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Build relationships with those who can provide leads and share trends on key sectors: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li># of target partners identified with the priority sectors (real estate brokers, academic institutions with applied research in priority sectors, and industry associations). Create and maintain a database</li> <li># of exploratory meetings held</li> <li># of industry associations met with</li> <li># of applied research institutions in GTA met with</li> <li># of industry conferences attended to promote Niagara Falls as an ideal location for key sectors</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Pillar Four: Expand Niagara Falls</b>	
<b>1. Invest in high-impact enhancements to public space and infrastructure</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li># of enhancements</li> </ul>
<b>2. Connect tourists with key assets across neighbourhoods</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li># local community assets included / featured in core tourism promotional tools (i.e., Fireman’s Park and its calendar of events; Niagara Falls Xchange, including the Hub and Farmers’ Market; Museums; Pop-up Markets such as the Christmas Market; Oakes Garden Theatre, etc.)</li> </ul>
<b>3. Continue to advance strategies of connected transit throughout City and Region</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li># of updates of short- and long-term transit plans in communications to business community</li> </ul>
<b>4. Expand the Niagara District Airport</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li># of initiatives / promotions of charter and cargo flights to support, tourism, convention, and other business activities</li> </ul>



A RECOMMENDATION	B EXAMPLE KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS / METRICS
<p><b>5. Provide incentives and tools that support economic sectors and priorities, including downtown, industrial and commercial land development, and mixed-use developments</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• # of new CIPs created / or adjustments made to existing CIPs</li> <li>• \$ of CIP funding provided</li> <li>• Processes adjusted to make CIP application more streamlined for businesses</li> <li>• Creation and communications of a digital tool that matches available land to business owner needs               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• # of users who have accessed the digital tool</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p><b>6. Connect businesses with opportunities for funding to help move development and expansion projects forward</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creation and communications of funding support for businesses (i.e., providing business with insights around what funding opportunities are available). This support can help businesses to navigate to a specialized area that includes key funding opportunities:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Workforce development and retention</li> <li>• R &amp; D</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Evaluate use of funding portal (using technology such as Fundica), which will serve two purposes:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Helping the City to track business needs</li> <li>• Enabling businesses to navigate funding opportunities on their own</li> </ul> </li> </ul>



## ABOUT BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

As the strategic economic engine of the City, the Niagara Falls Business Development Department positions Niagara Falls as Ontario's premier resort gaming and tourism destination through support for local expansion, sustained growth, and new investment attraction. The team fosters strong relationships across the City's diverse range of businesses and business owners and enhances economic growth, innovation, and entrepreneurship. By creating opportunities to attract and retain young families, youth, and newcomers to the City, Business Development works to ensure Niagara Falls will remain a vibrant and thriving community for generations to come.

## ABOUT STILETTO

Stiletto conducts market research and develops strategies for organizations focused on innovation. This work requires a collaborative approach, one that puts people first and uses meaningful data to guide recommendations. Working at the intersection of government, academia, and industry, we bring communities together to envision concepts, generate evidence-based insights, and move bold ideas forward. Clients across North America have included municipalities, economic development organizations, postsecondary education institutions, science and technology companies, research and technology parks, innovation districts, and accelerators.