



2020

# Niagara County Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy

Submitted to the United States Department of Commerce  
Economic Development Administration  
June, 2020



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## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

The development of this Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) document for Niagara County was made possible by the insightful guidance and devotion of the CEDS Committee. The diversity of interests represented on the CEDS Committee and their shared vision for the future of Niagara County ensures that the benefits resulting from this effort will be distributed equally throughout the county.

Many organizations and county government departments provided input critical to the analysis of data and development of the vision statement and program goals. Chief among these are the Niagara County Department of Economic Development and the Niagara County Industrial Development Agency. Special thanks are extended to the staff of the Center for Economic Development for their valuable input and preparation of this report. Gratitude is owed to all those who assisted in this collaborative effort to devise a strategy to bring sustainable prosperity to the people of Niagara County. Special appreciation is extended to the chief elected officials, municipal clerks, and community development directors of Niagara County's twenty cities, towns and villages. The U.S. Department of Commerce, Economic Development Administration's effort to promote cohesive planning, within the bounds of the entities eligible for financial assistance, has been favorably received by Niagara County's mayors and supervisors. Recognition of the importance of comprehensive economic development planning is illustrated by the timely and thoughtful priority projects submitted by each community and duly noted.

The Niagara County Legislature, on behalf of the citizens of Niagara County, wishes to thank all organizations and individuals who participated in the preparation of this important document. Because the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) is a living document which is expected to evolve, responding to changing needs and opportunities, every effort will be made to guarantee the integrity of the productive working relationships that made this high quality report possible.

## PREFACE

As this Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) was being developed, the global pandemic stemming from the novel coronavirus, COVID-19, was quickly unfolding. Meetings were canceled, schools and businesses were closed, borders were shut down, and makeshift hospitals were opened, in rapid succession. With the exception of certain essential businesses and public health and safety operations, daily activities ground to a halt. Health officials scrambled to understand and prepare for this new disease. Massive layoffs ensued and stock markets plummeted across the globe. Trading on the floor of the New York Stock Exchange was halted twice following huge sell-offs that saw the S&P 500 drop 7% within minutes of trading. The S&P 500, Dow Jones Industrial Average, and Nasdaq Composite would fall more than 30% over the next month, reaching lows on March 23, 2020.

New York State was particularly hard hit by COVID-19, especially in the New York City area with its high population density and busy public transit system. Governor Andrew Cuomo instituted an aggressive statewide program to combat the spread of the disease. This program, known as New York State on PAUSE, closed all non-essential businesses for months, greatly impacting the economy.

The economic effects of this global health crisis are just starting to be quantified, but the ripple effects will likely be felt for years as we continue to recover from the resulting recession. Early figures paint a sobering picture. In Niagara County, the unemployment rate jumped from 5.9% in March 2020 to 21.9% in April 2020. That rate is expected to be even higher in May. Figures from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics indicate the region suffered the third-worst employment decline of any major metro area in the U.S., losing 23.3% of its private-sector jobs between April 2019 and April 2020. Niagara County sales tax collection also continues to drop. According to the New York State Comptroller's Office, sales tax in Niagara County was down approximately 30% in April and May compared to the same time period last year. These revenue losses will have a big impact on municipal finances. One industry hit exceptionally hard in Niagara County has been tourism. Hotel operators are reporting single-digit occupancy as visitors cancel or defer travel plans. Restaurants and attractions are also suffering.

Some businesses have fared well during the pandemic, particularly big box retailers and beer, wine, and liquor stores, which remained open. Home improvement stores also benefited from increased traffic. Cleaning companies sanitizing workspaces, contractors installing social distancing measures, and delivery companies conveying online purchases also fared well.

The Niagara County Center for Economic Development (NCCED) has worked aggressively to support the business community during this ongoing economic crisis. Efforts include serving as a repository for information on the State's business guidelines, providing information on available business assistance programs, coordinating with Niagara County's Emergency Services Office to provide businesses with personal protective equipment, and more. The NCCED set up a dedicated COVID-19 tab on its website containing detailed business information. It has also sent near-daily emails to more than 1,800 contacts in the business community and utilized social media to further spread the word.

There are signs of light at the end of the tunnel. All of the major market indexes have nearly recovered their losses. In fact, the Nasdaq Composite once again reached a record high breaking the 10,000 mark on June 10<sup>th</sup>. The number of New Yorkers filing new unemployment claims has started to slow and all regions of the state are undergoing a phased reopening following a decrease in COVID-19 infections and hospitalizations as well as increased testing and availability of hospital beds. Western New York began its phased reopening on May 19<sup>th</sup>. The region is on track to fully reopen, with proper COVID-19 protections in place, by the end of June. Although businesses are reopening, they will have to adjust to a “new normal” that includes continued use of personal protective equipment, extensive cleaning regimens, reduced seating capacity, restrictions on large gatherings, and other requirements that will increase the cost of business and cut into revenues. These requirements will likely hamper economic activity and slow the rate of recovery, but balance public health needs during this time of continued uncertainty.

Economic development will be increasingly important in the coming years as we work to recover from the economic fallout of the pandemic. This Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy will serve as a roadmap for our efforts. Essential to our economic resilience will be business retention, business assistance, and ongoing communication with the business community to share information on available resources. This important work will take place in close coordination with government agencies at all levels, local leaders, businesses, nonprofits, community-based organizations, and other economic development partners.

## Table of Contents

<b>I. Background Information .....</b>	<b>1</b>
A. Demographic and Socioeconomic Data .....	1
B. Natural and Cultural Resource Profile .....	4
C. Infrastructure .....	5
D. Industry Sectors.....	10
E. Regional and State Context .....	13
F. Factors Affecting Economic Performance .....	14
G. Community and Economic Resiliency.....	15
<b>II. SWOT Analysis .....</b>	<b>17</b>
A. Strengths.....	17
B. Weaknesses .....	18
C. Opportunities.....	19
D. Threats.....	20
<b>III. Strategic Direction and Action Plan .....</b>	<b>21</b>
A. Vision Statement .....	21
B. Goals, Objectives and Action Plans .....	21
1. Goal: Increase and Promote Land and Buildings Available for Development .....	21
2. Goal: Improve Educational Opportunities to Ensure a Highly Skilled Workforce.....	23
3. Goal: Grow and Diversify the Population.....	25
4. Goal: Diversify Niagara County’s Economic Base to Ensure Resiliency .....	26
5. Goal: Retain Existing Businesses and Attract New Businesses.....	27
6. Goal: Improve the Image of Niagara County.....	29
7. Goal: Provide the Infrastructure Necessary for Growth and Development .....	29
<b>IV. Evaluation Framework .....</b>	<b>32</b>
A. Overarching Performance Measures .....	32
B. Goal-Specific Performance Measures .....	33
1. Goal: Increase and Promote Land and Buildings Available for Development .....	33
2. Goal: Improve Educational Opportunities to Ensure Highly Skilled Workforce .....	35
3. Goal: Grow and Diversify the Population.....	36
4. Goal: Diversify Niagara County’s Economic Base to Ensure Resiliency .....	37
5. Goal: Retain Existing Businesses and Attract New Businesses.....	38
6. Goal: Improve the Image of Niagara County.....	39
7. Goal: Provide the Infrastructure Necessary for Growth and Development .....	40
<b>V. Economic Resilience.....</b>	<b>42</b>
A. Resilience Planning.....	42
1. Challenges and Vulnerabilities .....	42



2. Early Warning Tools.....	44
3. Goals, Objectives, and Actions.....	45
4. Economic Resilience Measures .....	47
B. Communication .....	48
1. Stakeholder Collaboration and Information Exchange.....	48
2. Business Outreach Strategies.....	50
<b>Appendices.....</b>	<b>52</b>
A. Municipal Priority Projects & Programs.....	52
B. Buffalo Niagara Regional Agenda.....	111
C. Economic Development Partners.....	119
D. CEDS Committee.....	120

## **FIGURES**

Figure 1. Population Trend 1950 - 2017 .....	1
Figure 2. Average Annual Unemployment Rate Comparison 2007-2018.....	2
Figure 3. Niagara County Land Cover.....	5
Figure 4. Rail Transportation Network.....	7

## **TABLES**

Table 1. Top 40 Largest Employers in Niagara County by Total Number of Jobs .....	2
Table 2. Per Capita Income 2017.....	4
Table 3. Annual Payroll in Top Niagara County Industry Sectors (\$1,000).....	11
Table 4. Agricultural Trends in Niagara County .....	12

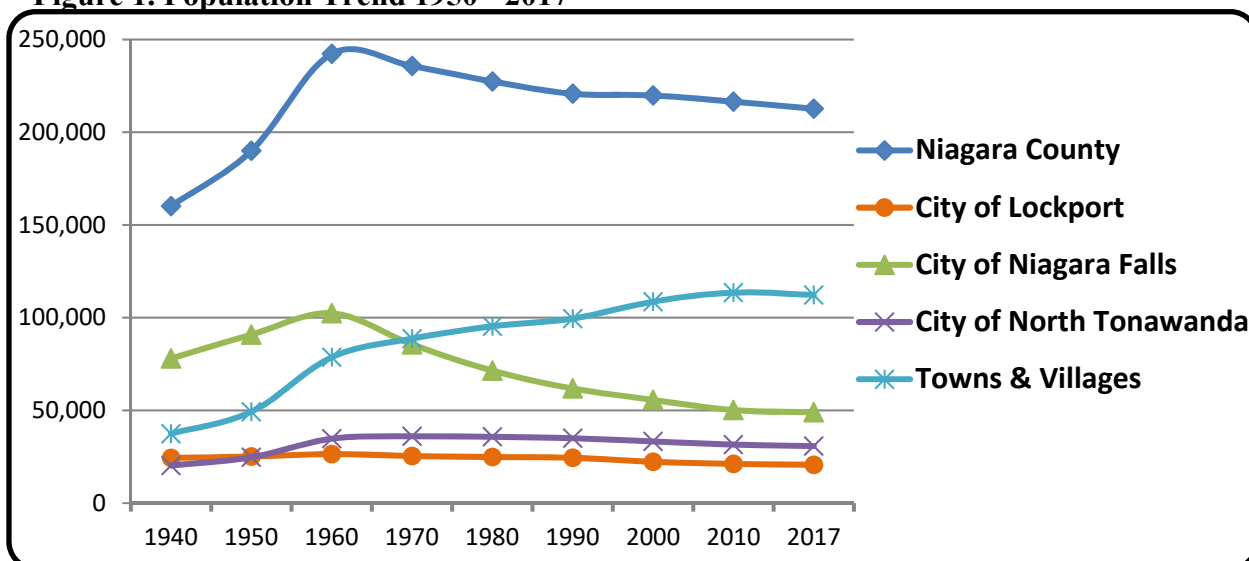
# I. Background Information

## A. Demographic and Socioeconomic Data

### 1. Population

According to the United States Census Bureau (American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates), Niagara County's population was 212,675 in 2017. The population has remained relatively stable with a slight decrease of 3.3% since the 2000 Census. Niagara County's population peaked in 1960 with 242,269 residents. Population growth was attributed to rapid industrial development in the City of Niagara Falls and the construction of the Niagara Power Project between 1957 and 1960. The City of Niagara Falls' population also peaked in 1960 at 102,394. The departure or downsizing of large companies in the steel, aircraft and aerospace, automotive, chemical, specialty ceramics, and paper industries resulted in significant population loss, particularly in the City of Niagara Falls. According to the American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates Program, the City of Niagara Falls' population was 48,976 in 2017, a 52.2% loss from 1960. The population of the City of Lockport also peaked in 1960 at 26,443, but fell 21.8% to 20,676 in 2017. The City of North Tonawanda's population peaked in 1970 at 36,012 and fell 14.6% to 30,752 in 2017.

**Figure 1. Population Trend 1950 - 2017**



Source: U.S. Census Bureau Decennial Census and ACS 2017 5-Year Estimates

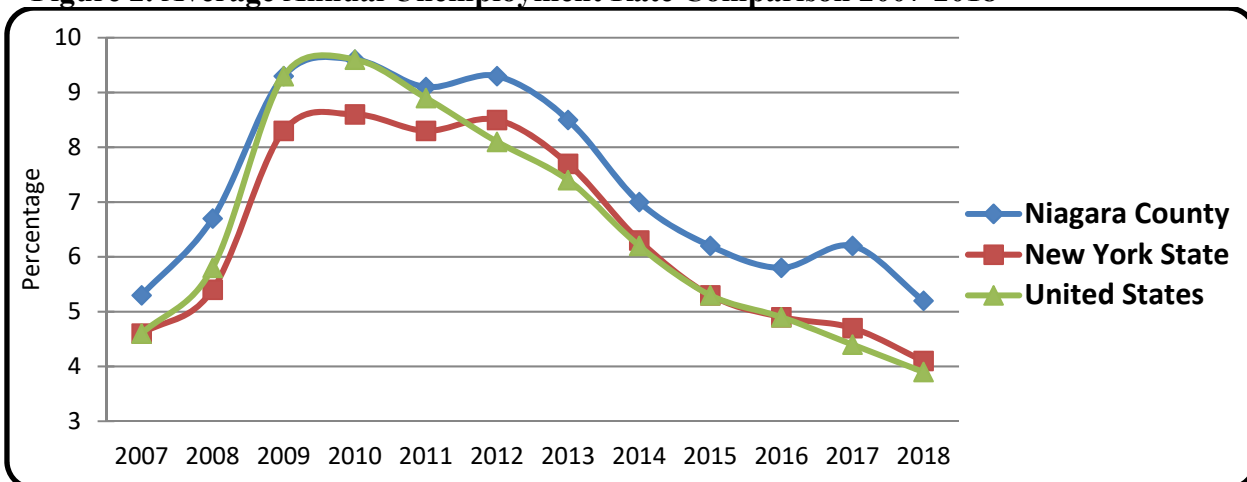
As shown in Figure 1, the population of Niagara County's towns and villages has grown steadily as the population of the three cities declined. This growth is due largely to increased automobile ownership and post-World War II suburbanization. The Town of Wheatfield, located just east of Niagara Falls, experienced one of the largest population increases for a municipality its size in New York State. Wheatfield's population grew from 14,086 in 2000 to 18,238 in 2017 (ACS 5-year Estimates), which represents an increase of 29.5%. The Towns of Cambria, Pendleton and Lockport also experienced population growth. Unlike New York State, which continues to gain population, Niagara County and the eight counties of Western New York continue to suffer population decline. Of the sixty-two counties in New York State, only 17 counties experienced population decline between 2000 and 2010, half of which were in Western New York (U.S. Decennial Censuses).

## 2. Employment

Figure 2 displays unemployment rates from 2007 through 2018. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, the average annual unemployment rate (as measured by percentage of total workforce for Niagara County) was 5.2% in 2018, down from a high of 9.6% in 2010, the height of the Great Recession. The 2018 unemployment rate for New York State was 4.1%, while the unemployment rate for the United States as a whole was 3.9%. This was 26.8% higher than the state unemployment rate and 33.3% higher than the national unemployment rate during a time when many economists believed the economy was at or close to full employment. Niagara County's average annual unemployment rate was also higher than the 4.6% unemployment rate for the Buffalo-Cheektowaga-Niagara Falls Metropolitan Statistical Area.

The above statistics were compiled prior to the economic downturn resulting from the COVID-19 global health crisis. The effects of this crisis are just starting to be quantified. According to the New York State Department of Labor, the monthly unemployment rate for Niagara County jumped from 5.9% in March 2020 to 21.9% in April 2020. That rate is expected to rise. Figures released by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics indicate that the region has suffered the third-worst employment decline of any major metropolitan area in the U.S. The region lost 23.3% of its private-sector jobs between April 2019 and April 2020. Significant work lies ahead in addressing the economic challenges resulting from this crisis.

**Figure 2. Average Annual Unemployment Rate Comparison 2007-2018**



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

Table 1 shows the top 40 largest employers in Niagara County as of May 2019. Niagara County's biggest employer and top public sector employer is the Niagara Falls Air Reserve Station with more than 3,000 jobs. The largest private sector employer is the Seneca Niagara Resort & Casino with more than 2,500 jobs, followed by the Fashion Outlets of Niagara Falls USA with just over 2,000 jobs, GM Components Holdings with approximately 1,400 jobs, and the Niagara Falls Memorial Medical Center with just over 1,000 jobs. Other large public sector employers include: Niagara County; Niagara County Community College; and the Niagara Falls, North Tonawanda, and Lockport City School Districts. These top 10 employers account for nearly 15,000 combined jobs or nearly 16% of all jobs in Niagara County.

**Table 1. Top 40 Largest Employers in Niagara County by Total Number of Jobs**

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1.	Niagara Falls Air Reserve Station	3,165	21.	Starpoint School District	366
2.	Seneca Niagara Casino & Hotel	2,528	22.	Lewiston Porter School District	333
3.	Fashion Outlets of Niagara	2,027	23.	Newfane School District	316
4.	Niagara County	1,425	24.	New York Power Authority	309
5.	GM Components Holdings, LLC	1,400	25.	Elderwood at Lockport	307
6.	Niagara Falls City School District	1,200	26.	DuPont de Nemours E I & Co.	218
7.	Niagara Falls Memorial Medical Ctr.	1,029	27.	Candlelight Cabinetry	218
8.	North Tonawanda City School District	704	28.	Occidental Chemical	211
9.	Niagara County Community College	700	29.	MAHLE Behr Troy, Inc.	210
10.	Lockport City School District	675	30.	Niagara Hospice	203
11.	City of Niagara Falls	645	31.	Oath (formerly Yahoo!)	202
12.	Mount Saint Mary's Hospital	627	32.	Wilson School District	200
13.	Eastern Niagara Health System	600	33.	Olin Corporation	190
14.	Niagara University	596	34.	Edwards Vacuum	186
15.	Niagara Wheatfield School District	578	35.	Confer Plastics	180
16.	Modern Corporation	544	36.	Saint Gobain Ceramics & Plastics	178
17.	New Directions Youth & Family Svcs.	510	37.	Royalton/Hartland School District	176
18.	DeGraff Memorial Hospital	473	38.	Greenpac Mill / Norampac	156
19.	Empower	460	39.	Armstrong Fluid Technology	150
20.	Our Lady of Peace Nursing Home	345	40.	Parmed Pharmaceuticals	150

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Source: Niagara County Department of Economic Development, May 2019

Niagara's WorkSourceOne is the largest Employment & Training initiative in Niagara County. Developed under Title I of the Workforce Development Act (WIA) of 1998, the program has been continued through the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). Through two One-Stop Career Center locations, Niagara's WorkSourceOne harnesses the resources of various organizations in Niagara County to provide a seamless array of services to local businesses and to job seekers who are unemployed, under-employed, or "dislocated" due to business closure or lay-off.

The Niagara County Workforce Development Board (WDB) focuses on demand occupations to respond quickly to business needs and utilizes its resources to support local industries. WDB is taking a leadership role and working in conjunction with regional efforts to supplying workforce needs in the areas of advanced manufacturing and life sciences.

Businesses, as well as individuals seeking employment/upgrading, are served through the One-Stop Career Centers, which bring together the resources of WDB and Department of Employment and Training staff. Partner programs are also represented. Core services are made available to everyone, along with intensive and training services for those who need additional assistance. Training is provided in demand occupations based on local needs. Funding cuts over the past five years have greatly decreased the amount of funded training services. However, universal customer services and business connections have been maintained.

### 3. Per Capita Income

Per-capita income in Niagara County is lower than the United States, New York State, the Buffalo-Cheektowaga-Niagara Falls Metropolitan Statistical Area, and neighboring Erie County. As shown in Table 1, per capita income in Niagara County was \$28,395 in 2017, according to the American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates. That's 8.9% lower than the U.S. and 17.8% lower than New York State.

**Table 2. Per Capita Income 2017**

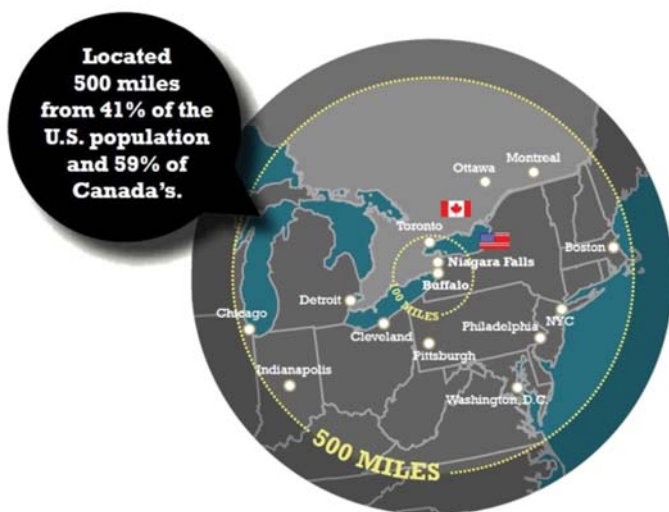
	Per Capita Income	Margin of Error
United States	\$31,177	+/- \$89
New York State	\$35,752	+/- \$157
Buffalo-Cheektowaga-Niagara Falls MSA	\$30,580	+/- \$291
Erie County	\$31,083	+/- \$330
Niagara County	\$28,395	+/- \$548

Source: U.S. Census Bureau ACS 2017 5-year Estimates

## B. Natural and Cultural Resource Profile

### 1. Geography and Climate

Niagara County is located in the northwestern corner of New York State with borders along Erie, Genesee, and Orleans Counties, and Lake Ontario. The Niagara River and the Province of Ontario, Canada form the western border of Niagara County. Niagara County encompasses a total land area of 527 square miles incorporated into three cities, twelve towns, and five villages. Two Native American Indian Reservations are located within the county.



Access to key population centers and natural resources is important to the county's success. Niagara County is located within 500 miles of 41% of the U.S. population and 59% of Canada's population, as well as 25% of the world's fresh water. Niagara County is poised to take advantage of its many assets and strengths.

The northern temperate climate allows for four season weather influenced by the Great Lakes. Humid warm summers and long, cold winters with periods of lake effect snow are common. The average daily high temperature is 57.2°F the average daily low temperature of 38.2°F.

## **2. Environment and Natural Resources**

The primary natural features that make Niagara County geologically unique are the Niagara Escarpment, the Niagara Gorge, and Niagara Falls. The Niagara River, which creates Niagara Falls as a result of its waters flowing over the Niagara Gorge, is the primary drainage passage for the four upper Great Lakes. The Niagara River is a significant international waterway forming the boundary between the U.S. and Canada. Although the Niagara River is only 37 miles in total length, its impact on the growth and development of the county has been enormous. This natural setting led to the development of relatively inexpensive hydroelectric power that historically fueled industrial expansion and the economic base of the region.

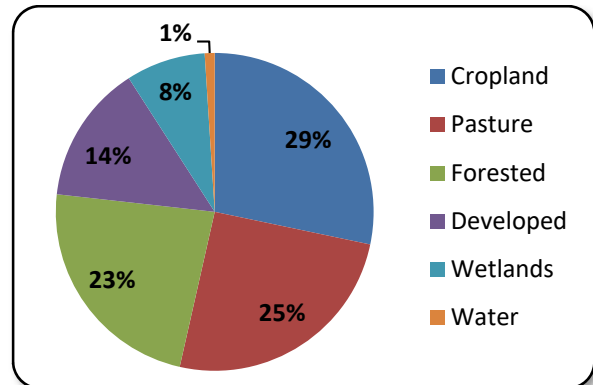


The rich diversity of aquatic life in the Niagara River, Lake Ontario, and many of the county's creeks makes the region a desirable destination for sport fishermen from across the country, providing additional tourism and associated economic opportunities.

The Niagara Escarpment runs east to west roughly parallel with the Lake Ontario shoreline. The Niagara Escarpment is a sloping bluff-like geological formation that sits nearly 400 feet above the water of Lake Ontario and has contributed to the success of agriculture in the region due to its cooling effect. Agriculture is discussed in more detail under Industry Sectors.

As shown in Figure 3, land use in the county ranges from developed urban areas (14%) to rural agricultural land (54%). Another 23% remains forested.

**Figure 3. Niagara County Land Cover**



Source: National Land Coverage Dataset, 2011

## **C. Infrastructure**

### **1. Transportation**

Niagara County benefits from the region's legacy as an international transportation center. Its strategic location within the bi-national Great Lakes region and access to the Erie Canal made the region a major port, while development of the rail network in the early 20th century established the region as the second largest rail center in the world. Construction of the U.S. Interstate Highway System captured significant business from the railroads. The opening of the St. Lawrence Seaway and Welland Canal diverted freight from local ports and further reduced the market share of railroads. While the transportation industry has changed significantly over the past 100 years, the Buffalo-Niagara Region remains a hub of interstate commerce and bi-national trade. According to the U.S. Bureau of Transportation Statistics, more than \$70 billion worth of goods travels through the Buffalo-

Niagara Falls international freight gateway by highway and rail each year. It is the third largest freight gateway between the U.S. and Canada and the 16th largest international freight gateway in the U.S. Major commercial border crossings in the region include the Lewiston-Queenston Bridge, Peace Bridge, and International Railway Bridge, which account for nearly 10% of all trade with Canada by value.

Niagara County and the Western New York region are served by a well-planned and well-maintained highway system. There are 465 miles of highway in Niagara County that are part of the Federal Aid Functional Classification System (funded with federal highway dollars); 252 miles in state jurisdiction, 132 miles in county jurisdiction, and 81 miles in local jurisdiction. This network of roads and highways provides convenient access to and from the region.

Interstate I-90 connects the region to points east (i.e. Rochester, Syracuse, Albany, New York City, Boston, etc.) and west (i.e. Pittsburgh, Cleveland, Indianapolis, Chicago, etc.) as well as routes south at major urban interchanges. Interstate I-190 connects the region to points north and west via the National Highway System in Canada including Toronto via the Queen Elizabeth Way (QEW) and Detroit via Canadian Route 401. Niagara County has three international automobile bridges into Canada; the Lewiston-Queenston, Rainbow, and Whirlpool Rapids Bridges in addition to the Peace Bridge in Buffalo less than 20 miles south.

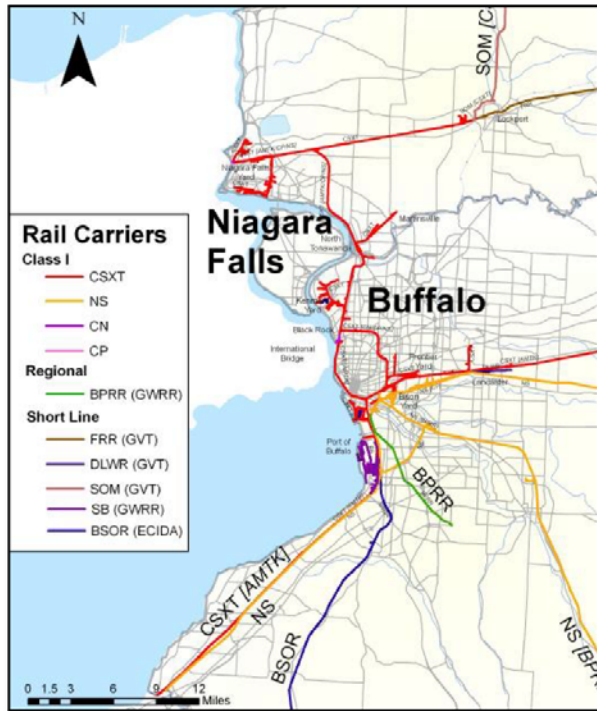
The Niagara Falls Bridge Commission is in its second year of construction on a \$91 million Phase 2 reconstruction of the U.S. plaza at the Lewiston-Queenston Bridge. The project is expected to last four years. The plan calls for five new inspection lanes comprised of three additional auto inspection lanes and two high – low inspection lanes that can be utilized by U.S. Customs and Border Protection for either commercial trucks or autos depending on the traffic needs. In addition to replacing all of the existing inspection lanes, a new bus processing lane will also be added. A new 32,000 square foot secondary building will replace the current 5,000 square foot secondary building and a secondary canopy will be added. The project will reduce congestion at one of the busiest crossings on the northern border.



Approximately 2.8 million vehicles enter the U.S. annually over the bridge. The Lewiston-Queenston Bridge is the 4<sup>th</sup> busiest commercial truck crossing along the U.S.–Canadian border.

Other major highway transportation projects in Niagara County include the ongoing reconfiguration of the former Robert Moses Parkway, now the Niagara Scenic Parkway into downtown Niagara Falls. The approximately two-mile-long section is being reconfigured to enhance parkland and improve the downtown gateway. Parkway traffic will be accommodated by reconstructing Whirlpool Street and Third Street. Reconstruction of Niagara Falls Boulevard from North Tonawanda to Niagara Falls is also planned.

**Figure 4. Rail Transportation Network**



Niagara County is still well-served by rail with four Class I railroads operating in the region: CSX Transportation, Norfolk-Southern, Canadian National, and Canadian Pacific railways. CSX and Norfolk-Southern operate 176 miles of the 250 total miles of track in the Buffalo Niagara region. Canadian National and Canadian Pacific have trackage rights over these lines and provide important connections into Canada via the Whirlpool Rapids Bridge (Niagara Falls) and International Railway Bridge (Buffalo). An additional 73 miles of track are operated by Class II and Class III railroads.

CSX operates most of the rail lines in Niagara County with connections to the north on the Somerset Railroad and connections to the east on the Falls Rail Road. Most rail lines are concentrated in the western end of the county. The Niagara County rail transportation network is depicted in Figure 4.

Rail yards in Niagara County include the underutilized former Lehigh Valley Rail Yard located just north of Niagara Falls, which is owned by New York State Department of Transportation, and the adjacent Niagara Falls Yard owned by CSX. The Lehigh Valley Rail Yard is being examined for expanded use including a freight and passenger rail car maintenance and/or intermodal transportation facility. Other major rail yards and intermodal facilities in the region include the CSX Frontier Yard, which is the region’s principal freight car classification facility and largest switching yard, CSX Seneca Yard, and Norfolk Southern Bison Yard, all located in the City of Buffalo.

In 2016, another major rail project came on line in Niagara County with the opening of the Niagara Falls International Railway Station and Intermodal Transportation Center at the Whirlpool Rapids Bridge. The Center houses a U.S. Customs & Border Protection facility, consolidated Amtrak / ViaRail operations for passenger travel to and from Canada, and a history museum highlighting Niagara Falls as a stop on the Underground Railroad. Rail passenger pre-clearance by Canadian Border Security Agency (CBSA) is coming to the station soon.

Aviation is also important in Niagara County, which is home to Niagara Falls International Airport (NFIA). In 2009, the Niagara Frontier Transportation Authority (NFTA) constructed a new, state-of-the-art passenger terminal at NFIA, which is helping to attract additional passenger service. Outside its role as a general aviation airport, NFIA is home to the Niagara Falls Air Reserve Station (NFARS), a U.S. military installation. NFARS has an estimated annual economic impact of \$233 million and continues to be the county’s largest employer, making base retention a top economic development priority. NFTA and NFARS share in the operation and maintenance of NFIA, making it more cost-effective. Recent airport improvements include lengthening the main runway to more than 10,000 feet to accommodate any size military or commercial aircraft. Improvements were also made to the aircraft aprons and passenger parking areas. The NFTA recently updated its Master Plan for NFIA, identifying development opportunities at the airport including air cargo operations.

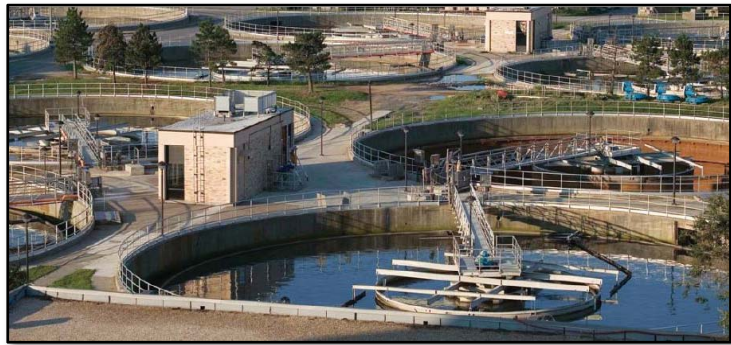


Maritime shipping opportunities also exist in Niagara County, which has direct access from Lake Ontario to the Atlantic Ocean via the St. Lawrence Seaway, access to Lake Erie and the upper Great Lakes from Lake Ontario via the Welland Canal and Upper Niagara River, and access to the Erie Canal, which connects the Great Lakes system with the inland waterways of New York State, the Hudson River, and the Atlantic Ocean. The Port of Buffalo is the only active maritime port / transload facility in the region.

## **2. Water and Sewer Service**

The Niagara River is the source of potable water in Niagara County. Through the Niagara County Water District, a dependable and safe supply of potable water is provided to approximately 150,000 residents and businesses throughout Niagara County and portions of Erie and Orleans Counties. The Niagara County Water District provides service to a total of twenty-two (22) municipalities. Niagara County's three cities of Lockport, Niagara Falls, and North Tonawanda operate and maintain their own public water systems. Two percent of households in Niagara County utilize either drilled or dug wells as a primary water source.

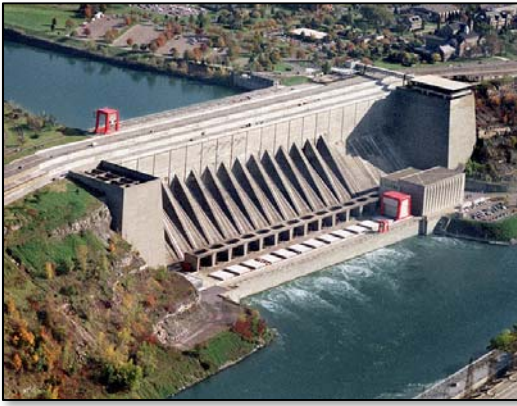
Sewer service in the county is controlled by multiple providers. Niagara County Sewer District No.1 owns, operates, and maintains the Water Pollution Control Center and associated wastewater collection system located in the Town of Wheatfield. The collection system serves six towns in the County, with more than 285 miles of pipeline. The



system consists of more than 65 miles of interceptor sewers ranging from 12 to 66 inches in diameter, seven pump stations, and associated force mains. Each of the three cities and five villages operate their own sewage disposal infrastructure. Private sewage treatment is handled through on-site septic systems overseen by the Niagara County Health Department. Niagara County, like many older communities, has an aging combined stormwater and sanitary sewer system that is problematic during storm events. As a result of severe storms in 2013, Niagara County received a disaster declaration and completed a countywide resiliency plan through the NY Rising Community Reconstruction Program. The 2014 plan led to new sewer and stormwater investments that helped increase resiliency to future flood events.

## **3. Utilities**

Residents and businesses in Niagara County have access to natural gas, electricity, and telecommunications services. The eastern portion of Niagara County is supplied with natural gas by New York State Electric and Gas Corporation (NYSEG), while the western end of the county is serviced by National Fuel Gas Distribution Corporation. Both of these companies offer economic development services including business incentives, site selection assistance, and equipment advice. In addition, National Fuel will partner with companies to find low-cost power alternatives, such as the production of electricity through natural gas-fired distributed generation.



Electricity in Niagara County is produced and distributed by several large and small suppliers. The largest distributor is National Grid, which services all of Niagara County except the City and Town of Lockport, which are serviced by NYSEG. The New York Power Authority's (NYPA) Niagara Power Project is the largest hydroelectric power plant in New York State and the third largest in the U.S. It is the largest supplier of clean energy in the region. Industries using large amounts of electricity in the production process are eligible to apply for special low-cost blocks of power from NYPA. In early 2020, Somerset Operating Company, LLC closed the coal-fired

Somerset Generation Plant, which used to be Niagara County's largest taxpayer. The plant, which has a 655 megawatt generating capacity, is being considered for repurposing into a data center hub.

Covanta Energy operates a state-of-the-art waste-to-energy facility in Niagara Falls that produces enough electricity to meet the needs of 38,000 homes as well as steam for industrial applications. Fortistar is a combined-cycle power plant that operates on an as-needed basis and provides extraction steam to Wheatfield Gardens. Lockport Energy Associates, L.P. maintains a co-generation facility that provides electricity and process steam to General Motors (GM) Components Holdings, LLC with excess power sold to NYSEG. GM Component Holdings is Niagara County's third largest employer. Modern Landfill in the Town of Lewiston partners with Innovative Energy Systems, which operates a landfill gas power plant that makes excess steam available for the adjacent hydroponic greenhouse.

All major telecommunications services are available in Niagara County including telephone service, wireless communications, internet, and television. A growing network of high-speed fiber-optic cable and an extensive copper cable network provide residential and business customers with access to high-speed, high-volume transmission of voice, video, and data. Verizon is the largest provider of conventional landline telephone services in the county, though internet-based phone service is increasingly competitive. Wireless 4G LTE service is offered by Verizon, Sprint, AT&T, Spectrum, and others. Spectrum is the largest provider of high-speed internet and cable television service. Verizon provides DSL internet service. Its higher-speed FIOS service, which includes television, is also available within the region, but on a more limited basis. Satellite television is also available through Dish Network and DirecTV. CrownCastle, Century Link, Frontier, and Windstream provide internet service mainly to business customers. Zayo and Crosslake Fibre provide long haul connectivity between major markets. Crosslake Fibre also provides middle mile connectivity in rural areas. Access to broadband internet service, defined by the Federal Communications Commission as 25 megabits per second (Mbps) download speed and 3 Mbps upload speed, is limited in low-density rural areas, particularly in the northern and eastern parts of the county. Efforts to extend service to unserved and underserved parts of the county are ongoing.

#### **4. Buildings and Sites**

Niagara County has available buildings and sites including developable land, shovel-ready designated sites, and brownfield sites, much of which is already serviced by major transportation and utility networks. Available buildings and sites are regularly inventoried and posted online through various websites including the Buffalo Niagara Commercial Listing Service (CLS), CoStar, LoopNet, and commercial real estate brokerage sites.

The affordability of real estate in Niagara County is a huge economic advantage, but the region is currently experiencing a shortage of available industrial real estate. According to statistics derived from the CBRE Marketview Q4 2018 report, the Buffalo Niagara Falls Metro Area continued its record low trend with an overall industrial availability rate of 3.4%, remaining below the national average. This puts Buffalo Niagara at a disadvantage when comparing the industrial availability rates in neighboring cities like Cleveland (5.2%), Pittsburgh (8.2%), Rochester (6.7%) and Albany (4.6%). Currently, the Buffalo Niagara MSA lease rates are lower than those in almost all major cities, but the CBRE report warns that because of the low availability rate, rates could continue to climb as the market waits for more inventory to come on line, thus affecting the region's affordability advantage. In response to this, Niagara County has joined the regional Industrial Real Estate Task Force, which includes local developers and economic development organizations, seeking to highlight the lack of available industrial real estate in the region and discussing issues and solutions to the ongoing predicament.

Niagara County also continues to work to prepare buildings and sites for development. The Niagara County Industrial Development Agency constructed several business incubator facilities targeting small companies and startups. The Niagara County Brownfields Development Corporation works actively to remediate contaminated sites for redevelopment. Niagara County also facilitated the planning and environmental work necessary to certify the Cambria Technology Park and Niagara Airport Commercial Park as "shovel-ready" through New York State's Build Now-NY Program. Most recently, the Center for Economic Development created more than three dozen fact sheets promoting industrial, commercial, and mixed-use real estate available for development.

#### **D. Industry Sectors**

Major sectors of Niagara County's economy include manufacturing, healthcare, retail trade, hospitality and tourism, and agriculture. Within these classifications are various subcategories that can be considered on a stand-alone basis by virtue of the role they play in the future prosperity of the county. Annual payroll broken down by industry sector is shown in Table 2. [Note: Data for the agricultural sector is not reported in the U.S. Census Bureau's County Business Patterns for Niagara County for reasons of data confidentiality. The figures reported have not been adjusted for inflation.]

Manufacturing continues to have the highest payroll followed by healthcare and social services. After adjusting for inflation, the most significant payroll gains between 2012 and 2016 (the most recent year for which data is available) were in the following sectors: health care and social services (+\$54.0 million), manufacturing (+\$33.4 million), accommodation and food services (+\$26.1 million), construction (+\$24.2), wholesale trade (+\$22.9 million), and retail trade (+\$18.7 million). Payroll losses are trending in administration and support services; professional, scientific, and technical services; and management of companies and enterprises.

**Table 3. Annual Payroll in Top Niagara County Industry Sectors (\$1,000)**

<b>SECTOR</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2016</b>
<b>Manufacturing</b>	424,450	414,621	437,067	462,607	479,766
<b>Health Care, Social Services</b>	328,993	333,283	359,473	398,920	399,975
<b>Retail Trade</b>	219,073	230,614	234,584	252,776	249,019
<b>Accommodations, Food Services</b>	152,588	162,512	170,302	178,342	186,552
<b>Admin &amp; Support, Waste Mgmt. Svcs.</b>	147,051	140,963	135,002	131,242	134,200
<b>Construction</b>	112,924	114,941	127,013	143,966	142,900
<b>Wholesale Trade</b>	96,050	101,759	107,391	118,913	123,920
<b>Professional, Scientific, Tech. Svcs.</b>	85,437	81,070	89,397	74,039	70,124
<b>Transportation/Warehousing</b>	71,025	71,760	76,468	83,969	83,010
<b>Mgt. of Companies &amp; Enterprises</b>	55,919	41,061	45,066	43,110	46,874

Source: U.S Census Bureau County Business Patterns, 2012-2016

### **1. Manufacturing**

According to the U.S. Census Bureau’s 2016 County Business Patterns, the Manufacturing sector in Niagara County is fourth in total jobs behind retail trade, healthcare and social services, and accommodation and food services. The manufacturing sector in Niagara County had only slight gains in the number of jobs over the past five years, rising from 8,566 jobs in 2012 to 8,619 jobs in 2016. While not the employment generator it once was, the manufacturing sector provides the largest annual payroll in Niagara County at \$480.8 million. In New York State, the manufacturing sector is ranked 9th in annual payroll. Niagara County has made a concerted effort to retain high paying manufacturing jobs with an aggressive Business Growth & Retention Program. The future of the manufacturing sector appears stable at the present time, but Niagara County has locational advantages



such as low-cost hydropower, availability of fresh water, and proximity to major markets, including Canada, that provide an attractive incentive to manufacturing operations.

### **2. Hospitality and Tourism**

The hospitality and tourism industry has always been a significant part of the local economy. Nearly eight million tourists visit Niagara Falls each year. According to a Destination Niagara USA study, visitor spending exceeded \$752 million in Niagara County in 2018, representing a 6.3% increase over the previous year. This helped to generate nearly \$50 million in tax revenue for local governments. In addition, 16,373 people work in tourism-related industries in Niagara County, which is an estimated 22.8% of the workforce.

Significant investments have been made in the hospitality and tourism industry over the past 20 years including: the opening of the Seneca Niagara Casino & Resort; redevelopment of the vacant former Rainbow Mall into the Niagara Falls Culinary Institute; construction of a new, state-of-the-art passenger terminal at Niagara Falls International Airport; and new exhibits at the Aquarium of

Niagara and Niagara Power Vista. In addition, the Discover Niagara Shuttle has been instituted and following a successful pilot period, is now fully funded through a portion of the county’s hotel bed tax. The shuttle links 17 destinations along the Niagara River providing convenient transportation for visitors. Significant investments have also been made in the hotel industry. Since 2009, more than a dozen new hotels have been constructed representing approximately 1,000 new rooms and \$250 million in capital investment. Regional attractions such as Fort Niagara, the Erie Canal and Flight of Five Locks, Niagara Wine Trail, and others are helping to extend visitor stays, which is critical to Niagara County’s tourism economy.

### **3. Agriculture**

Production of food and agricultural products is a leading industry sector in Niagara County. Due to the combination of productive soils, relatively flat agricultural land, and a climate moderated by Lake Ontario and the Niagara Escarpment, the county ranks 5<sup>th</sup> in New York State for growing fruits, tree nuts, and berries. The unique microclimate is suitable for the production of exquisite wines. The Niagara Wine Trail features 21 wineries and microbreweries representing a niche of the local economy and an important part of the county's agritourism efforts. Information on the wine trail is available at [www.niagarawinetrail.org](http://www.niagarawinetrail.org). As seen in Table 3, according to the 2017 U.S. Census of Agriculture, the number of farms and acres farmed are decreasing but the average size of each farm is increasing. The market value of agricultural products sold in Niagara County decreased since the last agricultural census in 2012.

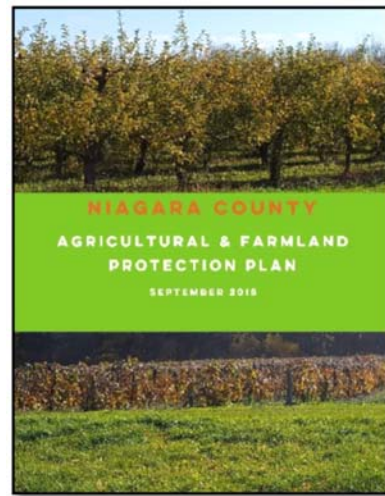
**Table 4. Agricultural Trends in Niagara County**

	2012	2017		Change
<b>Number of farms</b>	760	690	↓	70
<b>Acres farmed</b>	142,818	140,259	↓	2,559
<b>Average size of farm (acres)</b>	188	203	↑	15
<b>Market value of products sold</b>	\$122,600,000	\$118,617,000	↓	\$3,983,000

Source: U.S. Department of Agriculture 2017 Census of Agriculture

Niagara County has a strong agricultural base, but farming is increasingly threatened by low commodity prices and development pressures. To combat the declines in agriculture, Cornell Cooperative Extension of Niagara County launched a Buy Local campaign to help sustain local agriculture and build a stronger local food system. The Eat Fresh WNY smartphone app promotes local food offerings and agritourism attractions in Niagara County to both residents and visitors. The WNY Food Incubator is a shared-use commercial kitchen offering business support services to help farmers with value-added products and aspiring food entrepreneurs reach a wider audience.

Niagara County participates in the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets Agricultural Districts program, which provides tax abatements and development protections for farming operations within designated areas in the county. To streamline the program, the previous five agricultural districts were combined into one. Niagara County and several municipalities have adopted right-to-farm laws to provide additional protections to farmers. In 2019, Niagara County adopted an updated Agriculture and Farmland Protection Plan to help protect and grow the County’s agricultural base. Plan recommendations focus on production agriculture; agritourism and local and regional food markets; attracting new farmers and retaining existing ones; and marketing and education. The future of agriculture in the county is viewed as sustainable and valuable.



## **E. Regional and State Context**

### **1. General Context**

The Buffalo Niagara Region, which is comprised of Niagara and Erie Counties, is the second largest metropolitan area in New York State. The economies of the two counties are inextricably linked, but with different strengths and weaknesses. For example, the tourism industry plays a more significant role in Niagara County owing to Niagara Falls and attractions like the Seneca Niagara Casino. However, Erie County and the City of Buffalo have professional sports and large venues to accommodate concerts and other performances, providing the type of outlets for recreational spending that Niagara County lacks. The GDP of the two counties combined, which make up the Buffalo-Cheektowaga-Niagara Falls metropolitan area, is nearly \$70 billion. The bulk of that comes from Erie County with a GDP of nearly \$60 billion (U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis GDP by MSA 2018; inflation-adjusted to 2020). The economies of Niagara Falls, USA and Niagara Falls, Canada are also inextricably linked. Niagara Falls, USA competes directly with Canada for tourism. While Canada arguably has a stronger tourism product with more hotels and attractions, the U.S. offers greater access to the Niagara River, Niagara Falls, and Niagara Gorge. As mentioned earlier in this report, the removal of the former Robert Moses Parkway from Main Street to Findlay Drive in Niagara Falls, will create even more access to the waterfront.

Niagara County’s international border location also places it in close proximity to the City of Toronto, Canada and the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) in Southern Ontario. The GTA is part of a larger geographic area referred to as the Golden Horseshoe due to its large economy and U-shape, which wraps around the western boundary of Lake Ontario and incorporates the regions of Hamilton and Niagara. The Golden Horseshoe is the most densely populated and industrialized region in Canada. Major industry sectors include: manufacturing (especially steel and automotive production), healthcare, information technology, tourism, food and beverage production, freight, and finance. The term Greater Golden Horseshoe is used to describe an even larger area of Southern Ontario, though the term has been co-opted by economists in the U.S. to describe a bi-national mega-region that includes the Buffalo-Niagara and Rochester metropolitan areas, as well. This mega-region has a population of 11.4 million people and a GDP of \$518.3 billion (Greater Golden Horseshoe Transportation Plan Socio-Economic Profile 2017; U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis GDP by MSA 2018; all figures inflation-adjusted to 2020).

The transition away from the manufacturing economy that began in the 1970's has been more detrimental to the Niagara County economy than that of Erie County and the City of Buffalo, which have experienced steady gains in the back office subsectors of information technology, finance, insurance, and real estate. The concentration of these industries can be attributed to the much larger urban market in Buffalo and its first-ring suburbs. This trend continues today with consolidations in the banking industry that have resulted in large financial institutions anchored in Buffalo. Niagara County businesses benefit from access to the finance and insurance products offered in Erie County.

While the population of the state has grown, especially in the New York City metro area, the population of Western New York has declined slightly. Like most urban areas in Upstate New York, the cities in this region have lost population, while suburbs have grown. Individuals leaving the area tend to be younger and better-educated with employment expectations that cannot be met by current opportunities. This dynamic is self-reinforcing making it difficult to break the cycle, but recent projects such as M&T Bank's technology hub in Buffalo, Yahoo!'s northeast data center in Niagara County, and expansion of the Buffalo Niagara Medical Campus are beginning to reverse this trend.

## **2. Regional Economic Development Council**

In 2011, Governor Cuomo transformed the economic development process in New York State by establishing ten Regional Economic Development Councils (REDCs) led by the Regional Directors of Empire State Development Corporation. Each REDC was tasked with creating a regional economic development plan to compete for capital funds and tax credits from New York State. The Governor also streamlined the application process for seeking economic development funding through existing state programs by creating an online Consolidated Funding Application (CFA) process. Niagara



County took an active role in developing the REDC's "A Strategy for Prosperity in WNY Plan". The plan emphasizes job readiness, smart growth, and entrepreneurship. It also focuses on target industry sectors that include: advanced manufacturing, agriculture, bi-national logistics, energy, health and life sciences, higher education, professional services, and tourism. In recent years, a total of \$22.5 million in REDC funding was awarded to three of Niagara County's municipalities from the Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI) and Smart Growth Community Fund (SGCF), programs that are designed to create vibrant, walkable downtowns while embracing the principals of smart growth. In 2017, the City of North Tonawanda received \$2.5 million from the SGCF. In 2018, the City of Lockport was awarded \$10 million from the DRI and in 2019, the City of Niagara Falls was the \$10 million DRI winner.

## **F. Factors Affecting Economic Performance**

### **1. Direct Factors**

Niagara County's border location offers a competitive advantage because of convenient access to both U.S. and Canadian markets for goods and services. The International Railway Station and Intermodal Transportation Center at Whirlpool Rapids Bridge in Niagara Falls offers an opportunity to tap into the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) market of over seven million people. Access to low-cost power, fresh water, finance and insurance products, and business incentives are helping to grow existing businesses and attract new industries to the area. The county has a well-developed transportation network that includes highways, rail, and water access. Coupled with a significant amount of

undeveloped land, Niagara County is well positioned for future growth and development. As the local economy diversifies and expands, workforce training efforts will be needed to target skills gaps between existing workers and the demands of new industries. One of the biggest factors directly affecting Niagara County’s economic performance is high tax rates including corporate, sales, property, and income taxes. According to Kiplinger, New York State ranked third in Least Tax-Friendly States in the U.S. in 2019.

## **2. Indirect Factors**

Quality of life issues indirectly impact the economic resiliency of Niagara County. Niagara Falls is the region's most recognizable asset, but Niagara County has an abundance of key resources including cultural, historical, agricultural and recreational assets. Affordability makes the county an attractive place to run a business and raise a family. Great colleges and universities provide a foundation for a thriving knowledge economy and produce an educated workforce. As mentioned above, more work needs to be done on addressing the “skills gap,” especially in the manufacturing sector. Introducing the benefits of a career in advanced manufacturing to our secondary level students is a long-term solution to addressing the “skills gap” problem and the wave of retirements this sector is experiencing. Continuing to build on these assets will help Niagara County advance economic prosperity.

## **G. Community and Economic Resiliency**

### **1. Disaster Resiliency**

Niagara County experienced natural disasters in the summer of 2013 when several fast-moving, localized storm events dropped significant precipitation on local communities. Hardest hit were the cities of Niagara Falls, Lockport, and North Tonawanda. Significant flooding, property damage, and power outages affected more than 17,000 residents in the region. As a result, Niagara County developed a Countywide Resiliency Plan that helped secure millions of dollars in funding through the NY Rising Community Reconstruction Program for improvements to sewer collection and treatment systems, backup pumps and generators, and other equipment and infrastructure upgrades necessary to better prepare Niagara County for future storm events.

Niagara County experienced disasters again in the spring and summer of 2017 and 2019 when shoreline communities along Lake Ontario and the Lower Niagara River experienced severe coastal flooding. The flooding was the result of sustained, record-high water levels caused by a combination of heavy and persistent rainfall, rapid snow melt, and lake management policies limiting the outflow of water from Lake Ontario. The sustained high water levels, which were exacerbated by high wind and wave conditions, caused significant property damage



including flooding of homes and businesses, inundation of storm sewers, damage to waterfront infrastructure, and erosion. In addition, high water levels made it difficult for boaters, including charter fishing captains, to access boat launches and docking areas, which were underwater. While water levels were slightly higher in 2019, calmer wind and wave conditions resulted in less damage than in 2017 where damages resulted in state and federal disaster declarations.



In response, Governor Cuomo created the Lake Ontario Resiliency and Economic Development Initiative (REDI) to provide funding for capital projects that address both immediate and long-term resiliency needs, enhance economic development, protect critical infrastructure, incorporate green and natural features, and help sustainably rebuild and enhance communities along Lake Ontario and the Lower Niagara River. New York State's REDI Commission recommended funding for 11 projects in Niagara County totaling \$31.8 million. Local communities are required to provide a 5% match. Projects include shoreline stabilization measures, construction of new seawalls, installation of floating docks, utility upgrades, pier improvements, an offshore breakwater, and other flood reconstruction and mitigation measures.

## **2. Economic Resiliency**

Niagara County has taken several steps to help ensure its economic resiliency, as well. Through the Business Growth and Retention Program, the Niagara County Department of Economic Development has traditionally reached out to a minimum of 60 companies each year. The goal is to increase the number of companies contacted due to the COVID-19 pandemic. On-site meetings are held with dozens of companies to discuss their fiscal and organizational health, promote business assistance programs, and identify opportunities to help them stay and grow in Niagara County. Reaching out to businesses proactively helps ensure problems are identified early so public resources can be mobilized to stem potential layoffs and closures. It also helps identify opportunities to support business expansion efforts.

Niagara County is also working proactively to retain and grow the Niagara Falls Air Reserve Station (NFARS), which is the biggest employer in Niagara County with approximately 3,000 jobs. The NFARS is home to several U.S. Air Force Reserve, U.S. Army Reserve, New York Air National Guard, and New York Army National Guard units, in addition to the Buffalo Military Entrance Processing Station. In partnership with the Niagara Military Affairs Council (NIMAC) and other community stakeholders, Niagara County has been successful in keeping the airbase open through several U.S. Base Realignment and Closure processes. Niagara County, NIMAC, and the Western New York Congressional Delegation have been successful in recent years lobbying for new missions and infrastructure at the NFARS.

Economic resiliency is also dependent on diverse industries so that economic downturn in one industry sector does not have a significant adverse effect on the county's economy as a whole. With that in mind, Niagara County is working to grow businesses in smaller industry sectors such as administration and support, including subsectors like information technology and back office support. Niagara County is also working with the Buffalo Niagara International Trade Gateway Organization (ITGO) to grow the cargo and logistics industry, leveraging our extensive transportation infrastructure and international border location. More information on economic resiliency planning in Niagara County can be found in the Economic Resilience section of this report.

## **II. SWOT Analysis**

The analysis of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) related to Niagara County's economy considers a wide array of areas fundamental to economic growth: Quality of Life, Natural and Cultural Resources, Geographic Location, Business Incentives, Cost of Business, Infrastructure, Industrial Real Estate, Awareness of Business Programs, Business Development, Communication Technology, Trade Agreements, Workforce Availability, Social Change and Regulations. These interrelated themes also frame the Goals and Objectives, Implementation Actions, and Evaluation Framework in the subsequent chapters of the CEDS, reinforcing their fundamental importance to the broader economic development strategy.

### **A. Strengths**

The strengths listed below are indigenous assets unique to Niagara County that allow for a competitive advantage over other regions.

#### **1. Quality of Life**

Niagara County offers a high quality of life to those who live, work, and visit here. One reason is the low cost of living, including affordable housing prices. There are attractive, walkable communities in which to live, good schools, and institutions of higher learning and short commute times. The region has abundant natural and cultural resources that provide ample opportunities for recreation and entertainment. The area also offers the beauty of the four seasons and is relatively free of natural disasters. Quality of life is increasingly important to residents and businesses and will attract future generations to Niagara County.

#### **2. Natural and Cultural Resources**

Natural and cultural resources not only contribute to Niagara County's quality of life, they are important to the local economy, as well. Most notably, they drive tourism, which is one of the biggest sectors of the local economy. Ecotourism, agritourism, and heritage tourism have developed around the area's abundant natural and cultural resources, chief of which is Niagara Falls itself. Freshwater is the most important natural resource in Niagara County. In addition to fueling the Falls, it drives the production of hydroelectricity for homes and businesses, it is used in manufacturing, and it provides drinking water to sustain current and future populations. It is also used to irrigate prime farmland, a natural resource that helps provide fresh food and value-added products to the local population and products for export.

#### **3. Geographic Location**

One of Niagara County's biggest strengths is its geographic location, particularly its proximity to Canada, which is the United States' largest trading partner. Canada provides a huge market for goods and services from Niagara County companies. Conversely, Niagara County is home to a number of Canadian companies that have established operations here for better access to U.S. markets. These companies contribute positively to the local economy through new capital investment, job opportunities, and tax revenue. Canada is also a source of visitors who travel to Niagara County for shopping, dining, and entertainment. In addition, Niagara County is located within a 10-hour drive of nearly every major metropolitan area in the Northeast, Mid-Atlantic, and Great Lakes regions. In fact, Niagara County is just a 10-hour drive from 38% of the U.S. population and 59% of the Canadian population – approximately 140 million people.

#### **4. Business Incentives**

Another of Niagara County's strengths lies in its abundant business incentive programs, which are designed to help existing businesses grow and expand as well as attract new companies including startup businesses. This includes low-cost power programs through state and local agencies as well as energy efficiency programs. Utility companies also provide various forms of business development assistance. The Niagara County Industrial Development Agency offers one of the most business-friendly tax abatement programs in the state. It also has grant and loan programs for businesses. New York State funnels tens of millions of dollars each year to hundreds of economic development programs through its Regional Economic Development Councils, including capital grants and tax credits for businesses. In addition to low-cost power, the low cost of natural gas and freshwater also help bring down the cost of business in Niagara County.

### **B. Weaknesses**

The following weaknesses are area sectors that currently inhibit Niagara County from realizing its full economic development potential.

#### **1. Cost of Business**

High taxes and undue burdens continue to weaken the business climate and stifle competitiveness throughout New York State. Higher minimum wage rates, influence of organized labor, and restrictive laws in need of reform, such as the Scaffold and Wicks Law, create increased costs to construction in New York, especially on public projects. Unfunded New York State mandates fuel the rise of property and personal incomes taxes, in turn, contributing to a population decline. Businesses have a difficult time attracting qualified labor and economic development agencies struggle with these impediments in their effort to attract new businesses.

#### **2. Infrastructure**

Regional infrastructure projects are underfunded resulting in poor road conditions, structurally-deficient bridges, and an inadequate transit system. Niagara County specifically has three international bridges, each with bottleneck concerns, especially during peak tourism season. Traffic jams inhibit tourism and negatively affect our regions ability to take full advantage of our border. It also impacts the consistency of our commercial traffic, making the flow of trade difficult and, in some cases, unreliable.

#### **3. Industrial Real Estate**

The region faces an all-time market low for available industrial property. Niagara County has little inventory to offer prospective companies, leaving them with few options. The alternative is to construct new buildings, which is more costly and time-consuming. Developers in the region are unable to attract funding to build "on speculation," leaving the public sector in a position to intervene. Contaminated properties are also a problem across Niagara County, a legacy issue that will take generations to reverse. While there are tax benefits available to property owners willing to partake in the cleanup of parcels, this is a lengthy and costly process that requires professional specialization.

#### **4. Awareness of Business Programs**

Businesses in Niagara are unaware of incentives available to assist with business growth and retention. Companies therefore fail to take advantage of programs designed to assist with costs such as utilities, taxes, workforce training, marketing, etc. Local companies also tend to focus on their regional customer base and may be resistant to, or unknowledgeable about expanding into wider markets. Companies need to be better informed of these incentives in an effort to diversify their customer base in an ever-increasing global market.

### **C. Opportunities**

The following areas identify economic development sectors that Niagara County is poised to capitalize on given our strengths listed earlier in the SWOT Analysis section.

#### **1. Business Development**

Niagara County has numerous opportunities to promote entrepreneurship and increase business development throughout various industry sectors. These industry sectors include, but are not limited to, value-added agricultural products, agritourism, renewable energy, advanced manufacturing, tourism, logistics, and data centers. Niagara County also has over 7.3 million visitors each year, with a large number of them being international. An opportunity exists to cross-sell other aspects of Niagara County to visitors during their stay.

#### **2. Communication Technology**

Niagara County continues to have opportunities to advance technology. The New NY Broadband Program aims to provide access to broadband services to all urban, suburban, and rural areas. Progress with this initiative will allow for greater use of telecommuting and provide economic development opportunities in areas of the county that have been previously impeded due to lack of broadband. Ongoing plans to construct an ultra-high-speed fiber-optic network at Niagara Falls International Airport opens the door for new and existing businesses located within the network footprint to access some of the fastest broadband speeds available in Western New York.

#### **3. Trade Agreements**

The recently ratified United States-Mexico-Canada (USMCA) Free Trade Agreement provides a great opportunity for Niagara County. Our agricultural community and automotive industry in the area should benefit from new terms of the agreement. Niagara County is poised to benefit from the USMCA Trade Agreement given our close proximity to the majority of the Canadian population, the international bridge crossings, our established Foreign Trade Zone, and an international airport with a runway able to accommodate cargo flights. Future trade agreements with additional countries could further benefit Niagara County companies.

## **D. Threats**

Although external in nature, the following forces impede economic development growth in Niagara County.

### **1. Workforce Availability**

Currently there is a lack of skilled tradesman to fill available manufacturing jobs in the area. Several contributing factors include an aging population, large percentage of retiring workers, a low unemployment rate, and a misconception that manufacturing jobs are low-paying and unskilled. A disconnect still exists between school programming and the promotion of skilled trades programs. A smaller percentage of working age adults creates staffing issues for current and prospective companies, driving up costs.

### **2. Social Change**

Communities must be able to adapt to the changing needs and lifestyles of new and existing residents. The median age in Niagara County continues to increase while the overall population declines. Millennials as well as seniors are seeking more urban style living, downsizing from single-family homes to apartments and choosing walkable communities with public transportation. Rural and suburban communities are largely unable to accommodate these changing demands.

Nationally the number of Americans who contribute time and money to volunteer causes is on a steady decline. The reasons for declining volunteerism are varied and include more people interacting through social media, younger generations moving more often, and the need for more households to have two incomes, which leaves less time for volunteering. Without volunteers, non-profits suffer and communities experience greater social isolation, decreased mental and physical health benefits, and a loss of community spirit.

### **3. Regulations**

The trade war between China and the United States is an ongoing economic conflict between the two countries. Chinese tariffs on U.S. exports of agricultural and manufacturing products have negatively impacted those industries.

In 2017, the International Joint Commission adopted Plan 2014, a lake level management plan for the Great Lakes. Water levels have risen dramatically and severe flooding along the Lake Ontario shoreline continues to cause damage to residential and commercial properties.

New York State adopted the Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act in order to address and mitigate the impacts of climate change. The law requires the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation to establish greenhouse gas emissions limits and develop regulations to reduce emissions 85 percent by 2050. Concern exists that the new law will lead to higher costs and create a competitive disadvantage for businesses in New York State.

The New York State Legislature is considering adopting a prevailing wage law that would mandate all projects receiving any public assistance to pay prevailing wage. This would significantly drive up business costs and inhibit New York State's ability to compete with other states to attract new companies. It would also hinder the ability of industrial development agencies to attract new projects.

### **III. Strategic Direction and Action Plan**

The Strategic Direction of this CEDS is articulated by our Vision Statement, the Goals and Objectives that must be pursued to achieve that vision, and the Actions Plans that will get us there.

#### **A. Vision Statement**

Niagara County's Vision Statement expresses the need for proactive involvement, regional cooperation, and conscientious decision-making to build sustainable economic prosperity for all Niagara County residents, now and into the future.

*Our vision of Niagara County is a proactive model of economic development and sustainable growth. By thinking as a responsible, resourceful community, we hope to build on our assets by promoting a viable economic future for generations to come that emphasizes brownfields revitalization, qualitative development vs. quantitative growth, living wage jobs, and the creation of sound and practical plans through regional cooperation*

#### **B. Goals, Objectives and Action Plans**

Niagara County's economic development goals and objectives are intended to build on strengths, address weaknesses, capitalize on opportunities, and mitigate threats in the local and regional economy. They further articulate the vision statement and provide a framework for the strategies and actions used to achieve that vision. These goals and objectives will be accomplished by coordinating public and private decision-making on economic development.

The Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy establishes the goals and objectives necessary to solve the economic problems and capitalize on the resources of the region. Strategic projects, programs and activities identified in the Strategy are designed to fulfill these goals and objectives. Goals are broad, primary regional expectations. Objectives are more specific than goals, clearly measurable, and stated in realistic terms considering what can be accomplished over the five-year time frame of the Strategy. Action Plans are the direct activities that economic development partners throughout Niagara County will undertake to fulfill the objectives under each goal. They are highlighted within this section of the report and detailed more thoroughly in Appendix A.

#### **1. Goal: Increase and Promote Land and Buildings Available for Development**

- a. Objective:** Utilize resources such as the Niagara Orleans Regional Land Improvement Corporation (NORLIC), Niagara County Brownfield Programs, grant programs, and other resources to make more land and buildings available for development.

**Action Plans:**

- i. Continue the efforts by NORLIC to work with stakeholders to repurpose properties, reduce community blight, and improve neighborhoods
  - ii. Create new areas for industrial growth by capitalizing on the agreement between NORLIC and New York State Department of Environmental Conservation that minimizes environmental liability associated with acquisition of tax delinquent contaminated parcels
  - iii. Continue participation on the WNY Industrial Real Estate Development Task Force to finalize a regional industrial real estate development strategy, and leverage the strategy to assist in the development of a new industrial park in Niagara County
  - iv. Conduct Phase I and Phase II Environmental Site Assessments through the Niagara County Brownfield Assessment Program to identify environmental conditions that may be hindering property redevelopment
  - v. Utilize the Niagara County Brownfields Cleanup Revolving Loan Fund Program to provide monetary assistance in the form of low interest loans and sub-grants to assist with cleanup costs at brownfield sites in Niagara County
  - vi. Revitalize the Niagara Waterfront Opportunity Area, which includes reclaiming underutilized parcels, reconnecting the City of Niagara Falls to the Niagara River waterfront, and transportation improvements
  - vii. Continue the Strategic Land Acquisition and Redevelopment Program in the City of Niagara Falls
  - viii. Implement the Highland Area Brownfield Opportunity Area Redevelopment Strategy in the City of Niagara Falls to foster future development
  - ix. Market the Peninsula Harbor in the Village of Wilson, which has both harbor and waterfront access and will be available for development in 2021
- b. Objective:** Make strategic infrastructure investments such as utility and transportation improvements to create development-ready sites.

**Action Plans:**

- i. Construct a 12-15,000 square foot multi-tenant building in the Town of Lockport IDA Park for start-up manufacturing or distribution companies
  - ii. Design, develop and market 45 acres in Town of Lockport IDA Park
  - iii. Design and construction of infrastructure improvements to the Lakeshore site, Town of Somerset to allow for marketing as a NYS Certified Shovel-Ready site
- c. Objective:** Evaluate zoning to determine if adequate property exists to support current and future commercial and industrial development.

**Action Plans:**

- i. Undertake a countywide study of the supply and demand of commercial and industrial land, identify opportunities to increase the supply where needed, and make recommendations to municipal officials

- d. **Objective:** Provide outreach to developers on available incentives, showcase successful projects, and highlight development opportunities.

**Action Plans:**

- i. Complete renovations of the historic Hotel Niagara in Niagara Falls
- ii. Identify a buyer for DeGraff Memorial Hospital and begin redevelopment of the building into a mixed-use facility
- iii. Prepare and update fact sheets for high priority development sites
- iv. Promote development opportunities through the NCCED website, commercial listing services, site selectors, real estate brokers, and other channels

- e. **Objective:** Find redevelopment opportunities for owners of vacant and underutilized properties, especially commercial and industrial sites.

**Action Plans:**

- i. Promote Niagara County’s Opportunity Zones Program to private investors
- ii. Implement the South End Initiative – Niagara Street “Gateway” Project in the City of Niagara Falls
- iii. Implement the North End Downtown Revitalization Initiative “Niagara Falls USA Bridge District” in the City of Niagara Falls
- iv. Foster redevelopment of Tonawanda Island waterfront property and other properties part of the NT Momentum Plan in the City of North Tonawanda
- v. Complete projects associated with the City of Lockport Downtown Revitalization Initiative, which will improve walkability, tourism and access to the Erie Canal, and the redevelopment of significant mixed-use properties within downtown Lockport
- vi. Market the former Pfeiffer Foods facility in Wilson to potential developers

- f. **Objective:** Identify and promote mixed-use development projects.

**Action Plans:**

- i. Work with municipal partners to update comprehensive plans and zoning ordinances to encourage and allow mixed-use development
- ii. Complete construction of various mixed-use projects in Village of Lewiston business district
- iii. Promote the uniform adoption and use of the NYS 485-a mixed use real property tax exemption

## **2. Goal: Improve Educational Opportunities to Ensure a Highly Skilled Workforce**

- a. **Objective:** Identify skills gaps for key industries and develop workforce training programs to fill those gaps.



**Action Plans:**

- i. Continue collaboration between educational institutions, Workforce Development Board and its resource partners and the private sector to identify the skills gap in key industry sectors like advanced manufacturing, agribusiness, health and life sciences, hospitality & tourism and logistics
- ii. Continue to meet with local businesses to identify workforce development and skills training needs
- iii. Increase the variety and number of youth programs offered to youth ages 16-24 to provide soft-skills and other educational training to assist with filling entry-level and middle-skill job gaps
- iv. Explore the potential of offering micro-credentials and badges, which entail very brief training courses on skill sets that employers need in their employees

- b. Objective:** Better coordinate and utilize existing education and training programs to ensure an adequate workforce for current and future industries.

**Action Plans:**

- i. Expand the awareness of existing workforce development resources and the number of on the job training and customized training contracts with local businesses
- ii. Develop non-credit to credit pathways to educate incumbent workers and to up-skill and retain current employees
- iii. Increase internship / apprenticeship opportunities with local businesses
- iv. Seek state and federal funding opportunities to support the development of curriculum to meet the workforce needs of local business and growing industry sectors
- v. Develop and promote programs at Niagara County Community College that ensure a highly skilled workforce in current and emerging business sectors including professional piloting, cybersecurity, cannabis, residential and commercial building trades logistics/supply chain management, etc.
- vi. Increase the variety of short-term training opportunities to better match employee skills with employer needs
- vii. Coordinate with Orleans Niagara BOCES to ensure that secondary and adult education skilled trades, health sciences, and service sector programming is consistent with the current and emerging occupational needs for the county and region

- c. Objective:** Develop and improve existing transportation services to better connect people with available jobs.

**Action Plans:**

- i. Continue to foster dialogue between the Niagara Frontier Transportation Authority and Rural Niagara Transportation to make connections where needed for local businesses and job centers

- ii. Work with local businesses to investigate ride-sharing opportunities to help fill transportation gaps for employees

### **3. Goal: Grow and Diversify the Population**

- a. **Objective:** Promote job opportunities to retain current residents and expatriates.

#### **Action Plans:**

- i. Collaborate with Niagara WorkSourceOne and regional workforce development partners to promote job fairs and employment opportunities
- ii. Educate high school and college students on employment opportunities in Niagara County and the Western New York region
- iii. Participate in the Be in Buffalo campaign, aimed at attracting expatriates
- iv. Encourage entrepreneurship through Niagara County's microenterprise fund and through the promotion of local incubators such as TReC

- b. **Objective:** Ensure an adequate supply of diverse housing types that appeal to different ages, incomes, and lifestyles.

#### **Action Plans:**

- i. Develop the underutilized waterfront property at 624 River Road, North Tonawanda with a focus on mixed-use and residential apartments with nearby amenities
- ii. Finalize redevelopment of existing apartments including amenity upgrades within the Village of Lewiston business district
- iii. Market and aid in redevelopment of the former Lockport Air Force Station in Town of Cambria
- iv. Support community development, recognizing housing is a significant driver in the retention and attraction of millennials
- v. Support the sustainable development of the Oliver Street neighborhood in the City of North Tonawanda

- c. **Objective:** Promote our quality education system to new companies and residents.

#### **Action Plans:**

- i. Ensure recruitment materials provided by regional economic development agencies to potential new companies and residents include information on the quality of our education system from primary schools to higher education
- ii. Increase our digital marketing efforts to promote our regional strengths

- d. **Objective:** Promote and develop our low cost of living and high quality of life.

**Action Plans:**

- i. Expand development of the Village of Wilson Downtown Business District by opening a new pharmacy and making improvements to trails and landscaping
- ii. Redevelop a vacant building in the Village of Lewiston into community center
- iii. Design plans for the development of a waterfront park along the shore of Lake Ontario in the Town of Somerset that incorporates the initial shoreline stabilization REDI Project work
- iv. Design and construct bicycle and pedestrian trails from the Lockport Rail Trail to the Erie Canalway Trail
- v. Construct a bicycle path along Lake Ontario that connects the Villages of Wilson and Youngstown
- vi. Conduct the Upper Niagara Shoreline Trail Connectivity Study, which would include a proposed bike trail from the Town of Porter to the Town of Newfane, with a Village of Wilson loop component
- vii. Support a rails-to-trails bicycle path connection between the cities of North Tonawanda and Lockport
- viii. Undertake Day Road Park improvements in the Town of Lockport, including a walking path extension, constructing a multi-use pavilion and adding ADA playground upgrades
- ix. Finalize construction upgrades at Porter on the Lake to include additional pedestrian walkways, public facilities, waterlines and enclosure of the pavilion
- x. Develop programs that retain and attract educated young people

**4. Goal: Diversify Niagara County’s Economic Base to Ensure Resiliency**

- a. Objective:** Identify and attract companies in growing sectors such as health and life sciences, information technology, green technology, agribusiness, and others.

**Action Plans:**

- i. Redevelop the former Somerset Operating System LLC Power Plant into the Empire State Data Hub
- ii. Construct the Western New York First Response and Preparedness Center, which will serve as a catalyst for further development around the Niagara Falls International Airport
- iii. Seek funding and conduct a countywide meat processing facility market demand and economic viability study

- b. Objective:** Market available incentives and resources to growing industry sectors that are not well represented in Niagara County.

**Action Plans:**

- i. Utilize a 64-acres landfill site for renewable energy in the Town of Wilson

- ii. Construct a community solar energy facility on a 30-acre closed landfill in the Town of Niagara
  - iii. Work to steer solar development to landfill and brownfield sites, preserving our farmland
- c. Objective:** Encourage startup companies and microenterprises through training and funding.

**Action Plans:**

- i. Administer the countywide microenterprise grant program in an effort to assist start-ups and small businesses
- ii. Continue the NFC Development Corporation loan and grant financial assistance programs, to promote business growth in the City of Niagara Falls
- iii. Promote existing microenterprise and small business development programs throughout the county
- iv. Continue to provide Small Business Development Center services which include business planning, marketing, global strategies, financial analysis and training services, which are critical to startups and small businesses

**5. Goal: Retain Existing Businesses and Attract New Businesses**

- a. Objective:** Enhance existing business recruitment efforts, especially recruitment of Canadian companies and U.S. companies outside of New York State.

**Action Plans:**

- i. Partner with World Trade Center Buffalo Niagara and Global NY on business recruitment efforts
- ii. Participate in tradeshows and Select USA events to promote Niagara County as a desirable business development location

- b. Objective:** Develop new communication tools to support business outreach efforts.

**Action Plans:**

- i. Identify direct and indirect outreach mechanisms that can be utilized to reach new and existing companies including digital marketing, direct mail, cold calling, newspaper and magazine ads, television and radio ads, and other channels
- ii. Expand lunch and learn series to highlight important topics in key industry sectors
- iii. Bring meaningful information to small groups for more impactful results
- iv. Utilize Global NY personnel to promote exporting assistance to existing companies

- c. **Objective:** Market incentives and resources to attract, retain and grow companies.

**Action Plans:**

- i. Promote Niagara County’s Commercial Property Assessed Clean Energy Program (C-PACE) to companies seeking alternative financing for energy efficiency and building-scale renewable energy project
- ii. Continue to market and promote the various incentive programs, infrastructure assistance and job training opportunities afforded to area businesses through National Fuel, National Grid, New York State Energy & Gas (NYSEG) and New York Power Authority (NYPA)

- d. **Objective:** Promote the natural and cultural assets of the region.

**Action Plans:**

- i. Complete the Flight of Five – Phase III Restoration Project in the City of Lockport and promote the heritage tourism in the Locks District
- ii. Re-validate the concept and feasibility, and identify and secure the site of, “The Niagara Experience” Heritage Center (NEC) in City of Niagara Falls
- iii. Expand the Riviera Theatre in the City of North Tonawanda as part of cultural tourism development
- iv. Ensure recruitment materials provided by regional economic development agencies to potential new companies and residents include information on the quality of our natural and cultural assets

- e. **Objective:** Expand business retention efforts through outreach and incentives

**Action Plans:**

- i. Continue the Niagara County Business Growth and Retention Program, whereby economic development professionals conduct direct outreach efforts to keep companies abreast of the various programs available to them in their efforts to invest in their facilities, and retain and create jobs
- ii. Complete the expansion project of Armstrong Fluid Technologies manufacturing facility in the City of North Tonawanda
- iii. Finish façade improvements consistent with design guidelines in targeted commercial districts in the Town of Lockport
- iv. Expand the Woodcock Brothers Brewery in Town of Wilson to include a bottling facility
- v. Advocate for the construction of a pharmacy to serve the citizens of Wilson
- vi. Implement the Oliver Street Commercial Façade Renovation Program in the City of North Tonawanda to improve the business district

## **6. Goal: Improve the Image of Niagara County**

- a. Objective:** Coordinate local and regional marketing efforts.

### **Action Plans:**

- i. Work with Invest Buffalo Niagara, Destination Niagara USA, Empire State Development, and other marketing agencies to ensure equitable promotion of Niagara County in marketing efforts

- b. Objective:** Identify opportunities to brand and promote Niagara County strengths.

### **Action Plans:**

- i. Work with regional economic development partners to create a Niagara County focused marketing campaign highlighting Niagara County's strengths
- ii. Develop a marketing plan that includes brand development and promotion within local, regional, and external markets

- c. Objective:** Create compelling stories regarding Niagara County successes.

### **Action Plans:**

- i. Promote local success stories through Niagara County's partnership with World Trade Center Buffalo Niagara, Invest Buffalo Niagara, the International Trade Gateway Organization, Focus on Niagara TV show, and other various conferences and events
- ii. Work with Niagara County's Public Information Officer to strengthen the County's image as business-friendly
- iii. Develop videos and other promotional materials highlighting Niagara County project successes

## **7. Goal: Provide the Infrastructure Necessary for Growth and Development**

- a. Objective:** Direct development to sites already served by utility and transportation infrastructure.

### **Action Plans:**

- i. Improve Transit North infrastructure and streetscaping to enhance attractiveness for further retail business expansion
- ii. Identify available development sites served by existing infrastructure and promote these sites as faster and affordable development opportunities
- iii. Encourage the construction of multi-tenant spec buildings and industrial suites in areas served by existing infrastructure

**b. Objective:** Reinvest in existing infrastructure to create new development opportunities.

**Action Plans:**

- i. Complete the adaptive reuse of the Rainbow Center Mall and Ramp in the City of Niagara Falls
- ii. Construct the Olcott Harbor Breakwater in the Town of Newfane to protect existing infrastructure, allow redevelopment of the harbor, and create new waterfront development opportunities
- iii. Rehabilitate the Gulf Interceptor Sewer in the City of Lockport
- iv. Implement Town of Newfane Wastewater Treatment Plant upgrades and improvements
- v. Undertake Town of Newfane Marina upgrades, through dock upgrades and replacements and repaving of the boat/trailer parking area

**c. Objective:** Make strategic investments in new infrastructure at key development sites such as planned business and industrial parks, and other sites.

**Action Plans:**

- i. Construct the Niagara Falls International Airport Fiber-optic Network
- ii. Design and construct the Lockport Harbor and Marine Center
- iii. Complete needed infrastructure including entrance road, sanitary sewer and associated pump station at the Cambria Technology Park, which is a NYS Certified Shovel-Ready site
- iv. Replace and upgrade the water/wastewater lines along Saunders Settlement Road

**d. Objective:** Activate and enhance rail infrastructure and rail-served sites to support industry.

**Action Plans:**

- i. Create and market an inventory of available rail-served sites
- ii. Work with the Greater Buffalo Niagara Regional Transportation Council and International Trade Gateway Buffalo Niagara to identify rail infrastructure improvements necessary to support local industry including the freight industry

**e. Objective:** Invest in roads, bridges, and other infrastructure critical to the movement of people, goods, and services, including international bridges.

**Action Plans:**

- i. Implement the Niagara County Rural Bridges Initiative, whereby reconstruction of various structurally deficient rural bridges within Niagara County will help support the flow of agribusiness-related commerce
- ii. Complete dredging of Olcott Harbor in the Town of Newfane to a minimum depth for existing boat traffic

- iii. Construct the Riverway Phase II Project, including the Hyde Park Blvd Roundabout, in the City of Niagara Falls
- f. **Objective:** Expand broadband access to all parts of the county and attract more service providers.

**Action Plans:**

- i. Implement the Niagara-Orleans Regional Alliance (NORA) Rural Broadband Initiative to provide broadband internet services to unserved commercial and residential customers in rural areas of Niagara and Orleans Counties
- ii. Construct the Niagara Falls International Airport Fiber-optic Network and identify opportunities to expand the network to additional businesses and sites
- iii. Encourage municipalities and utility providers to adopt dig once policies, joint trenching agreements, and requirements for installation of fiber-optic conduit as part of major infrastructure projects such as road reconstruction projects
- iv. Work with internet service providers to identify build-out opportunities in unserved and underserved parts of the county



## **IV. Evaluation Framework**

The Evaluation Framework is an important element of Niagara County’s ongoing planning process. It is designed to answer the questions, “How are we doing?” and “What can we do better?” It is structured around key metrics that serve as indicators of success in achieving our goals and objectives. These performance measures help monitor our progress in implementing the CEDS. The Evaluation Framework includes both Overarching Performance Measures and Goal-Specific Performance Measures, which are detailed below.

### **A. Overarching Performance Measures**

Overarching performance measures are those that provide a broad indication of Niagara County’s economic health. They include conventional measures of growth and prosperity commonly used to compare local, regional, state, and national trends such as unemployment rate and median household income. They also include county-specific benchmarks like gross county product. Overarching performance measures are as follows.

**Metric: Average Annual Unemployment Rate**

Data source: NYS Department of Labor Local Area Unemployment Statistics Program

Benchmark: 5.2% (2018)

Current: 5.0% (2019)

Change:  0.2%

Summary: A decline in the unemployment rate or a consistently low unemployment rate indicates an improvement in Niagara County’s economic health. Between 2018 and 2019, the average annual unemployment rate in Niagara County decreased by 0.2%, reflecting a national trend in historically low unemployment rates. However, early assessments of the economic fallout resulting from the COVID-19 global health crisis show unemployment rates skyrocketing to as high as 25%.

**Metric: Median Household Income**

Data source: U.S. Census Bureau Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates Program

Benchmark: \$55,355 (2017)

Current: \$55,013 (2018)

Change:  \$342 (0.6%)


Summary: Median household income is the income level where half of the households in Niagara County earn more and half earn less. Changes in the dollar amount are indicators of the economic health of the county’s residents. Between 2017 and 2018, the median household income in Niagara County decreased by 0.6%. The benchmark data was adjusted to 2018 dollars using the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics Consumer Price Index inflation calculator.


**Metric: Percent of Population Below the Poverty Line**

Data source: U.S. Census Bureau Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates Program

Benchmark: 12.4% (2017)

Current: 13.0% (2018)

Change:  0.6%  
Summary: The number of people below the poverty line indicates the percentage of Niagara County’s population that does not have the minimum level of income needed to secure the daily necessities. Between 2017 and 2018, the percent of Niagara County’s population living below the poverty line increased by 0.6%.

**Metric:** **Gross Domestic Product by County**  
Data source: U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis  
Benchmark: \$9,120,533,000 (2015)  
Current: \$10,002,259,000 (2018)  
Change:  881,726,000 (4.1%)  
Summary: Gross Domestic Product by County, known informally as Gross County Product or GCP, represents the combined output of all of the businesses, nonprofit organizations, and government agencies within a given county. Between 2015 and 2018, GCP in Niagara County increased nearly \$882 million or 9.7%, which is an average annual growth rate of 3.2%


## B. Goal-Specific Performance Measures

Goal-specific performance measures are those that provide an indication of our progress in achieving the goals outlined in the previous section. Each performance measure is also designed to address one or more objectives. These measures more specifically address Niagara County’s success in implementing the CEDS.

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### 1. Goal: **Increase and Promote Land and Buildings Available for Development**

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**Metric:** **Acres of Vacant Land Zoned for Commercial Development**  
Data source: Niagara County Department of Economic Development, Niagara County Real Property Tax Services Office  
Benchmark: 5,724.0 (2010)  
Current: 4,886.4 (2019)  
Change:  837.6 (14.6%)  
Summary: The amount of vacant land zoned for commercial development in Niagara County decreased by 837.6 acres or 14.6% between 2010 and 2019. The decrease in supply is attributable to the amount of development taking place along major commercial corridors including Niagara Falls Boulevard, Military Road, Transit Road, and others. In addition, the Town of Royalton rezoned all of its Business districts to Light Industrial, though commercial uses are still allowed in the Light Industrial districts. Municipalities should look to new zoning strategies in order to increase the amount of commercial land available for development, including mixed-used zoning districts and less linear forms of commercial zoning.

**Metric: Acres of Vacant Land Zoned for Industrial Development**

Data source: Niagara County Department of Economic Development, Niagara County Real Property Tax Services Office

Benchmark: 7,645.0 (2010)

Current: 9,166.2 (2019)

Change:  1,521.1 (19.9%)

Summary: The amount of vacant land zoned for industrial development in Niagara County increased by 1,521.1 acres or 19.9% between 2010 and 2019, ensuring there is an adequate supply of industrial land available for development. The large increase in the supply of available industrial land is attributable, in part, to the rezoning of 536 acres of land from Agriculture and Residence to Industrial along the CSX rail line in the Town of Cambria. The Town of Royalton also added 276 acres of industrial land through rezoning.

**Metric: Average Monthly Pageviews for Sites Page of NCCED Website**

Data source: Google Analytics Report for NCCED Website

Benchmark: 56.1 (November 2019 to May 2020)

Current: 50 (May 2020)

Change:  6.1 (10.9%)

Summary: The “Sites” page of the Niagara County Center for Economic Development (NCCED) website contains a list of Featured Sites as well as a Site Finder tool that can be used to find land and buildings available for sale or lease. The successful promotion of available real estate will result in an increase in traffic to the Sites page. The NCCED launched a new website in late October 2019, so visitation data is presently limited. The current benchmark of Average Monthly Pageviews will be replaced with Annual Pageviews once the data is available. It is evident based on the data that more work needs to be done to drive traffic to this page. Monthly pageviews are currently trending downward, likely due to the economic downturn resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Metric: Commercial and Industrial Building Permits Issued**

Data source: Niagara County Department of Economic Development Annual Survey of Construction Permits

Benchmark: 285 (2017)

Current: 352 (2018)

Change:  67 (28.3%)

Summary: The number of commercial and industrial building permits issued represents the non-residential activity occurring annually in Niagara County and is an indicator of the how the county’s tax base is changing. More activity occurred in 2018 compared to 2017 and was concentrated in a few areas. Permits issued in the City of North Tonawanda and Town of Niagara accounted for 67.6% of all commercial and industrial permits issued in 2018.

**Metric: Value of Commercial and Industrial Building Permits Issued**

Data source: Niagara County Department of Economic Development Annual Survey of Construction Permits

Benchmark: \$40,638,052 (2017)

Current: \$34,871,027 (2018)

Change: ↓ \$5,767,025 (-14.2%)

Summary: The value of commercial and industrial activity in Niagara County decreased significantly between 2017 and 2018 even though there was a sharp increase in the number of permits issued. In 2017, five projects in the Town of Lockport were valued at \$14.2 million which accounts for the large decrease in value depicted in 2018.

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**2. Goal: Improve Educational Opportunities to Ensure Highly Skilled Workforce**

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**Metric: Graduates from Select ONBOCES Programs**

Data source: Orleans/Niagara Board of Cooperative Educational Services (ONBOCES)

Benchmark: 376 (2015-2016)

Current: 443 (2018-2019)

Change: ↑ 67 (17.8%)

Summary: The Orleans/Niagara Board of Cooperative Educational Services has developed curriculum to meet the workforce needs of local businesses. The table below shows the number of graduates from select ONBOCES workforce development programs. Between school years 2015-2016 and 2018-2019, the total number of graduates in these programs increased 17.8%. The largest rates of increase were from the Health Science Professions and Electricity/Electronics program. Only one program – Heating, Ventilating, Air Conditioning – experienced a decrease in the number of graduates. Educational programs must continue to adapt to the needs of businesses by offering curriculum that prepares workers for available jobs.

<b>Program</b>	<b>2015-2016</b>	<b>2018-2019</b>	<b>Change</b>
Practical Nursing (PN)	36	38	5.6%
Health Science Professions (other than PN)	89	135	51.7%
Welding	95	106	11.6%
CNC Machining	31	32	3.2%
Electricity/Electronics	56	71	26.8%
Heating, Ventilating, Air Conditioning	69	61	-11.6%
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>376</b>	<b>443</b>	<b>17.8%</b>

**Metric: Anticipated Enrollment in Select NCCC Programs**

Data source: Niagara County Community College (NCCC)

Summary: Niagara County Community College is developing new curriculum to meet the workforce needs of local businesses. New programs in Residential & Commercial Building Trades and Logistics/Supply Chain Management will start accepting students in the Fall 2020 semester. The table below shows the expected student enrollment in each of these programs through Fall 2021. Each of these programs is expected to grow in demand based on job availability. No benchmark is provided for this data as the programs have not yet started. Educational programs must continue to adapt to the needs of businesses by offering curriculum that prepares workers for available jobs.

Program	Fall 2020	Spring 2021	Fall 2021
Residential & Commercial Building Trades	0	18	35
Logistics/Supply Chain Management	12	30	>30

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**3. Goal: Grow and Diversify the Population**

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**Metric: Annual Population Growth by Municipality**

Data source: U.S. Census Bureau Annual Estimates of the Resident Population

Summary: Population changes reflect the number of people moving into and out of Niagara County, but can also represent movement of the population in the county from one municipality to another. Between 2010 and 2019, Niagara County lost 3.3% of its population. In fact, every municipality in Niagara County lost population with the exception of the Town of Pendleton, which grew by 6.8%.

Municipality	Benchmark (2010)	Current (2019)	Change	Percent
Niagara County	216,469	209,281	-7,188	-3.3%
City of Lockport	21,165	20,305	-860	-4.1%
City of Niagara Falls	50,193	47,720	-2,473	-4.9%
City of North Tonawanda	31,568	30,245	-1,323	-4.2%
Town of Cambria	5,839	5,745	-94	-1.6%
Town of Hartland	4,117	3,973	-144	-3.5%
Town of Lewiston	16,262	15,729	-533	-3.3%
Town of Lockport	20,529	19,908	-621	-3.0%
Town of Newfane	9,666	9,149	-517	-5.3%
Town of Niagara	8,378	8,063	-315	-3.8%
Town of Pendleton	6,397	6,829	432	6.8%
Town of Porter	6,771	6,530	-241	-3.6%
Town of Royalton	7,660	7,506	-154	-2.0%
Town of Somerset	2,662	2,548	-114	-4.3%
Town of Wheatfield	18,117	18,053	-64	-0.4%
Town of Wilson	5,993	5,787	-206	-3.4%
Village of Barker	533	507	-26	-4.9%

Village of Lewiston	2,701	2,570	-131	-4.9%
Village of Middleport	1,840	1,743	-97	-5.3%
Village of Wilson	1,264	1,221	-43	-3.4%
Village of Youngstown	1,935	1,880	-55	-2.8%

**Metric: Niagara County Population Diversity Index**

Data source: Environmental Systems Research Institute (Esri) Diversity Index

Benchmark: 28 (2018)

Current: 29 (2019)

Change: ↑ 1

Summary: Esri’s Diversity Index shows the likelihood that two persons, chosen at random from the same area, belong to different race or ethnic groups. The index ranges from 0 (no diversity) to 100 (complete diversity). While Niagara County was slightly more diverse in 2019 than the previous year, it is still significantly less diverse than New York State, which had a Diversity Index of 71 in 2019. It is also much less diverse than the United States as a whole, which had a Diversity Index of 65 in 2019.

**4. Goal: Diversify Niagara County’s Economic Base to Ensure Resiliency**

**Metric: Economic Diversity Index**

Data source: Chmura Economics & Analytics, JobsEQ

Current: 66.7 (2020)

Summary: Economic diversity measures the degree to which a region possesses a broad mix of economic activities. The highest level of economic diversity is achieved when all industries are equally represented in a region. Economic diversity ensures the county is not overly reliant on any one industry sector and is resilient to economic shocks. The Economic Diversity Index (EDI) developed by Chmura Economics & Analytics measures the industry employment mix compared to that of the U.S. as a whole, which is the most economically diverse region with an index value of 100. A relatively low index value implies the region is fairly economically diverse, while a high value means the region is not very economically diverse.

Since historical data is not readily available, no benchmark is provided. Instead, Niagara County’s EDI is compared with other regions, as follows. EDI’s range from a low of 37.6 in Maricopa County, AZ (Phoenix) to a high of 175.8 in rural Eureka County, NV. Niagara County is less economically diverse than neighboring Erie County, which has an EDI of 46.9, but more economically diverse than New York County (Manhattan), which has an EDI of 87.4. Niagara County’s EDI ranks it 292, which puts it in the top 10% most economically diverse counties in the U.S.

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**5. Goal: Retain Existing Businesses and Attract New Businesses**

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**Metric: Employer Business Establishments**

Data source: U.S. Census Bureau County Business Patterns

Benchmark: 4,584 (2016)

Current: 4,594 (2017)

Change:  10 (0.2%)

Summary: County Business Patterns is an annual data series that provides economic data by industry for businesses that have paid employees. The most recent year for which data is available is 2017. For reasons of data confidentiality, the following industry sectors are not included in the data set for Niagara County: Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting; Mining; and Public Administration. Niagara County saw an increase in 10 employer business establishments between 2016 and 2017. Year-over-year increases in the number of business establishments signal a growing economy.

**Metric: Nonemployer Business Establishments**

Data source: U.S. Census Bureau Nonemployer Statistics

Benchmark: 9,870 (2017)

Current: 10,336 (2018)

Change:  466 (4.7%)


Summary: Nonemployer Statistics is an annual data series that provides economic data for businesses that are subject to federal income tax, but have no paid employees. The data is a good indicator of small and startup business activity. In 2018, there were 10,336 nonemployer business establishments in Niagara County, an increase of 466 establishments or 4.7% from the previous year. Year-over-year increases in the number of nonemployer business establishments signal a growing economy.

**Metric: Companies Contacted through Business Growth & Retention Program**

Data source: NCDED Program Files

Benchmark: 2018 – 76 companies

Current: 2019 – 79 companies

Change:  3


Summary: The Niagara County Department of Economic Development, working with its' Economic Development Partners, strives to contact at least 60 companies annually. The goal is to assist existing companies with programs to enable them to be more competitive, invest in their facilities, retain, and create jobs.

**Metric: Percentage of Capital Investment from NCIDA PILOTs**

Data source: Niagara County Industrial Development Agency Closed Projects

Benchmark: 5 project (2018) \$71M Capital Investment

Current: 19 project (2019) \$104M Capital Investment

Change:  14 (26% increase in projects & 68% increase in investment)

Summary: The amount of private capital investment incentivized through payment-in-lieu-

of-tax agreements (PILOTs) with the Niagara County Industrial Development Agency is a good indicator of our economic development efforts. The share of private capital invested by new companies versus existing companies indicates whether we are succeeding in attracting outside companies to the area, furthermore, the continued investment that existing companies spend indicates that we are a region that supports growth through policies in place that serve the business community. The data shows that we had three new projects and two expansion projects in 2018 and nine new projects and ten expansion projects in 2019. These numbers are strong indicators that show existing companies have a desire to invest in the region and also prove that we are competitive in attracting new investment.

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**6. Goal: Improve the Image of Niagara County**

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**Metric: Value of Media Campaigns**

Data source: Niagara County Department of Economic Development Marketing Program

Benchmark: \$21,892 (2019)

Current: \$40,000 (2020)

Change:  \$18,108 (54%)

Summary: Niagara County undertook 3 media campaigns in 2019 valued at \$21,892. These media campaigns were undertaken by the Niagara County Center for Economic Development and mainly targeted Southern Ontario. Now and throughout the rest of the year we will partnership with outside agencies such as Invest Buffalo Niagara and World Trade Center Buffalo Niagara to bolster our image and be a part of larger campaigns that can reach a much larger audience. With our partners we will continue to promote ourselves throughout Ontario Canada and will continue to receive opportunities that put us in front of manufacturing groups, exporters, chambers, and other interest groups.

**Metric: Average Daily Reach of NCCED Facebook Posts**

Data source: Facebook Insights, Key Metrics

Benchmark: 6.8 (2018)

Current: 14.3 (2019)

Change:  7.5

Summary: This metric represents the average number of people per day who had any of the Niagara County Center for Economic Development’s Facebook posts enter their screen. This includes status updates, photo albums, links, events, and other content. The data is strongly correlated with the total number of NCCED Facebook posts per year and number of page likes. In 2019, the NCCED’s Facebook posts reached an average of 7.5 more people per day than its posts in 2018, an increase of 110%.



The NCCED is using social media to help improve the image of Niagara County as an attractive and business-friendly place; to establish the NCCED as a tech-savvy organization; and to expand the NCCED's internet footprint, building organic reach and driving traffic to its website and social media pages. A year-over-year increase in the average daily reach of NCCED Facebook posts will serve as an indication of success in improving the image of Niagara County.

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**7. Goal: Provide the Infrastructure Necessary for Growth and Development**

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**Metric: Percentage of Bridges Rated Deficient**

Data source: New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT) GIS Data

Benchmark: Not available

Current: 21.7% (2019)

Change: To be determined

Summary: The New York State Department of Transportation uses a single Condition Rating for each bridge, which is calculated from the weighted average of 13 different bridge inspection elements. Condition Rating is the most widely used bridge condition performance indicator. If the bridge's Condition Rating is less than 5.00, NYSDOT considers it "Deficient." Out of the 322 bridges in Niagara County, 70 bridges (21.7%) are rated as "Deficient." Retired bridges and bridges without a Condition Rating were removed from the analysis. Since historical data is not readily available, no benchmark is provided. This performance measure will be updated moving forward with the current data serving as the benchmark.

**Metric: Percentage of Lane Miles of Road Rated Poor**

Data source: Greater Buffalo Niagara Regional Transportation Council Road Score Data

Benchmark: 5.7% (2013)

Current: 8.9% (2017)

Change: ↑ 3.2%

Summary: State and local transportation departments use a Road Score to rate and track the surface condition of all streets/roads/highways eligible for federal aid. Each road segment in the county is given a score ranging from 1 to 10, where a score of "5" or lower is consider "Poor" condition. Out of the 1,322.3 lane miles of road in Niagara County eligible for federal aid, 74.9 lane miles (5.7%) were rated "Poor" in 2013. In 2017, the most recent year for which data is available across all state and local jurisdictions, 118.0 lane miles (8.9%) were rated "Poor," which is an increase of 3.2%. Lane miles are calculated by multiplying the length of the street/road/highway segment by the number of traffic lanes within that segment.

**Metric: Percent of Households with Broadband Internet Service**

Data source: U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Benchmark: 73.2% (2017)

Current: 76.1% (2018)

Change:  2.9%

Summary: The percent of households in Niagara County with broadband internet service increased by 2.9% between 2017 and 2018, representing a significant improvement in broadband access. While more households in Niagara County have a broadband connection, 21,095 households (nearly 24%) lack broadband service. The Federal Communications Commission defines broadband as 25 megabits per second (Mbps) download speed and 3 Mbps upload speed. Niagara County is working to expand broadband access by extending infrastructure to unserved and under-served areas as well as making service more affordable through greater market competition. Niagara County will achieve its goal when all households that want broadband service have access to it.

## **V. Economic Resilience**

Niagara County's economic prosperity is linked to its ability to prevent, withstand, and quickly recover from major disruptions or "shocks" to its economic base, which is known as "economic resilience." Economic resilience has three primary attributes: the ability to recover quickly from a shock, the ability to withstand a shock, and the ability to avoid the shock altogether. This requires anticipating risks, evaluating how those risks can impact key economic assets, and building a response capability. Potential risks include:

- Downturns or other significant events in the national or international economy which impact demand for locally produced goods and consumer spending;
- Downturns in particular industries that constitute a critical component of the region's economic activity; and/or
- Other external shocks such as a natural or manmade disaster, closure of a military base, exit of a major employer, etc.

Through the preparation of this CEDS document, Niagara County's economic development partners are working together to build capacity for economic resilience. In the event of a shock or disruption to our economic base, these agencies will be critical in providing post-incident coordination, disseminating information, responding to external inquiries, and undertaking recovery initiatives. Niagara County's efforts to build capacity for economic resilience can be divided into two main categories: resilience planning and communication.

### **A. Resilience Planning**

Niagara County is planning and implementing a number of initiatives to be more economically resilient. These initiatives are designed to both mitigate the effects of an economic shock as well as support long-term recovery efforts. Niagara County has identified key threats to its economic prosperity; early warning tools and indicators of economic stress; goals, objectives, and actions to address these threats; and ways to measure success.

#### **1. Challenges and Vulnerabilities**

Niagara County faces several key challenges and possesses vulnerabilities that must be addressed in order to achieve economic resilience. In many instances, local and regional stakeholders are already working to address these challenges and overcome our vulnerabilities.

- **Decline in manufacturing** – Niagara County has experienced a multi-decade decline in manufacturing, which historically dominated the region's economy. Efforts to sustain the current base of manufacturing and diversify the economy are improving economic resilience, but challenges remain.
- **Skills gap** – One of the biggest challenges identified by local employers, especially in the manufacturing and construction sectors, is the skills gap of workers. This may be due to a lack of emphasis on vocational learning at the secondary level. Efforts in recent years to close the skills gap through new programming at Niagara County Community College, Orleans Niagara BOCES, Northland Workforce Training Center, Buffalo Employment & Training Center, and others is helping to address industry needs.

- **Access to transportation** – Another challenge facing businesses is access to transportation by workers. Many workers are unable to take full advantage of available employment opportunities due to lack of transportation options. This problem can be addressed by locating jobs closer to population centers as well as expanding public transportation to areas with high employment concentrations.
- **Urban poverty** – Persistent urban poverty is also a significant challenge within the region. In the City of Niagara Falls where 23.0% of Niagara County’s population resides, the poverty rate is 27.4%. This is more than twice the 13.4% poverty rate of Niagara County and 13.6% poverty rate of New York State (2018 ACS 5-Year Estimates). In a likely correlation, the unemployment rate in the City of Niagara Falls is higher and the median household income is lower than Niagara County as a whole.
- **High cost of doing business** – The biggest challenge to Niagara County’s economy is the high cost of doing business in New York State. According to the Tax Foundation’s 2020 State Business Tax Climate Index, New York State has the second-worst business tax climate, ranking 49<sup>th</sup> out of 50 in 2020. The state ranked 50<sup>th</sup> in the five years prior. The report notes high personal income tax, high sales tax, high property tax, and relatively high unemployment insurance tax. The state ranks 13<sup>th</sup> in corporate tax rate, which is more competitive.
- **Broadband internet access** – Another key challenge in Niagara County is broadband internet access. In areas where broadband internet is accessible, lack of choice among service providers has resulted in high prices. The lack of competition also reduces the incentive for internet service providers to make the infrastructure investments necessary to increase bandwidth speeds. An estimated 20,107 or 22.8% of households in Niagara County do not have internet service (2018 ACS 5-Year Estimates). Rural broadband access remains the biggest challenge as internet service providers are unwilling to make the infrastructure investments necessary to expand service due to low subscriber densities.
- **National image** – One of the most persistent challenges to Niagara County’s economy has been its national image. Niagara County, like many counties in the northeast and Great Lakes region, is known as a Rust Belt community with a high cost of business and cold, snowy weather. Organizations such as Destination Niagara USA, Visit Buffalo Niagara, Invest Buffalo Niagara, and the Niagara County Center for Economic Development are working to improve our image through aggressive marketing campaigns targeting millennials and visitors.
- **Military base closure** – Niagara County has several vulnerabilities to economic resilience, as well. Chief among them is the threat of closure of the Niagara Falls Air Reserve Station (NFARS). With over 3,000 full and part-time personnel, NFARS is Niagara County’s largest employer. The base has an annual economic impact of \$143 million (Niagara Military Affairs Council, 2019). NFARS houses U.S. Air Force Reserve, U.S. Army Reserve, New York Air National Guard, and New York Army National Guard units as well

as the Buffalo Military Entrance Processing Station. Closure of the NFARS would have a devastating effect on the local economy. Niagara County works tirelessly with its partners in the community to ensure the long-term presence of the base.

- **Large business closures** – Like anywhere in the U.S., Niagara County is prone to the closure of large businesses. One of the biggest closures in recent history was the Somerset Operating Company, which was Niagara County’s largest taxpayer. Closures in the chemical and vehicle manufacturing industries have also significantly impacted the local economy. The job and tax implications and the associated ripple effects of these closures is significant.
- **Natural disasters** – Niagara County is also vulnerable to natural disasters, especially heavy rainstorms, snowstorms, and lakeshore flooding. While Niagara County does not get the level of snow experienced to the south in neighboring Erie County, it has been particularly susceptible to coastal flooding due to a combination of heavy precipitation in the Great Lakes basin and the lake level management policies of the International Joint Commission. Policy issues are being addressed through pressure from state and local governments. Manmade disasters are also a possibility.
- **Global health crises** – Lastly, as we have recently learned, Niagara County is also vulnerable to global health crises. In fact, the region has experienced the third-worst job loss in the nation as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. As of April 2020, the region has lost an estimated 23.3% or 110,500 of its private-sector jobs (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2020). We are still learning from this experience.

## **2. Early Warning Tools**

There are a number of key data sources that inform our economic development efforts and our economic resiliency. Chief among them are ongoing reports from our economic development partners that measure economic performance at the local and regional levels and identify challenges facing the business community. These reporting tools were developed as part of separate, but interrelated, economic development initiatives. They are designed to measure progress in achieving goals and objectives for growing our economy, strengthening our quality of life, and improving our business climate, but they can also serve as early warning tools, signaling economic stress and identifying looming challenges. In addition to the resources below, this CEDS includes a number of key indicators of the state of our economy. It will be updated every three to five years, serving as an important early warning tool.

- **WNY Regional Economic Development Council Annual Progress Report** – measures progress in achieving the goals and objectives outlined in the WNY Regional Economic Development Strategic Plan. This dashboard report is instrumental in gauging the economic health of the five-county Western New York Region.

- **One Region Forward Report Card** – provides updates on key metrics used to evaluate progress in implementing One Region Forward, the Regional Plan for Sustainable Development in the two-county Buffalo-Niagara Region. This dashboard report, released every three years, was last updated in 2018. It includes key indicators of sustainable growth and development, including economic impacts of development patterns.
- **Niagara County Annual Economic Development Address** – serves as an update to the Niagara County Legislature on economic development initiatives undertaken by the Niagara County Center for Economic Development. This annual report includes key metrics on business retention, marketing, business expansion, and new business recruitment activities. The data provides a baseline for comparing economic development activities year over year.
- **Buffalo Niagara Partnership Advocacy Agenda** – The Buffalo Niagara Partnership advocates for economic development and business policies on behalf of its members, which include government, businesses, and nonprofits. The BNP’s Advocacy Agenda, which is released annually, includes a number of metrics on key challenges facing businesses, which underlie their advocacy efforts.
- **Niagara County NY Rising Countywide Resiliency Plan** – This plan was a collaboration between stakeholders in government, business, education, and emergency services. The plan addresses risks and vulnerabilities to flooding. It includes reconstruction and recovery measures as well as strategies to mitigate the impact of future flooding. The plan provides a comprehensive framework for addressing resiliency.

### **3. Goals, Objectives, and Actions**

A number of the goals, objectives, and actions identified in the Strategic Direction and Action Plan section of the CEDS address issues pertaining to economic resilience. Below are some of the actions Niagara County is pursuing to address goals and objectives related to economic resilience.

- **Invest in infrastructure** – Niagara County will continue to seek grant funding wherever possible to enhance our infrastructure. We will continue to make strategic investments in utility and transportation improvements to better serve the businesses across the county. We will also continue to monitor zoning to ensure adequate property exists for development and utilize our Brownfields program to bring underdeveloped or contaminated sites back online.
- **Market business opportunities** – Niagara County will continue our outreach efforts through a variety of programs to notify our existing businesses of the opportunities available to assist them with future growth. We will partner with organizations to promote our region to companies outside the area.

- **Identify and fill skills gaps / educate and train workforce** – Continue collaboration between educational institutions, Workforce Development Board and its resource partners and the private sector to identify the skills gap in key industry sectors like advanced manufacturing, agribusiness, health and life sciences, hospitality & tourism and logistics. Continue to meet with local businesses to identify workforce development and skills training needs.
- **Improve employment access (transportation)** – Through our rural transportation coordinator, we will seek a better coordinated transit system. The new system will take into account all transportation providers and create routes that better serve the community and coordinate the needs with the demands.
- **Identify and attract workers in growing industry sectors** – Expand the awareness of existing workforce development resources and the number of on the job training and customized training contracts with local businesses that are currently available. We will also work to bridge the gap between the needs of companies and the educational programs within the schools, ensuring a future pipeline of skilled individuals that are available to our local businesses.
- **Encourage startups and microenterprises** – Administer a countywide microenterprise grant program in an effort to assist start-ups and small businesses and continue the NFC Development Corporation loan and grant financial assistance programs, to promote business growth in the City of Niagara Falls. We will also continue to provide Small Business Development Center services which include business planning, marketing, global strategies, financial analysis and training services, which are critical to startups and small businesses.
- **Attract and retain companies** – Continue the Niagara County Business Growth and Retention Program, and increase outreach efforts post COVID-19, whereby economic development professionals conduct meetings in order to keep companies abreast of the various programs available to them in their efforts to invest in their facilities, and retain and create jobs.
- **Provide resources to businesses** – Expand our business retention program to include additional in person meetings as well as virtual outreach. We will continue to educate our business community about the resources available to assist them in growth and expansion. We will also work to ensure our local companies become more sustainable, improving their ability to endure dramatic economic shifts.
- **Brand and promote strengths** – Work with Invest Buffalo Niagara, Destination Niagara USA, Empire State Development, and other marketing agencies to ensure equitable promotion of Niagara County in marketing efforts. Promote local success stories through Niagara County’s partnership with World Trade Center Buffalo Niagara, Invest Buffalo

Niagara, the International Trade Gateway Organization, Focus on Niagara TV show, and other various conferences and events.

- **Expand broadband access** – Niagara County will seek to expand broadband access to all parts of the county and attract more service providers. In an effort to accomplish this Niagara County will create and implement the Niagara-Orleans Regional Alliance (NORA) Rural Broadband Initiative, to provide broadband internet services to unserved commercial and residential customers in rural areas of Niagara and Orleans Counties. Niagara County will also construct the Niagara Falls International Airport Fiber-optic Network and encourage municipalities and utility providers to adopt dig once policies, joint trenching agreements, and requirements for installation of fiber-optic conduit as part of major infrastructure projects such as road reconstruction projects.

#### **4. Economic Resilience Measures**

Measuring economic resilience provides a way to gauge how an area can effectively respond to future stresses and changes in the economic climate resulting from both internal and external forces. Two common economic resilience measures are the degree of regional economic diversification and degree of regional income equality.

- **Economic diversification index (EDI)** – Economic diversity measures the degree to which a region possesses a broad mix of economic activities and industries. The highest level of economic diversity is achieved when all industries are equally represented in a region. Economic diversity ensures the county is not overly reliant on any one industry sector and is resilient to economic shocks. Niagara County has a diversified economic base and even though the region has been slow to grow it has not been subject to the more national level fluctuations. Niagara County’s EDI ranks it 292, which puts it in the top 10% most economically diverse counties in the U.S. Maintaining this diversification will allow the county to continue experiencing a stable economy.
- **Unemployment** – Unemployment negatively impacts the disposable income of families, erodes purchasing power, and decreases an economy's output. Reduced purchasing power can often lead to unemployment for other workers, creating a cascading effect that ripples through the economy. Niagara County has been fortunate in maintaining a relatively low unemployment rate. By monitoring the unemployment rate, more informative decisions can be made about ways to counter unemployment and steer the economy in a positive direction.
- **Median household income** – Median income reflects the income status of the majority of households and is a good representation of economic health of an area. Changes in median income reflect several trends including an aging population who are no longer working, evolution of the household and family composition, changing work and schooling patterns, and both long- and short-term trends in the economy itself. Niagara County’s median household income has remained relatively stable.



- **Percent of population below poverty line** – The number of people below the poverty line indicates the percentage of Niagara County’s population that does not have the minimum level of income needed to meet daily needs. People below the poverty level typically require governmental intervention so a higher poverty rate correlates to a higher amount of governmental services required. Niagara County’s percentage of the population below poverty line is lower than the NYS percentage but higher than the national percentage.

## **B. Communication**

Niagara County has established a number of mechanisms to facilitate active and regular communication between relevant stakeholders in the public, private, and nonprofit sectors. These stakeholders are working proactively to address common challenges, particularly as they relate to economic development. Niagara County also serves as a data repository and hub for information through its Center for Economic Development, which most recently developed and deployed capabilities to keep businesses and workers informed during the COVID-19 pandemic.

### **1. Stakeholder Collaboration and Information Exchange**

Stakeholder collaboration and information exchange are critical during times of crisis. Niagara County has a number of unique outlets for communicating with stakeholders and disseminating information, particularly in the government and business sectors. In times of economic crisis, Niagara County can leverage these channels to coordinate an effective response effort.

- **Economic Development Alliance** – Established by the Niagara County Legislature in 1993 as a working group of economic development professionals in the region representing over 30 agencies. The group meets quarterly with the sole purpose to provide a wide range of supportive services to business and to coordinate and facilitate the provision of those services.
- **Niagara County Center for Economic Development** – Developed as a one-stop-shop and centrally located in Niagara County. The Center for Economic Development includes the Niagara County Department of Economic Development which provides information support for business and the public including technical data related to land use, zoning and other planning matters; Niagara County Industrial Development Agency, which provides tax abatements, below market-rate loan funds, microenterprise assistance grants; Niagara USA Chamber of Commerce and Niagara County Community College Small Business Development Center.
- **Workforce Development Board** – Sets policy for the local workforce development system, serving the universal population of both job seekers and business. The WDB is directly responsible in determining the best use local WIOA funds, which can be used to provide services to individuals seeking employment through linkages to job openings, services, and training programs.

- **Leaders Encouraging Action and Progress** – Established as a partnership with local elected leaders as well as state and local agencies. The primary purpose of LEAP, whose members meet monthly, is to network and stay current with local economic issues in order to resolve problems that may impede progress in Niagara County.
- **New York State Data Center Affiliate** – The Niagara County Department of Economic Development is a state-designated Local Affiliate Data Center, under contract with the NYS Department of Labor. The State Data Center and its Local Affiliate Data Centers operate as part of a nationwide effort to improve public access to demographic, economic, and other pertinent data provided by the U.S. Census Bureau.
- **ReStart Niagara** – Established by the Niagara County Legislature in response to the COVID-19 Pandemic. Restart Niagara is a working group of elected officials, Niagara County Public Health and Economic Development officials, and private sector businesses that meet regularly (via Zoom during the pandemic) to share business reopening plans and safety protocols as well as best practices from industry trade groups (i.e. Buffalo Niagara Manufacturing Association, New York State Builders Association, New York State Farm Bureau, New York State Hospitality & Tourism Association, etc.)
- **TReC & NCCC SBDC (startup assistance)** – TreC is a co-working space developed by the Niagara Global Tourism Institute & Niagara University with a focus on transformational development in downtown Niagara Falls, NY and to offer resources to assist entrepreneurs with their ideas and help them launch a business. The NCCC Small Business Development Center is part of a network of statewide assistance centers supported by the Small Business Administration and the State University of New York. The SBDC assists small businesses and prospective business owners to meet the entrepreneurial challenges of owning and operating their business while continuing to promote economic growth and stability throughout Western New York.
- **Invest Buffalo Niagara** – The Niagara County Department of Economic Development is a member of Invest Buffalo Niagara (InBN), an organization representing the eight counties of WNY whose mission is to attract new employers to the region through outreach to growing companies around the world with a unified response to regional economic development opportunities.
- **Office of Emergency Services** – The Niagara County Office of Emergency Services (OES) will ensure, through coordination with all First Responders that the county is prepared to respond to, and recover from, all natural and man-made emergencies for our citizens, employers and visitors. OES will provide the leadership, training and support to reduce the loss of life and property through an all-hazards emergency management program of planning and preparedness, mitigation, response and recovery throughout Niagara County.

## **2. Business Outreach Strategies**

Niagara County has implemented numerous business outreach strategies, designed to not only assist the businesses that are located here, as they look to remain competitive and grow in the region, but also strategies that attract new businesses to the area, and help our economic base expand. These efforts assist with informing the business community about what resources are available to them, while also establishing communication channels between business owners and economic development agency partners. This ongoing dialogue is key to being resilient during economic downturns.

- **Business Workshops** – The Niagara County Center for Economic Development along with the Niagara County Community College Small Business Development Center, U.S. Small Business Administration, Niagara County Department of Employment & Training, Empire State Development and Access-VR conduct several workshops throughout Niagara County each year designed to outline the programs available to current and prospective Niagara County businesses. We are in the process of adding virtual workshops to our efforts to reach an even larger audience.
- **Business Growth & Retention Program** – The Niagara County Center for Economic Development implements a very robust business growth and retention program. Meeting with at least 60 companies per year, from all industry sectors, staff are able to learn about the needs of businesses in the community and to explain all of the resources and programs available. This program allows staff to stay engaged with the business community and to develop further programs based on the needs highlighted in these in person meetings. Staff expects to expand this program even further following the COVID-19 pandemic through the use of video conferencing capabilities.
- **Center for Economic Development Media Channels** – Social media is an important avenue that we utilize to share resources, services and programs with businesses and the community. Our three main channels include Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn, and these are utilized both independently and in tandem to reach an even larger audience.
- **Chambers of Commerce** – Niagara County has three Chamber of Commerce operating within its boundaries. Working in conjunction with one another they are able to be a strong advocate for the businesses in Niagara County and provide many key services that businesses depend on for success.
- **Lunch and Learn Series** – The Niagara County Center for Economic Development in conjunction with the Niagara USA Chamber and Niagara’s WorkSourceOne recently implemented the Lunch and Learn Series. This business outreach strategy brings together economic development partners, along with company executives, from a specific industry sector, as a way to share ideas and learn about resources and programs that can assist their business with growth and employee training. Attendees also work collaboratively to advocate for policies that will help their industries expand and prosper in the region.

- **Virtuality** – Outreach to businesses has expanded exponentially through virtual platforms. Through the use of electronic newsletters, blogs and a new website, the Niagara County Center for Economic Development has been able to provide key information on important programs and resources to a much larger audience in the business community. Through the use of several virtual platforms we are poised to further expand our digital marketing campaign to tell the compelling story of how Niagara County is a great place to open a business, work and raise a family. These efforts look to attract both new and ex-patriots to the region from both national and international locations.

## Appendices

### A.Municipal Priority Projects & Programs



### Niagara County

<b>Project Name</b>	Olcott Harbor Breakwater
<b>Brief Project Description</b>	Construction of an approximately 692 ft. long by 46 ft. wide detached offshore steel cellular sheet pile breakwater in Lake Ontario and 1,420 linear feet of containment walls in Olcott Harbor to protect the harbor from shoreline erosion and infrastructure damage resulting from wave action. The project will allow further development to take place within the harbor including new boating infrastructure and improved shoreline access
<b>Estimated Cost</b>	\$15.7 million
<b>Funding Secured to Date</b>	\$15.7 million
<b>Funding Sources</b>	Community Development Block Grant, New York State Resiliency and Economic Development Initiative, Town of Newfane, Niagara County
<b>Project Lead</b>	Town of Newfane
<b>Other Stakeholders Involved</b>	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, NYS Department of Environmental Conservation, NYS Office of General Services, NYS Department of State, Niagara County Economic Development Dept., businesses, residents
<b>Timeframe (include commencement and anticipated completion dates)</b>	Final design Spring 2020, construction bid Fall 2020, construction started Spring 2021, construction completed Winter 2021

<b>Project Name</b>	Site Development
<b>Brief Project Description</b>	Creating an industrial park by merging adjoining tax delinquent parcels
<b>Estimated Cost</b>	TBD
<b>Funding Secured to Date</b>	0
<b>Funding Sources</b>	ESD, DEC, Brownfields Development Corp, NORLIC, and Niagara County
<b>Project Lead</b>	A. Klyczek
<b>Other Stakeholders Involved</b>	County
<b>Timeframe (include commencement and anticipated completion dates)</b>	Now- 10 years from now to complete

<b>Project Name</b>	Western New York First Response and Preparedness Center
<b>Brief Project Description</b>	Construction of a 12,440 sq. ft. facility adjacent to Niagara Falls International Airport to house operations of Mercy Flight, Mercy EMS, and Niagara County Sheriff's Aviation Unit including two rotary wing aircraft, three to six ground ambulances or fly cars, crew quarters, and administrative offices. The project will serve as a catalyst for redevelopment of the adjacent former Niagara Falls Army Reserve Center and broader airport development
<b>Estimated Cost</b>	\$4.6 million
<b>Funding Secured to Date</b>	\$1.425 million
<b>Funding Sources</b>	Dormitory Authority of the State of New York, Empire State Development, Niagara Falls casino funds
<b>Project Lead</b>	Town of Niagara
<b>Other Stakeholders Involved</b>	Mercy Flight, Niagara County Sheriff's Office, Niagara County IDA, Niagara County Economic Development Dept., Niagara County Emergency Services
<b>Timeframe (include commencement and anticipated completion dates)</b>	Construction anticipated Spring 2021 to be completed by Winter 2021

<b>Project Name</b>	Niagara Falls International Airport Fiber-optic Network
<b>Brief Project Description</b>	Construction of an ultra-high-speed fiber-optic network providing 1 gigabit-per-second (Gbps) broadband service to Niagara Falls International Airport, airport tenants, adjacent multi-tenant buildings, and surrounding businesses and development sites. The project involves construction/installation of approximately 13,400 linear feet of fiber-optic cable, conduit, network hardware, and other associated infrastructure and equipment
<b>Estimated Cost</b>	\$800,000
<b>Funding Secured to Date</b>	\$400,000
<b>Funding Sources</b>	Empire State Development, U.S. Economic Development Administration
<b>Project Lead</b>	Niagara Frontier Transportation Authority
<b>Other Stakeholders Involved</b>	Niagara County Economic Development Dept., Niagara Falls Air Reserve Station (914 <sup>th</sup> ARW), Niagara County IDA, Calspan and other businesses
<b>Timeframe (include commencement and anticipated completion dates)</b>	Final design Fall 2020, construction started and completed by Spring 2021

<b>Project Name</b>	Niagara Orleans Land Improvement Corporation (NORLIC)
<b>Brief Project Description</b>	Continue to work with stakeholders to secure dilapidated properties in strategic corridors. Work with the effected taxing jurisdiction to repurpose the properties, improving the overall neighborhood. Through these continued efforts the land bank will grow to become self-sustaining with staff. Hiring a full time staff member would allow for additional outreach into the communities and influence throughout the networks of community development
<b>Estimated Cost</b>	\$500,000
<b>Funding Secured to Date</b>	\$120,000
<b>Funding Sources</b>	Proceeds from property sales

<b>Project Lead</b>	Andrea Klyczek
<b>Other Stakeholders Involved</b>	Niagara County, Orleans County, Niagara Falls, North Tonawanda, Lockport
<b>Timeframe (include commencement and anticipated completion dates)</b>	2 years

<b>Project Name</b>	Niagara County Rural Bridges Initiative
<b>Brief Project Description</b>	<p>Reconstruction of structurally deficient rural bridges necessary to support the flow of agribusiness-related commerce in Niagara County, including:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1.) Carmen Road over Johnson Creek;</li> <li>2.) Ditch Road over Black Creek;</li> <li>3.) Johnson Road over Johnson Creek;</li> <li>4.) Gasport Road over 18-Mile Creek; and</li> <li>5.) Hartland Road over Golden Hill.</li> </ol> <p>Project alternates include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6.) Carmen Road over Golden Hill and</li> <li>7.) Royalton Center over Mud Creek</li> </ol>
<b>Estimated Cost</b>	\$6.218 million
<b>Funding Secured to Date</b>	\$1.244 million
<b>Funding Sources</b>	Niagara County has committed \$1.244 million in matching funds from its capital budget.
<b>Project Lead</b>	Niagara County Department of Public Works
<b>Other Stakeholders Involved</b>	Niagara County Center for Economic Development, Greater Buffalo Niagara Regional Transportation Council, Cornell Cooperative Extension, Buffalo Niagara International Trade Gateway Organization
<b>Timeframe (include commencement and anticipated completion dates)</b>	The schedule for completion of this project from the notice of award of grant funding to construction closeout is estimated to be 38 months



<b>Project Name</b>	Niagara-Orleans Regional Alliance (NORA) Rural Broadband Initiative
<b>Brief Project Description</b>	Develop and deploy an affordable, terrestrially-based broadband internet services to unserved rural areas in Niagara and Orleans Counties including commercial and residential customers. NORA has documented over 3,900 unserved address-points and created a comprehensive list of vertical assets, including municipally owned structures, that can potentially be utilized by internet service providers (ISPs). NORA is working to attract and incentivize telecommunications providers that can independently develop, design, launch, and profitably operate businesses that provide broadband internet services including fiber-optic, coaxial cable, and wireless networks
<b>Estimated Cost</b>	TBD
<b>Funding Secured to Date</b>	\$81,799,840 awarded to private ISPs across eight WNY counties
<b>Funding Sources</b>	New York State Broadband Program, U.S. Department of Agriculture Rural Development Program (potential future funding source)
<b>Project Lead</b>	Niagara County & Orleans County Legislatures
<b>Other Stakeholders Involved</b>	Private telecommunications providers, supporting county departments
<b>Timeframe (include commencement and anticipated completion dates)</b>	TBD

<b>Program Name</b>	Micro program
<b>Brief Program Description</b>	Funding to small businesses or start-ups
<b>Estimated Cost</b>	200,000
<b>Funding Secured to Date</b>	200,000
<b>Funding Sources</b>	NY State
<b>Program Lead</b>	A. Klyczek
<b>Other Stakeholders Involved</b>	Niagara County
<b>Timeframe (include commencement and anticipated completion dates)</b>	Annually

<b>Program Name</b>	Niagara County C-PACE
<b>Brief Program Description</b>	Niagara County’s Commercial Property Assessed Clean Energy Program (C-PACE) provides alternative financing for energy efficiency and building-scale renewable energy projects. Funding is available for up to 100% of project costs at competitive rates
<b>Estimated Cost</b>	N/A
<b>Funding Secured to Date</b>	\$2 million (Wheatfield Gardens LLC)
<b>Funding Sources</b>	Private capital providers
<b>Program Lead</b>	Niagara County Economic Development Dept.
<b>Other Stakeholders Involved</b>	Energy Improvement Corporation, NYS Energy Research & Development Authority, private capital providers
<b>Timeframe (include commencement and anticipated completion dates)</b>	Ongoing since July 2019

<b>Program Name</b>	Niagara County Opportunity Zones Program
<b>Brief Program Description</b>	Federal capital gains tax benefits available for business and real estate investments in designated low-income census tracts known as Opportunity Zones. Niagara County’s Opportunity Zones Program promotes site-specific investment opportunities. Niagara County’s Opportunity Zones are located in the cities of Lockport, Niagara Falls, and North Tonawanda
<b>Estimated Cost</b>	N/A
<b>Funding Secured to Date</b>	N/A
<b>Funding Sources</b>	Private capital gains channeled into Qualified Opportunity Funds
<b>Program Lead</b>	Private investors
<b>Other Stakeholders Involved</b>	Niagara County Economic Development Dept., City of Lockport, City of Niagara Falls, City of North Tonawanda
<b>Timeframe (include commencement and anticipated completion dates)</b>	Ongoing since January 2018

<b>Program Name</b>	Niagara County Brownfield Assessment Program
<b>Brief Program Description</b>	Through the assessment program, Niagara County conducts Phase I and II Environmental Site Assessments on publicly and privately owned brownfield sites at no cost to the property owner. The assessments identify environmental conditions that may be hindering property redevelopment. Program has a special focus on tax delinquent sites
<b>Estimated Cost</b>	Varies based on site conditions
<b>Funding Secured to Date</b>	\$2.05 million
<b>Funding Sources</b>	Competitively secured grants from United States Environmental Protection Agency
<b>Program Lead</b>	Niagara County Economic Development Dept.
<b>Other Stakeholders Involved</b>	United States Environmental Protection Agency, municipalities, private property owners
<b>Timeframe (include commencement and anticipated completion dates)</b>	Ongoing since 1999

<b>Program Name</b>	Niagara County Brownfields Cleanup Revolving Loan Fund Program
<b>Brief Program Description</b>	The Brownfields Cleanup Revolving Loan Fund program provides monetary assistance in the form of low interest loans and subgrants to assist with cleanup costs at brownfield sites in Niagara County. Flexible loan terms include one-year interest and payment free grace period after loan closing and second year of interest only payments
<b>Estimated Cost</b>	N/A
<b>Funding Secured to Date</b>	\$4.68 million
<b>Funding Sources</b>	Competitively secured grants from United States Environmental Protection Agency
<b>Program Lead</b>	Niagara County Brownfield Development Corporation
<b>Other Stakeholders Involved</b>	Niagara County Economic Development Dept., United States Environmental Protection Agency, municipalities, private property owners
<b>Timeframe (include commencement and anticipated completion dates)</b>	Ongoing since 2008

<b>Program Name</b>	Niagara County Business Growth & Retention Program
<b>Brief Program Description</b>	Working with members of the Niagara County Economic Development Alliance, the Niagara County Department of Economic Development (NCDED) will coordinate a direct outreach to at least 60 companies annually over the next five years. The program allows economic development professionals to stay informed of any issues, or expansion plans of our companies to allow for a proactive response. The program also allows the companies to stay abreast of the various programs available to them in their efforts to invest in their facilities, retain, and create jobs
<b>Estimated Cost</b>	Staff time and cost for program marketing collateral is covered in the NCDED budget
<b>Funding Secured to Date</b>	N/A
<b>Funding Sources</b>	NCDED budget for staff time and marketing materials. Niagara County Industrial Development Agency budget for staff time and marketing materials, Various budgets of economic development alliance partners for staff time
<b>Program Lead</b>	Niagara County Department of Economic Development
<b>Other Stakeholders Involved</b>	Cities of Lockport, Niagara Falls, and North Tonawanda Economic Development offices. Town of Lockport Economic Development, as well as other resource partners
<b>Timeframe (include commencement and anticipated completion dates)</b>	Annual Program, which runs throughout calendar years 2020 – 2025

<b>Project Name</b>	Meat Processing Facility Market Demand & Economic Viability Study
<b>Brief Project Description</b>	Currently there are two small meat-processing facilities in Niagara County and many farmers need to have meat processed outside of Niagara County. Additional Niagara County meat processing facilities would not only reduce costs farmers need to pay for processing, but it would also provide jobs and investment in Niagara County
<b>Estimated Cost</b>	\$80,000 to \$100,000
<b>Funding Secured to Date</b>	\$0
<b>Funding Sources</b>	Will be applying to the Western New York Regional Economic Development Council for a study grant. Potential USDA and CDBG Funding
<b>Project Lead</b>	Amy Fisk, Michael Casale
<b>Other Stakeholders Involved</b>	Cornell Cooperative Extension of Niagara County
<b>Timeframe (include commencement and anticipated completion dates)</b>	Funding application submitted July 2020. Funding award announced December 2020. RFP's 1Q 2021. Study completion 4Q 2021

<b>Program Name</b>	Niagara County Partnerships
<b>Brief Program Description</b>	Through Niagara County's partnership with World Trade Center Buffalo Niagara, Invest Buffalo Niagara, the International Trade Gateway Organization, Focus on Niagara TV show, and other various conferences and events, Niagara County Center for Economic Development will continue to tout our successes. In conjunction with the county PIO we will focus on strengthening our image as a business friendly county to work in
<b>Estimated Cost</b>	N/A
<b>Funding Secured to Date</b>	\$40,000
<b>Funding Sources</b>	Niagara County and Niagara County Industrial Development Agency
<b>Program Lead</b>	Niagara County Staff
<b>Other Stakeholders Involved</b>	Niagara County Center for Economic Development, WTCBN, Invest Buffalo Niagara
<b>Timeframe (include commencement and anticipated completion dates)</b>	Ongoing



## City of Lockport

<b>Project Name</b>	Gulf Interceptor Sewer Rehabilitation
<b>Brief Project Description</b>	The Gulf Interceptor sewer is 50-80 years old and carries combined flows from the western portion of the City and the adjacent portion of the Town, including the Town IDA Park, to the City WWTP on West Jackson St. Flow monitoring and condition assessment of interceptor sewer revealed that it is in poor condition resulting in limited capacity. The proposed project includes rehabilitation of the sewer and incorporation of Green Infrastructure Improvements in order to regain/improve capacity on the interceptor. These improvements will allow for additional development of the IDA as well as City and Town areas tributary to the interceptor
<b>Estimated Cost</b>	\$7.25 Million
<b>Funding Secured to Date</b>	\$0
<b>Funding Sources</b>	Will be applying via the New York State Consolidated Funding Application for a Water Quality Improvement Program (WQIP) Grant, Water Infrastructure Improvement Act (WIIA) Grant, and Clean Water State Revolving Fund (CWSRF) Loan
<b>Project Lead</b>	Jamie Elmer
<b>Other Stakeholders Involved</b>	Town of Lockport, Town of Lockport IDA
<b>Timeframe (include commencement and anticipated completion dates)</b>	Funding Applications – July 2020 Design Completion (pending funding) – September 2021 Permitting and Design Approval – January 2022 Bidding – March 2022 Construction – April 2022 to December 2022

<b>Project Name</b>	Flight of Five – Phase III
<b>Brief Project Description</b>	The restoration of the Flight of Five returns one of the Erie Canal’s most iconic pieces of infrastructure to its original glory as an engineering marvel. The historic preservation project has enormous tourism and economic development implications, included an anticipated \$11 million in new spending annually in Niagara County alone, generating approximately \$600,000 in occupancy and sales tax
<b>Estimated Cost</b>	\$14.3 Million
<b>Funding Secured to Date</b>	\$0 for Phase III, but the first two phases were completed from 2014-2019 at a cost of approximately \$6 million.
<b>Funding Sources</b>	Potentially Reimagine the Canals (NYS)
<b>Project Lead</b>	Brian Smith
<b>Other Stakeholders Involved</b>	Lockport Locks Heritage District Corporation, NYS Canal Corporation, NY Power Authority
<b>Timeframe (include commencement and anticipated completion dates)</b>	2021-2022

<b>Project Name</b>	Lockport Harbor and Marine Center
<b>Brief Project Description</b>	The establishment of a canal-front marina along the Erie Canal immediately adjacent to downtown Lockport that will offer docks and other boating infrastructure as well as a boat and kayak launch area
<b>Estimated Cost</b>	\$7 million
<b>Funding Secured to Date</b>	\$0
<b>Funding Sources</b>	Potentially Federal Boating Infrastructure Grant (BIG) program as well as New York State
<b>Project Lead</b>	James Elmer, Brian Smith
<b>Other Stakeholders Involved</b>	NYS Canal Corporation, Empire State Development, Lockport Locks Heritage District Corporation, NY Power Authority
<b>Timeframe (include commencement and anticipated completion dates)</b>	2021-2023

<b>Project Name</b>	Bicycle and Pedestrian Trails
<b>Brief Project Description</b>	A comprehensive improvement of Lockport’s bicycle and pedestrian trails, including the extension of the Trolley Trail (also called Lockport Rail Trail) from the Town of Lockport to the Stevens Street Bridge, critical connections to the Erie Canalway Trail, as well as a network of bicycle infrastructure to connect residents/neighborhoods to the Erie Canalway Trail
<b>Estimated Cost</b>	TBD
<b>Funding Secured to Date</b>	\$0
<b>Funding Sources</b>	TBD
<b>Project Lead</b>	Brian Smith
<b>Other Stakeholders Involved</b>	Empire State Trail, Niagara River Greenway Commission
<b>Timeframe (include commencement and anticipated completion dates)</b>	2021-2025

<b>Project Name</b>	Lockport Downtown Revitalization Initiative
<b>Brief Project Description</b>	Downtown Lockport was selected by the Western New York Regional Economic Development Council as the recipient of a \$10 million grant as part of a competitive process that identifies central business districts ripe for accelerated economic development and provides funding to implement catalytic projects. These projects include improving walkability, tourism and access to the Erie Canal, and the redevelopment of significant mixed-use properties within downtown Lockport
<b>Estimated Cost</b>	\$40 million
<b>Funding Secured to Date</b>	Approximately \$30 million
<b>Funding Sources</b>	NYS, Private Developers, various Foundations
<b>Project Lead</b>	Brian Smith
<b>Other Stakeholders Involved</b>	Private Developers, City of Lockport, Greater Lockport Development Corporation, New York State, various Foundations
<b>Timeframe (include commencement and anticipated completion dates)</b>	January 2020 through December 2022





## City of Niagara Falls

<b>Project Name</b>	South End (Downtown) Initiative – Niagara St “Gateway” Project
<b>Brief Project Description</b>	This Project is the purposeful attempt to expand the progress that is being made elsewhere downtown directly addressing the blighting conditions that hamper infill and discourage developers. The Gateway Project includes: acquisition, site preparation / blight removal and related soft costs, for renovation or new construction of commercial or mixed-use properties in the city’s South End (north side of Niagara Street), expected to leverage at least \$7-8 million private investment
<b>Estimated Cost</b>	~ \$7.5Million
<b>Funding Secured to Date</b>	\$1.5Million
<b>Funding Sources</b>	CNF/NF-URA, NYS-ESD, Private (to be determined)
<b>Project Lead</b>	NF-URA
<b>Other Stakeholders Involved</b>	CNF/NF-URA, NYS-ESD, Private Sector Investor/Developers
<b>Timeframe (include commencement and anticipated completion dates)</b>	2020 through 2025

<b>Project Name</b>	North End (Downtown Revitalization Initiative) - "Niagara Falls USA Bridge District"
<b>Brief Project Description</b>	The City of Niagara Falls is undergoing massive transformation through thoughtful local planning and continued support from the community stakeholder. The Bridge District (Downtown Revitalization) Initiative represents multiple public and private project proposals totaling \$10Million for public infrastructure that will revitalize the North End’s Main Street Corridor and leverage private sector investments, estimated upwards of \$50Million,

	together these investments will fuel the community’s vision of a vibrant, new, Bridge District
<b>Estimated Cost</b>	~28Million
<b>Funding Secured to Date</b>	\$10Million
<b>Funding Sources</b>	\$18Million – NYS / CNF / Multiple Private Sector
<b>Project Lead</b>	CNF
<b>Other Stakeholders Involved</b>	NYS-DOS / NYS-ESD / NYS-DHCR
<b>Timeframe (include commencement and anticipated completion dates)</b>	2020 - 2025

<b>Project Name</b>	Riverway Phase-2 Project (includes Hyde Park Blvd Roundabout)
<b>Brief Project Description</b>	This transportation project will construct a new roundabout/intersection to connect Hyde Park Boulevard and the Niagara Scenic Parkway. The Project also removes all Niagara Scenic Parkway expressway features between Hyde Park Blvd. and J.B. Daly Blvd. and replaces existing infrastructure with a two-lane extension of ‘Riverway’ eastward to the new Hyde Park roundabout. This Project requires the construction of a new highway bridge to extend Hyde Park Boulevard (R-61) and connect it with a reconfigured Parkway along the Upper Niagara River. Once complete, the resulting transportation improvements will: improve traffic flows and reduce congestion; energizing economic development within the Corridor; reclaim hundreds of acres of public space for park use, and; transform 'Intake Park'
<b>Estimated Cost</b>	~ \$100Million
<b>Funding Secured to Date</b>	~\$30Million
<b>Funding Sources</b>	NYS-ESD
<b>Project Lead</b>	USA Niagara Development Corporation (USAN) a subsidiary of Empire State Development
<b>Other Stakeholders Involved</b>	CNF / NF-URA
<b>Timeframe (include commencement and anticipated completion dates)</b>	2017 - 2022

<b>Project Name</b>	‘The Niagara Experience’ Heritage Center (NEC)
<b>Brief Project Description</b>	The NEC is a \$120Million heritage museum and hospitality complex in downtown Niagara Falls, NY. The NEC includes: • an “experiential” museum immersing visitors in the stories about the Buffalo-Niagara Region; • six experience halls featuring diverse Niagara-specific topics; • a cutting-edge museum facility; • an integrated hospitality product, and; • an encompassing outdoor heritage space that will surround the museum, creating a logical transition between parkland and the City, while simultaneously providing locations for outdoor entertainment and/or adjacent private investment opportunities. Next Steps: Re-validate concept and feasibility; identify and secure site; marketing
<b>Estimated Cost</b>	\$130,000,000
<b>Funding Secured to Date</b>	TBD
<b>Funding Sources</b>	ESD, CNF & Private Sector
<b>Project Lead</b>	[ESD] USA Niagara Development Corp.
<b>Other Stakeholders Involved</b>	CNF/NF-URA, NYS-ESD, NYS-OPRHP, NYS-DOS, Private Sector Investor/Developers
<b>Timeframe (include commencement and anticipated completion dates)</b>	2020 - 2025

<b>Project Name</b>	Rainbow Center' Mall & Ramp - Re-development
<b>Brief Project Description</b>	The adaptive reuse of a former shopping mall and parking ramp in downtown Niagara Falls that will establish greater public access and walkability, create commercial opportunity and also improve parking to support new and existing businesses at and near the site
<b>Estimated Cost</b>	Project cost ~ \$20-25M
<b>Funding Secured to Date</b>	TBD
<b>Funding Sources</b>	[ESD] USA Niagara Development Corp. / CNF / Public Sector
<b>Project Lead</b>	[ESD] USA Niagara Development Corp.
<b>Other Stakeholders Involved</b>	CNF / NF-URA
<b>Timeframe (include commencement and anticipated completion dates)</b>	2020-2023

<b>Program Name</b>	South End (Downtown) Initiative — Blight Removal, Streetscape, Residential & Commercial Redevelopment Projects
<b>Brief Program Description</b>	One initiative, two primary projects that are the purposeful attempt to expand the progress that is being made elsewhere downtown directly addressing the blighting conditions that hamper infill and discourage developers. Gateway & Stabilization Projects involve acquisition, site preparation, blight removal, design, and partial costs for renovation or new construction of commercial or mixed-use properties in the city's South End (north side of Niagara Street). Expected to leverage at least \$8-10 million in new private investment in one or more new developments
<b>Estimated Cost</b>	~ \$8Million
<b>Funding Secured to Date</b>	\$1.5Million
<b>Funding Sources</b>	CNF/NF-URA, NYS-ESD, Private (to be determined)
<b>Program Lead</b>	CNF / NF-URA
<b>Other Stakeholders Involved</b>	CNF/NF-URA, NYS-ESD, Private Sector Investor/Developers
<b>Timeframe (include commencement and anticipated completion dates)</b>	2020 through 2025

<b>Program Name</b>	North End Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI) - "Niagara Falls USA Bridge District"
<b>Brief Program Description</b>	The City of Niagara Falls is undergoing massive transformation through thoughtful local planning and continued support from the community stakeholder. The Bridge District (Downtown Revitalization) Initiative represents multiple public and private project proposals representing an initial \$10Million grant toward revitalizing the North End's Main Street Corridor, which will leverage \$18M public & private investments. The DRI funding and projects will then leverage a Phase-2, with an additional \$50Million (estimated) of private investments. This multi-phase initiative will expedite the community's vision of a revitalized new 'Bridge District'
<b>Estimated Cost</b>	~28Million
<b>Funding Secured to Date</b>	\$10Million
<b>Funding Sources</b>	\$10Million by NYS-DOS. \$18Million by various public & private entities.
<b>Program Lead</b>	CNF
<b>Other Stakeholders Involved</b>	NYS-DOS / NYS-ESD / NYS-DHCR
<b>Timeframe (include commencement and anticipated completion dates)</b>	2020 - 2025

<b>Program Name</b>	Niagara Waterfront Opportunity Area (NWOA) — The Buffalo Ave / Upper River Waterfront Corridor
<b>Brief Program Description</b>	The City's NWOA Program covers almost 1,900 acres within the Buffalo Ave Industrial Corridor—a federal QOZ. The Program deploys a bold and catalytic revitalization strategy, focusing on five strategic nodes for: Reclaiming underutilized, vacant and potentially contaminated parcels; Reconnecting the City to 3-miles of Niagara River waterfront; and Introduce new uses into the corridor that are more responsive to the emerging market and community need for development ready land.

	The NWOA Program also includes a robust multi-phase set of transportation Improvements to the Niagara Parkway and associated linking highways
<b>Estimated Cost</b>	>\$55Million
<b>Funding Secured to Date</b>	TBD
<b>Funding Sources</b>	USA / NYS / CNF / NYPA / Greenway Commission / Others
<b>Program Lead</b>	CNF / NF-URA
<b>Other Stakeholders Involved</b>	NYS-DOT / NYPA / CNF / ESD / DEC / OPR&HP
<b>Timeframe (include commencement and anticipated completion dates)</b>	2021 - 2031

<b>Program Name</b>	Strategic (Downtown) Land Acquisition & Redevelopment Program
<b>Brief Program Description</b>	Niagara Falls is subject to extensive land speculation resulting in a high ratio of vacant and/or underutilized land adjacent to Niagara Falls State Park or within a several blocks of the Niagara River/Gorge. This program established a fund to strategically purchase parcels for site assembly and /or redevelopment. To date, USAN has acquired thirty-three properties totaling nearly 11.75 acres near Niagara's Waterfront and in downtown NF. The agency is updating a general real estate market analysis and establishing a specific development strategy for the acquired properties
<b>Estimated Cost</b>	~ \$100M - \$300Million
<b>Funding Secured to Date</b>	~\$30Million
<b>Funding Sources</b>	NYS-ESD
<b>Program Lead</b>	USA Niagara Development Corporation (USAN) a subsidiary of Empire State Development
<b>Other Stakeholders Involved</b>	CNF / NF-URA
<b>Timeframe (include commencement and anticipated completion dates)</b>	2017 - 2022

<b>Program Name</b>	Highland Area BOA Redevelopment Strategy (Brownfield Opportunity Area)
<b>Brief Program Description</b>	Highland Area Redevelopment is about repairing the Highland community. Implementing the Highland Master Plan Recommendations / prioritizing the creation of clean-industrial and/or advanced-manufacturing uses, including warehousing and professional services uses, in a new "Commerce Park" that is immediately ready for market absorption. The primary public investment is targeted towards acquisition, site assembly, and infrastructure improvements necessary to enable the future development of one or more "Commerce (technology and business) Parks
<b>Estimated Cost</b>	~\$20,000,000
<b>Funding Secured to Date</b>	?
<b>Funding Sources</b>	CNF / ESD / NF-URA
<b>Program Lead</b>	CNF
<b>Other Stakeholders Involved</b>	Nat Grid / NFG / NYS-DEC / ESD / NF-URA / Various Property Owners
<b>Timeframe (include commencement and anticipated completion dates)</b>	2021 -2031

<b>Program Name</b>	NFC Development Corporation — Loan and Grant Financial Assistance – Various Programs
<b>Brief Program Description</b>	Incorporated for the purpose of identifying and developing business opportunities within the City of Niagara Falls. NFC packages needed financing, develops and administers various financial loan and grant programs to support business and real estate development. Ongoing
<b>Estimated Cost</b>	Varies, depending on funds available
<b>Funding Secured to Date</b>	Millions historically. Limited fund balances as of January 1, 2020
<b>Funding Sources</b>	CNF / NYS / Various

<b>Program Lead</b>	CNF / NFC Development Corp.
<b>Other Stakeholders Involved</b>	Not applicable
<b>Timeframe (include commencement and anticipated completion dates)</b>	Ongoing

<b>Project Name</b>	Hotel Niagara (Historic Restoration / Revitalization) Project
<b>Brief Project Description</b>	In the summer of 2016, USAN acquired the long vacant historic Hotel Niagara. After acquisition, USAN issued a request for proposal to develop the site. Construction of the project is expected to begin in 2019
<b>Estimated Cost</b>	~ \$48Million
<b>Funding Secured to Date</b>	\$48Million
<b>Funding Sources</b>	NYS-ESD & Brine Wells Development LLC
<b>Project Lead</b>	USA Niagara Development Corporation (USAN) a subsidiary of Empire State Development
<b>Other Stakeholders Involved</b>	CNF / NF-URA
<b>Timeframe (include commencement and anticipated completion dates)</b>	2020-2023





## City of North Tonawanda

<b>Project Name</b>	Armstrong Pumps Expansion
<b>Brief Project Description</b>	125,000 square foot expansion of Armstrong Pumps manufacturing facility at Buffalo Bolt Business Park. Project includes at least 35 new jobs as well as a new technical training center
<b>Estimated Cost</b>	\$20,000,000
<b>Funding Secured to Date</b>	\$0
<b>Funding Sources</b>	Empire State Development
<b>Project Lead</b>	
<b>Other Stakeholders Involved</b>	Lumber City Development Corporation, Niagara County, Empire State Development
<b>Timeframe (include commencement and anticipated completion dates)</b>	01/01/2021 – 06/01/2022

<b>Project Name</b>	Redevelopment of DeGraff Memorial Hospital
<b>Brief Project Description</b>	Redevelopment of a former hospital building, substantially closed in 2019, into a mixed-use facility featuring 80+ apartment units. Located within a historic neighborhood and along the Erie Canal
<b>Estimated Cost</b>	\$20,000,000
<b>Funding Secured to Date</b>	\$0
<b>Funding Sources</b>	
<b>Project Lead</b>	
<b>Other Stakeholders Involved</b>	Lumber City Development Corporation, Niagara County
<b>Timeframe (include commencement and anticipated completion dates)</b>	01/31/2020 – 12/31/2022

<b>Project Name</b>	Tonawanda Island Redevelopment
<b>Brief Project Description</b>	<p>Redevelopment of approximately 30+ acres of vacant or underutilized property on Tonawanda Island. Unique waterfront property provides opportunity for mixed-use development including residential, destination retail, and lodging as well as boat docking and public waterfront amenities</p> <p>Tonawanda Island is the center piece of the city’s NT Momentum master redevelopment plan. This plan, completed through the NYS Brownfield Opportunity Area program, envisions a redevelopment of North Tonawanda’s formerly industrial downtown and waterfront areas into a vibrant, urban, modern waterfront community featuring dense residential, commercial, and entertainment amenities along with abundant public waterfront access and recreational opportunities. Completion of the Tonawanda Island Redevelopment will be the most significant project to advance the NT Momentum plan</p>
<b>Estimated Cost</b>	\$30,000,000
<b>Funding Secured to Date</b>	\$0
<b>Funding Sources</b>	
<b>Project Lead</b>	
<b>Other Stakeholders Involved</b>	Lumber City Development Corporation, Niagara County
<b>Timeframe (include commencement and anticipated completion dates)</b>	06/01/2021 – 12/31/2023

<b>Project Name</b>	624 River Road
<b>Brief Project Description</b>	Development of underutilized waterfront property into a mixed-use development including hotel, residential apartments, and a restaurant/brewery. Project to also include boat dockage and public waterfront boardwalk
<b>Estimated Cost</b>	\$15,000,000
<b>Funding Secured to Date</b>	\$0
<b>Funding Sources</b>	
<b>Project Lead</b>	Rock One Development
<b>Other Stakeholders Involved</b>	Lumber City Development Corporation, Niagara County
<b>Timeframe (include commencement and anticipated completion dates)</b>	

<b>Project Name</b>	Riviera Theatre Expansion
<b>Brief Project Description</b>	Construction of a new facility expansion to the historic Riviera Theatre in downtown. The expansion will include needed amenities including performing dressing rooms, professional green room, and patron amenities including new restrooms and modern lobby
<b>Estimated Cost</b>	\$8,000,000
<b>Funding Secured to Date</b>	\$2,000,000
<b>Funding Sources</b>	
<b>Project Lead</b>	Riviera Theatre
<b>Other Stakeholders Involved</b>	Lumber City Development Corporation, Niagara County
<b>Timeframe (include commencement and anticipated completion dates)</b>	01/01/2020 – 12/31/2022

<b>Project Name</b>	Rails-to-trails bicycle path connection between the cities of North Tonawanda and Lockport
<b>Brief Project Description</b>	An abandoned CSX rail line runs through the City of North Tonawanda, Town of Wheatfield, Town of Pendleton, and Town of Lockport and could be used to connect a number of smaller disconnected trails to make one continuous path from the City of North Tonawanda to the City of Lockport
<b>Estimated Cost</b>	
<b>Funding Secured to Date</b>	
<b>Funding Sources</b>	
<b>Project Lead</b>	Niagara County
<b>Other Stakeholders Involved</b>	North Tonawanda, Pendleton, Wheatfield, City of Town of Lockport
<b>Timeframe (include commencement and anticipated completion dates)</b>	2021-2023

<b>Project Name</b>	Support sustainable development of the Oliver Street corridor
<b>Brief Project Description</b>	Oliver Street is a neighborhood business corridor over 2 miles long that runs through the center of North Tonawanda. The area is moderately distressed and features a number of vacant storefronts and substandard housing units, however the area has great potential to be a vibrant mixed-income neighborhood. Sustainable redevelopment of Oliver Street will require a combination of commercial and housing redevelopment projects, homeownership assistance, new infill development, and supportive community projects
<b>Estimated Cost</b>	
<b>Funding Secured to Date</b>	
<b>Funding Sources</b>	
<b>Project Lead</b>	Lumber City Development Corporation
<b>Other Stakeholders Involved</b>	City of North Tonawanda, Niagara County, NORLIC, Empire State Development
<b>Timeframe (include commencement and anticipated completion dates)</b>	2020 - 2025

<b>Program Name</b>	Micro-enterprise Assistance Program
<b>Brief Program Description</b>	Small business and entrepreneur development program which makes small grants to qualifying businesses. Focused on supporting businesses in the downtown development area and/or the Oliver Street neighborhood. Program includes business planning, entrepreneurial training classes, and technical support
<b>Estimated Cost</b>	\$400,000
<b>Funding Secured to Date</b>	\$200,000
<b>Funding Sources</b>	New York State Office of Community Renewal
<b>Program Lead</b>	Lumber City Development Corporation
<b>Other Stakeholders Involved</b>	Niagara Small Business Development Center
<b>Timeframe (include commencement and anticipated completion dates)</b>	05/01/2020 – 12/31/2021, 05/01/2022 – 12/31/2023

<b>Program Name</b>	Oliver Street Commercial Façade Renovations
<b>Brief Program Description</b>	Matching grant funding to qualifying commercial property owners in select target areas of Oliver Street for building façade renovations. Program includes architectural design services
<b>Estimated Cost</b>	\$200,000
<b>Funding Secured to Date</b>	\$0
<b>Funding Sources</b>	New York State Housing Trust Fund Corporation
<b>Program Lead</b>	Lumber City Development Corporation
<b>Other Stakeholders Involved</b>	
<b>Timeframe (include commencement and anticipated completion dates)</b>	05/2021 – 12/31/2022

<b>Project Name</b>	Support the uniform adoption and use of the NYS 485-a real property tax exemption
<b>Brief Project Description</b>	New York’s 485-a real property tax exemption allows municipalities to provide a significant abatement of real property taxes for non-residential properties converted into mixed-use. This program has potential to be very effective to incentive the development of mixed-use buildings in downtown areas. However to be effective this program must be adopted by all taxing jurisdictions involved including the County, municipality, and school district
<b>Estimated Cost</b>	\$0
<b>Funding Secured to Date</b>	
<b>Funding Sources</b>	
<b>Project Lead</b>	Niagara County
<b>Other Stakeholders Involved</b>	All municipalities and school districts county-wide
<b>Timeframe (include commencement and anticipated completion dates)</b>	2020 - 2021



## Town of Cambria

<b>Project Name</b>	Former Brownfields
<b>Brief Project Description</b>	Redevelopment through marketing of three (3) vacant parcels at former Lockport Air Force Station/NIKE Site
<b>Estimated Cost</b>	
<b>Funding Secured to Date</b>	
<b>Funding Sources</b>	
<b>Project Lead</b>	
<b>Other Stakeholders Involved</b>	
<b>Timeframe (include commencement and anticipated completion dates)</b>	Properties are available now

<b>Project Name</b>	Industrial
<b>Brief Project Description</b>	Priority infrastructure projects at the Cambria Technology Park, a Build-Now NY Shovel-Ready site. Infrastructure needs include an entrance road, sanitary sewer service and associated pump station
<b>Estimated Cost</b>	\$1,700,000
<b>Funding Secured to Date</b>	
<b>Funding Sources</b>	
<b>Project Lead</b>	
<b>Other Stakeholders Involved</b>	
<b>Timeframe (include commencement and anticipated completion dates)</b>	

<b>Project Name</b>	Infrastructure
<b>Brief Project Description</b>	Ongoing replacement/rehabilitation of aging water/wastewater lines at various locations in accordance with Asset Management Plan. 2020 replacement/upgrade of 5,200 L.F. of waterline along north side of Saunders Settlement Road
<b>Estimated Cost</b>	\$1,450,000
<b>Funding Secured to Date</b>	20%
<b>Funding Sources</b>	Town of Cambria Water Construction Reserve Fund and 5-year BAN
<b>Project Lead</b>	
<b>Other Stakeholders Involved</b>	
<b>Timeframe (include commencement and anticipated completion dates)</b>	April-1 September 2020. Ongoing project is a 5-year plan

<b>Project Name</b>	Parks and Recreation
<b>Brief Project Description</b>	Town park and Recreation area, 35 acres remain to be developed with additional athletic fields, picnic areas, walking trail extension and construction of an administrative/storage building
<b>Estimated Cost</b>	\$1.6 million
<b>Funding Secured to Date</b>	
<b>Funding Sources</b>	
<b>Project Lead</b>	
<b>Other Stakeholders Involved</b>	
<b>Timeframe (include commencement and anticipated completion dates)</b>	As funding becomes available





## Town of Lewiston

<b>Project Name</b>	Lewiston Waterline Improvement Project
<b>Brief Project Description</b>	8.5 miles of water lines being replaced in several different locations in the Town of Lewiston
<b>Estimated Cost</b>	\$14 million
<b>Funding Secured to Date</b>	
<b>Funding Sources</b>	\$10.2 million in bonds \$3.8 million in BAN funding
<b>Project Lead</b>	Bob Lannon – Town Engineer – GHD
<b>Other Stakeholders Involved</b>	
<b>Timeframe (include commencement and anticipated completion dates)</b>	4/2020 – 4/2021

<b>Project Name</b>	Lower River Road Park
<b>Brief Project Description</b>	
<b>Estimated Cost</b>	\$700,000
<b>Funding Secured to Date</b>	\$700,000
<b>Funding Sources</b>	Greenway funds
<b>Project Lead</b>	Supervisor Broderick
<b>Other Stakeholders Involved</b>	
<b>Timeframe (include commencement and anticipated completion dates)</b>	4/2020 – 10/2020



## Town of Lockport

<b>Project Name</b>	Commercial Building Facade Improvement
<b>Brief Project Description</b>	Facade improvement program funded via matching grants to upgrade commercial building exteriors consistent with design guidelines in targeted commercial districts
<b>Estimated Cost</b>	\$250,000
<b>Funding Secured to Date</b>	0
<b>Funding Sources</b>	Grants with town match and investment by developer
<b>Project Lead</b>	Thomas Sy
<b>Other Stakeholders Involved</b>	Town Building Inspector/Town Council
<b>Timeframe (include commencement and anticipated completion dates)</b>	2021-2025

<b>Project Name</b>	Transit North Infrastructure
<b>Brief Project Description</b>	Improve Transit North infrastructure (water lines) and streetscaping (median, crosswalks, trees and signage) to enhance attractiveness for retail business expansion
<b>Estimated Cost</b>	\$1,000,000
<b>Funding Secured to Date</b>	0
<b>Funding Sources</b>	ESD, NYSCFA programs
<b>Project Lead</b>	Thomas Sy
<b>Other Stakeholders Involved</b>	Brian Belson and Town Council
<b>Timeframe (include commencement and anticipated completion dates)</b>	2025

<b>Project Name</b>	Spec/Incubator Building
<b>Brief Project Description</b>	Construct a 12-15,000 square foot multi-tenant building in the IDA park for startup manufacturing or distribution companies
<b>Estimated Cost</b>	\$600,000
<b>Funding Secured to Date</b>	0
<b>Funding Sources</b>	Developer/IDA
<b>Project Lead</b>	Thomas Sy
<b>Other Stakeholders Involved</b>	Town IDA
<b>Timeframe (include commencement and anticipated completion dates)</b>	2022

<b>Project Name</b>	LED Street Lights
<b>Brief Project Description</b>	Replace existing street lights with LED lamps throughout the Town of Lockport
<b>Estimated Cost</b>	\$800,000
<b>Funding Secured to Date</b>	0
<b>Funding Sources</b>	Town of Lockport, offset by reduced electrical charges
<b>Project Lead</b>	Thomas Sy
<b>Other Stakeholders Involved</b>	Town Council/Supervisor
<b>Timeframe (include commencement and anticipated completion dates)</b>	2021

<b>Project Name</b>	Sewer Lift Station Upgrades
<b>Brief Project Description</b>	Rehab 17 sanitary sewer pump stations with pump and motor replacement and emergency generators serving both residential and commercial customers
<b>Estimated Cost</b>	\$600,000
<b>Funding Secured to Date</b>	\$600,000
<b>Funding Sources</b>	WIIA grant from NYS
<b>Project Lead</b>	Rob Klavoon – Town Engineer
<b>Other Stakeholders Involved</b>	Dave Miller – Highway Supervisor
<b>Timeframe (include commencement and anticipated completion dates)</b>	2021

<b>Project Name</b>	IDA Park South Expansion
<b>Brief Project Description</b>	Design, develop and market 45 acres in IDA Park South. Design parcel layout, roads and related infrastructure. Construct roads and drainage ditching
<b>Estimated Cost</b>	\$750,0000
<b>Funding Secured to Date</b>	0
<b>Funding Sources</b>	IDA, ESD and developers
<b>Project Lead</b>	Thomas Sy
<b>Other Stakeholders Involved</b>	
<b>Timeframe (include commencement and anticipated completion dates)</b>	2023

<b>Project Name</b>	Campus Consolidation
<b>Brief Project Description</b>	Purchase adjacent land, construct new highway/Water garage and facilitate internal department relocations within existing buildings
<b>Estimated Cost</b>	\$1,000,000
<b>Funding Secured to Date</b>	N/A
<b>Funding Sources</b>	Town, grants and sale of property
<b>Project Lead</b>	Thomas Sy
<b>Other Stakeholders Involved</b>	Supervisor, Deputy Supervisor
<b>Timeframe (include commencement and anticipated completion dates)</b>	2023

<b>Project Name</b>	Day Road Park Improvements
<b>Brief Project Description</b>	Update/Replace existing playground equipment, add ADA playground, extend walking path and construct multi-use pavilion.
<b>Estimated Cost</b>	\$500,000
<b>Funding Secured to Date</b>	N/A
<b>Funding Sources</b>	Town resources and grants
<b>Project Lead</b>	Thomas Sy
<b>Other Stakeholders Involved</b>	Deputy Supervisor, Highway Supervisor
<b>Timeframe (include commencement and anticipated completion dates)</b>	2021-2022

<b>Project Name</b>	Records Storage
<b>Brief Project Description</b>	Purchase large fireproof vault, digital scanning equipment and build out additional storage space for town and town court records.
<b>Estimated Cost</b>	\$150,000
<b>Funding Secured to Date</b>	N/A
<b>Funding Sources</b>	Town and Municipal grants
<b>Project Lead</b>	Thomas Sy
<b>Other Stakeholders Involved</b>	Town Clerk
<b>Timeframe (include commencement and anticipated completion dates)</b>	2022



## Town of Newfane

<b>Project Name</b>	Town of Newfane Waste Water Treatment Plant upgrades/improvements
<b>Brief Project Description</b>	To make updates to our WWTP to facilitate combining the Village of Wilson sewer system to the Town of Newfane's WWTP, thus eliminating The Village of Wilson's WWTP
<b>Estimated Cost</b>	\$2,000,000
<b>Funding Secured to Date</b>	\$1,500,000
<b>Funding Sources</b>	REDI Program
<b>Project Lead</b>	Wendel Engineers
<b>Other Stakeholders Involved</b>	Village of Wilson & Town of Newfane
<b>Timeframe (include commencement and anticipated completion dates)</b>	10/20 – 10/21

<b>Project Name</b>	Town of Newfane Marina upgrades
<b>Brief Project Description</b>	To replace existing 30-year-old floating docks with new upgraded docks To repave the 30-year-old boat/trailer parking area This work will enhance our fisheries & tourism markets & support all of the local businesses
<b>Estimated Cost</b>	\$250,000
<b>Funding Secured to Date</b>	0
<b>Funding Sources</b>	State & Federal Grants
<b>Project Lead</b>	Town of Newfane
<b>Other Stakeholders Involved</b>	
<b>Timeframe (include commencement and anticipated completion dates)</b>	4/21 – 10/21

<b>Project Name -</b>	Olcott Harbor Dredging
<b>Brief Project Description</b>	This project would be to dredge the Olcott Harbor to a minimum depth for the existing boat traffic. The Army Corp. only dredges between the Federal Piers. This project would complete the dredging from the Federal Piers south to the high level bridge
<b>Estimated Cost</b>	\$750,000 - \$900,000
<b>Funding Secured to Date</b>	0
<b>Funding Sources</b>	State and Federal grants
<b>Project Lead</b>	Town of Newfane
<b>Other Stakeholders Involved</b>	
<b>Timeframe (include commencement and anticipated completion dates)</b>	3/21/20 – 10/21/21

<b>Project Name</b>	Town of Newfane Fish Rearing Project
<b>Brief Project Description</b>	To create a mini fish hatchery in the upper parking lot of the Town Marina to raise our own Salmon/Trout and then release into 18-mile creek. This would be a guarantee to keep our fishing industry alive and well
<b>Estimated Cost</b>	\$1,500,000
<b>Funding Secured to Date</b>	0
<b>Funding Sources</b>	State and Federal Grants
<b>Project Lead</b>	Town of Newfane
<b>Other Stakeholders Involved</b>	Niagara County – NYS DEC
<b>Timeframe (include commencement and anticipated completion dates)</b>	Unknown



## Town of Niagara

<b>Project Name</b>	Belden Center Sewer Project (Phase II)
<b>Brief Project Description</b>	Phase II of the Belden Center Sewer Project consist of a complete re-structuring of Rhode Island Ave., along with construction of the main storm drain and laterals as required
<b>Estimated Cost</b>	\$900,000
<b>Funding Secured to Date</b>	None, project will be bonded
<b>Funding Sources</b>	Town of Niagara Water/Sewer budget via bond
<b>Project Lead</b>	Robert Lannon/Engineer GHD
<b>Other Stakeholders Involved</b>	
<b>Timeframe (include commencement and anticipated completion dates)</b>	Summer 2020

<b>Project Name</b>	Internal & External Water Tower upgrade
<b>Brief Project Description</b>	Internal and external Town of Niagara water tower upgrade, including painting
<b>Estimated Cost</b>	1.5 Million
<b>Funding Secured to Date</b>	User fee will be used to pay the bond payment
<b>Funding Sources</b>	See above
<b>Project Lead</b>	Robert Lannon/Steve Roberts
<b>Other Stakeholders Involved</b>	None
<b>Timeframe (include commencement and anticipated completion dates)</b>	Summer 2020



<b>Project Name</b>	Road Paving
<b>Brief Project Description</b>	Continuation of road paving as per the town master plan
<b>Estimated Cost</b>	\$300,000
<b>Funding Secured to Date</b>	\$80,000
<b>Funding Sources</b>	Highway budget and bond
<b>Project Lead</b>	Robert Herman/Highway Superintendent
<b>Other Stakeholders Involved</b>	None
<b>Timeframe (include commencement and anticipated completion dates)</b>	Summer 2020

<b>Project Name</b>	Conversion of street lights to LED
<b>Brief Project Description</b>	The town of Niagara is working with National Grid on the conversion of the 500 plus town street lights
<b>Estimated Cost</b>	\$26,743.00
<b>Funding Secured to Date</b>	None
<b>Funding Sources</b>	Town street light budget and fund balance
<b>Project Lead</b>	Lee Wallace Town Supervisor/Robert Herman Highway Superintendent
<b>Other Stakeholders Involved</b>	National Grid
<b>Timeframe (include commencement and anticipated completion dates)</b>	Summer 2020



## Town of Porter

<b>Project Name</b>	Porter on the Lake
<b>Brief Project Description</b>	Close in pavilion, add walking paths, construct a new bathroom, put metal on exterior buildings Install emergency 911 call boxes with cell booster Add a nature trail through the woods Install new water lines
<b>Estimated Cost</b>	\$210,144 \$7,700 and \$8,000 \$5,000
<b>Funding Secured to Date</b>	0 \$16,000 \$5,000
<b>Funding Sources</b>	DASNY, NYS Grant Greenway Commission Town of Porter Summerfest
<b>Project Lead</b>	Town of Porter
<b>Other Stakeholders Involved</b>	
<b>Timeframe (include commencement and anticipated completion dates)</b>	Project is in final review and has been for eight months Within three months Within three months



## Town of Somerset

<b>Project Name</b>	Lakeshore Site
<b>Brief Project Description</b>	Design and construction of infrastructure improvements to create a certified shovel-ready site which can be marketed for economic development and industrial facilities
<b>Estimated Cost</b>	
<b>Funding Secured to Date</b>	
<b>Funding Sources</b>	
<b>Project Lead</b>	Town of Somerset
<b>Other Stakeholders Involved</b>	
<b>Timeframe (include commencement and anticipated completion dates)</b>	

<b>Project Name</b>	Empire State Data Hub
<b>Brief Project Description</b>	Redevelopment of the former Somerset Operating Company Power Plant property into a data center. Including vacant land rezoned PUD to the west of the facility.
<b>Estimated Cost</b>	
<b>Funding Secured to Date</b>	
<b>Funding Sources</b>	
<b>Project Lead</b>	Town of Somerset
<b>Other Stakeholders Involved</b>	
<b>Timeframe (include commencement and anticipated completion dates)</b>	

<b>Project Name</b>	Somerset Multi-Use Site
<b>Brief Project Description</b>	Design of construction for the development of waterfront park on lands adjoining the former AES Power Plant to implement the Park Master Plan currently being developed. The site, located on the shore of Lake Ontario and on the Seaway Trail, is a mix of woodland and open fields, and offers spectacular views of the land and surrounding countryside. The project will help the town and region move forward with regional tourism goals
<b>Estimated Cost</b>	
<b>Funding Secured to Date</b>	
<b>Funding Sources</b>	
<b>Project Lead</b>	Town of Somerset
<b>Other Stakeholders Involved</b>	
<b>Timeframe (include commencement and anticipated completion dates)</b>	

<b>Project Name</b>	REDI Project Shoreline Stabilization
<b>Brief Project Description</b>	Stabilization and improvements to shoreline of Somerset Multi-Use Site
<b>Estimated Cost</b>	
<b>Funding Secured to Date</b>	
<b>Funding Sources</b>	
<b>Project Lead</b>	Town of Somerset
<b>Other Stakeholders Involved</b>	
<b>Timeframe (include commencement and anticipated completion dates)</b>	



## Town of Wilson

<b>Project Name</b>	Former Pfeiffer Foods Facility
<b>Brief Project Description</b>	Market the former Pfeiffer Foods facility in Wilson to potential developers
<b>Estimated Cost</b>	
<b>Funding Secured to Date</b>	
<b>Funding Sources</b>	
<b>Project Lead</b>	Town of Wilson
<b>Other Stakeholders Involved</b>	Village of Wilson Niagara County Center for Economic Development
<b>Timeframe (include commencement and anticipated completion dates)</b>	Ongoing

<b>Project Name</b>	Woodcock Brothers Brewery Expansion
<b>Brief Project Description</b>	Expand the Woodcock Brothers Brewery in Town of Wilson to include a bottling facility
<b>Estimated Cost</b>	
<b>Funding Secured to Date</b>	
<b>Funding Sources</b>	
<b>Project Lead</b>	
<b>Other Stakeholders Involved</b>	
<b>Timeframe (include commencement and anticipated completion dates)</b>	

<b>Project Name</b>	Repurposed Landfill Site
<b>Brief Project Description</b>	Utilize a 64-acres landfill site for renewable energy in the Town of Wilson
<b>Estimated Cost</b>	
<b>Funding Secured to Date</b>	
<b>Funding Sources</b>	
<b>Project Lead</b>	
<b>Other Stakeholders Involved</b>	
<b>Timeframe (include commencement and anticipated completion dates)</b>	

<b>Project Name</b>	Pharmacy in Wilson
<b>Brief Project Description</b>	Advocate for the construction of a pharmacy to serve the citizens of Wilson
<b>Estimated Cost</b>	
<b>Funding Secured to Date</b>	
<b>Funding Sources</b>	
<b>Project Lead</b>	
<b>Other Stakeholders Involved</b>	
<b>Timeframe (include commencement and anticipated completion dates)</b>	



## Village of Lewiston

<b>Project Name</b>	Ellicott Development Mixed-Use Project
<b>Brief Project Description</b>	<p>Building One</p> <p>Building Two – Mixed-use 10,800 sf with 5,400 sf proposed restaurant and 5,400 sf proposed retail</p> <p>Building Three – Mixed-use 11,180 sf with 3,784 sf proposed retail and 13 2-bedroom apartment on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor</p>
<b>Estimated Cost</b>	Open-ended
<b>Funding Secured to Date</b>	NA
<b>Funding Sources</b>	
<b>Project Lead</b>	Ellicott Development
<b>Other Stakeholders Involved</b>	Jeff and Jerry Williams
<b>Timeframe (include commencement and anticipated completion dates)</b>	Fall of 2020

<b>Project Name</b>	Gallo Coal Fire Pizza/Retail
<b>Brief Project Description</b>	Build over an existing building located at 402 Center Street. Plans are being finalized
<b>Estimated Cost</b>	Open
<b>Funding Secured to Date</b>	NA
<b>Funding Sources</b>	NA
<b>Project Lead</b>	Michael Hibbard
<b>Other Stakeholders Involved</b>	Pavone Restaurant Group
<b>Timeframe (include commencement and anticipated completion dates)</b>	Summer 2020

<b>Project Name</b>	444 Center Street
<b>Brief Project Description</b>	Mixed-use retail/business/apartments/small restaurants 3,138 sf 1 <sup>st</sup> floor, 4 tenants 3,261 sf 2 <sup>nd</sup> floor, 2 apartments
<b>Estimated Cost</b>	\$400,000
<b>Funding Secured to Date</b>	NA
<b>Funding Sources</b>	NA
<b>Project Lead</b>	Al Bax
<b>Other Stakeholders Involved</b>	NA
<b>Timeframe (include commencement and anticipated completion dates)</b>	Summer 2020

<b>Project Name</b>	Casale Apartments
<b>Brief Project Description</b>	Re-work of existing apartments and entranceways  Reside and reroof and add a large three-sided clock tower. Como Deli lower
<b>Estimated Cost</b>	\$100,000
<b>Funding Secured to Date</b>	NA
<b>Funding Sources</b>	NA
<b>Project Lead</b>	Eagle Eye Properties LLC
<b>Other Stakeholders Involved</b>	Zack Casale
<b>Timeframe (include commencement and anticipated completion dates)</b>	Summer 2020





## Village of Wilson

<b>Project Name</b>	Development of Peninsula Harbor
<b>Brief Project Description</b>	The Peninsula Harbor property is the most valuable piece of land in the Village of Wilson. This harbor peninsula has a unique characteristic of both harbor and waterfront access. This land will be available for development after the wastewater treatment plant is decommissioned in late fall or early winter of 2021
<b>Estimated Cost</b>	
<b>Funding Secured to Date</b>	
<b>Funding Sources</b>	
<b>Project Lead</b>	Village of Wilson
<b>Other Stakeholders Involved</b>	
<b>Timeframe (include commencement and anticipated completion dates)</b>	Early 2022

<b>Project Name</b>	Parks and Recreation Community Center
<b>Brief Project Description</b>	A Park and Recreation Plan was completed by Wendel in 2017. Projects associated with this plan will provide additional activities for our youth. In addition, the school district has a vacant building in the heart of the village. The building has the ability to be utilized as an adult education center, senior citizen center and all-around community center. This project will increase the quality of life of the village population
<b>Estimated Cost</b>	
<b>Funding Secured to Date</b>	
<b>Funding Sources</b>	
<b>Project Lead</b>	
<b>Other Stakeholders Involved</b>	
<b>Timeframe (include commencement and anticipated completion dates)</b>	

<b>Project Name</b>	Bike Trail System Connecting Adjacent Communities
<b>Brief Project Description</b>	<p>The Greenway Commission is studying the opportunity to expand the bike trail further along the south shore of Lake Ontario, linking the “Greenway spine” to upland and interior communities to promote access to the waterfront</p> <p>Bike Trails Proposed under review include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Town of Porter to Wilson involved the Town of Porter, Town of Wilson, Village of Wilson and Tuscarora State Park. Potential sites include, but are not limited to 12-Mile Park, Town of Porter Park, seaway Trail, and Tuscarora State Park. This leg is roughly 7 miles</li> <li>b) Village of Wilson to Town of Newfane involves the Village of Wilson, Town of Wilson, and Town of Newfane. Potential sites include, but are not limited to the Wilson Harbor, Wilson Boat House, Village of Wilson Townline Pier, Seaway Trail, Niagara County Wine Trail, Krueger Park, Victorianbough Winery, Black Willow Winery, Olcott Harbor, Krull Park, Amusement Park Rides, Shops, and multiple restaurants</li> <li>c) Village of Wilson Loop which involves the Village of Wilson, Wilson School District, Town of Wilson, and Tuscarora State Park. Potential sites include, but are not limited to, Krueger Park, Woodcock Brewery, Wilson House Restaurant, Wilson Business District, Sunset Bar and Grill, and Tuscarora State Park. This loop will enhance the Village of Wilson ‘Walking Trail’</li> </ul>
<b>Estimated Cost</b>	
<b>Funding Secured to Date</b>	
<b>Funding Sources</b>	
<b>Project Lead</b>	
<b>Other Stakeholders Involved</b>	
<b>Timeframe (include commencement and anticipated completion dates)</b>	



## Niagara County Community College

<b>Program Name</b>	Professional Piloting, A.A.S
<b>Brief Program Description</b>	The Professional Piloting A.A.S. program prepares students to enter the field of aviation as a professional pilot. Students successfully completing the program will have earned the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) certification of Private and Commercial Pilot, with Instrument Rating, and either be a Certified Flight Instructor (CFI) -- Airplane or possess the multi-engine rating. All instruction occurs under Part 141 of Title 14 CFR (Code of Federal Regulations). Students may also elect to obtain the multi-engine or Certified Flight Instructor, and the Certified Flight Instructor – Instrument ratings. Students may complete this program within 2 years. This program serves to meet the job market while serving the educational and career needs of the prospective student
<b>Estimated Cost</b>	Annual: approximately \$60,000
<b>Funding Secured to Date</b>	
<b>Funding Sources</b>	
<b>Program Lead</b>	Brad Wingert, Interim Assistant Vice President of Academic Affairs
<b>Other Stakeholders Involved</b>	
<b>Timeframe (include commencement and anticipated completion dates)</b>	Anticipated start date: January 2021

<b>Program Name</b>	Cybersecurity, A.S.
<b>Brief Program Description</b>	The proposed program is intended to prepare students to transfer to four-year institutions in a Cybersecurity or related major. Students will take introductory level courses in cybersecurity, computer science, computer information systems and networking, and mathematics to prepare them for junior and senior level classes upon transfer. A student who enters NCCC meeting the pre-requisites for the required courses will be able to transfer in two years having completed an Associate's Degree in Cybersecurity
<b>Estimated Cost</b>	Personnel: \$65,000; Materials/Software: \$15,000. Total estimation: \$80,000
<b>Funding Secured to Date</b>	
<b>Funding Sources</b>	
<b>Program Lead</b>	Don Topolski, Professor of Computer Science
<b>Other Stakeholders Involved</b>	
<b>Timeframe (include commencement and anticipated completion dates)</b>	Program in college internal governance Fall 2020; to begin Fall 2021

<b>Program Name</b>	Coaching, Certificate
<b>Brief Program Description</b>	The coaching certificate program prepares students to become New York State certified athletics coaches. The curriculum consists of three NYSED approved coaching courses and physical education courses which include topics in learning theories, social and psychological issues, principles or organization and administration, kinesthetic theories, injury care, and exercise and nutritional considerations
<b>Estimated Cost</b>	
<b>Funding Secured to Date</b>	
<b>Funding Sources</b>	
<b>Program Lead</b>	Gail Tylec, Professor of Physical/Health Education
<b>Other Stakeholders Involved</b>	
<b>Timeframe (include commencement and anticipated completion dates)</b>	Program commencement tentatively Fall 2022

<b>Program Name</b>	Residential and Commercial Building Trades- Non-credit to Credit Pathway
<b>Brief Program Description</b>	Development of non-credit to credit pathway in construction trades including plumbing, electrical, masonry, and carpentry
<b>Estimated Cost</b>	
<b>Funding Secured to Date</b>	
<b>Funding Sources</b>	
<b>Program Lead</b>	Karen Kwandrans AVP, Brad Wingert AVP
<b>Other Stakeholders Involved</b>	
<b>Timeframe (include commencement and anticipated completion dates)</b>	Spring 2021

<b>Program Name</b>	Cannabis- Non-credit to Credit Pathway
<b>Brief Program Description</b>	Program would include an introduction to the legal, financial, and societal issues surrounding medicinal, recreational, and industrial cannabis and the cannabis industry, and the laws that govern cannabis distribution, cultivation, possession, and consumption for adults and medical patients. It will explore the history of cannabis, industry trends, careers available in the industry, business types, sales and customer service skills, security, and information on strains, products, consumption methods, budtending, cannabis culture, biology and species evolution and taxonomy, morphology and floral traits, cannabinoids, terpenes, tropisms, plant genetics, and breeding
<b>Estimated Cost</b>	
<b>Funding Secured to Date</b>	
<b>Funding Sources</b>	
<b>Program Lead</b>	Carolyn Stanko, Associate Professor
<b>Other Stakeholders Involved</b>	
<b>Timeframe (include commencement and anticipated completion dates)</b>	Potential commencement Fall 2022

<b>Program Name:</b>	Small Business Development Center (SBDC)
<b>Brief Program Description</b>	<p>The SBDC provides management and technical assistance services including business planning, development of marketing and global strategies, cash-flow projections, and financial analysis. The SBDC is staffed by knowledgeable, experienced professionals and provides clients with expert individualized counseling, to help grow local businesses</p> <p>The center specializes in free and confidential one-on-one counseling, dealing with small-business opportunities and problems.</p> <p>The SBDC also offers training (nearly 30 a year with approximately 800 total attendees) and instructional programs targeted to the needs and interests of the small business. The SBDC provides services for every stage of a business' life cycle. The SBDC can work with all for profit business that meet the SBA size standards. For most industries that is up to 500 employees.</p>
<b>Estimated Cost</b>	Budget is consistent year to year and spent mostly on salaries to support a staff of seven full time equivalent employees. NCCC provides office and support services
<b>Funding Secured to Date</b>	Granted annually by funding partners
<b>Funding Sources</b>	<p>Administered by the State University of New York (SUNY)</p> <p>Funded in Part by the Small Business Administration (SBA)</p> <p>Hosted by NCCC. NCCC also provides match to support the grant</p>
<b>Program Lead</b>	Lynn Oswald, Director
<b>Other Stakeholders Involved</b>	SBDC Staff, other local resource providers, the NYSBDC network of 24 centers, the NYSBDC Research Library, the host NCCC, and funding partners, SUNY and SBA
<b>Timeframe (include commencement and anticipated completion dates)</b>	<p>This program has run continuously since 1984. The expert advisors of the Niagara SBDC have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Worked directly with 18,219 businesses</li> <li>• Helped them invest \$524 million</li> <li>• Helped them create or save 11,185 jobs</li> <li>• Assists nearly 800 clients a year including approximately 450 of which are new clients</li> </ul>

<b>Program Name</b>	Logistics/Supply Chain Management- Non-credit to Credit Pathway
<b>Brief Program Description</b>	Development of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Three course Micro-credentials in Supply Chain Management</li> <li>• Supply Chain Business Track</li> <li>• Apprenticeship Related Instruction</li> </ul>
<b>Estimated Cost</b>	
<b>Funding Secured to Date</b>	
<b>Funding Sources</b>	NYS CFA
<b>Program Lead</b>	Karen Kwandrans, Assistant VP of Academic Affairs- Workforce
<b>Other Stakeholders Involved</b>	
<b>Timeframe (include commencement and anticipated completion dates)</b>	Spring 2021



## Niagara County Workforce Development Board

<b>Program Name</b>	Increase WIOA Funded Training Opportunities
<b>Brief Program Description</b>	To meet local employer demand, we anticipate increasing the variety of short-term training opportunities that lead to demand occupations within Niagara County; specifically, those training opportunities that qualify for federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) funding. Over the past year, outreach and one-on-one meetings have been convened with training providers. As a result, three new training providers have been added, offering electrical, electronic engineering technician, welding, and family nurse practitioner courses. Demand occupations for Niagara County are determined by the NYS Department of Labor
<b>Estimated Cost</b>	In-kind under WIOA grant.
<b>Funding Secured to Date</b>	WIOA funding levels yet to be determined for the next program year
<b>Funding Sources</b>	WIOA
<b>Program Lead</b>	Bonnie Rice
<b>Other Stakeholders Involved</b>	Local approved training providers, local employers, trade unions
<b>Timeframe (include commencement and anticipated completion dates)</b>	January 2019 – December 2025



<b>Program Name</b>	Increase Youth Employment and Engagement in Workforce
<b>Brief Program Description</b>	Niagara County WDB plans to increase the variety and number of youth programs by offering more WIOA funding for youth bidders. The goal is to engage a greater number of Niagara County youth ages 16-24 in education, soft skills training, and ultimately employment in the local area. The TANF SYEP grant results in summer jobs for 150 Niagara County youth ages 14-20 each year. In 2019 and 2020, local employers are experiencing difficulty finding entry-level and middle-skill workers. Growing the next generation of workers will help local employers gain qualified candidates for their job openings. We anticipate offering twice as many WIOA funded Youth programs in 2020 as were offered in 2019
<b>Estimated Cost</b>	In-kind under WIOA grant. Program Year 2020 Request for Proposals in the amount of up to \$800,000 plus up to \$750,000 for in-house Youth program. TANF Summer Youth Employment Program for 2019 in the amount of \$435,000
<b>Funding Secured to Date</b>	WIOA and TANF funding levels yet to be determined for the next program year
<b>Funding Sources</b>	Federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) grant, NYS Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP) grant
<b>Program Lead</b>	Bonnie Rice, Donald Jablonski
<b>Other Stakeholders Involved</b>	Local employers who serve as subsidized worksites, Niagara County youth ages 14-24
<b>Timeframe (include commencement and anticipated completion dates)</b>	2020-2025

<b>Program Name</b>	Exploration of Microcredentials and Badges
<b>Brief Program Description</b>	In lieu of college degrees, employers are starting to accept microcredentials resulting from very brief training in a skill set the employer needs. Badges serve as a digital “certificate” to prove the individual successfully completed the micro-training. Microcredentials and Badges may assist employers in assessing the existing skill set of a candidate. They may also offer a quick method of upskilling their existing workforce. We intend to speak with employers and learn their needs, and to gain familiarity with how these items are being used in other states. There will be a need to educate employers on the role that microcredentialing can play in the local job market
<b>Estimated Cost</b>	In-kind through WIOA grant
<b>Funding Secured to Date</b>	WIOA
<b>Funding Sources</b>	WIOA funding levels yet to be determined for the next program year
<b>Program Lead</b>	Bonnie Rice
<b>Other Stakeholders Involved</b>	Local employers, local job seekers
<b>Timeframe (include commencement and anticipated completion dates)</b>	2020-2025



## National Fuel

<b>Program Name</b>	Area Development Program
<b>Brief Program Description</b>	Funding is available annually for natural gas infrastructure, interior natural gas piping, certain natural gas equipment costs and even job training. The program provides grants for specific projects in order to stimulate economic activity and redevelopment in National Fuel’s Western New York service area. To be approved for funding, projects must be natural gas-related and meet at least the following criteria: (1) Stimulate investment in infrastructure for the development or redevelopment of underutilized industrial or commercial property, including, but not limited to, brownfield sites or brownfield opportunity areas. (2) Create new employment opportunities or higher-value employment opportunities. (3) Provide workforce training or retraining to ensure that higher-value skills are available in the workforce, when needed. (4) Stimulate expenditure or private investment in direct capital expenditures needed to expand employment. (5) Ability to provide National Fuel with data annually to track the effectiveness of the program for reporting to the NY PSC
<b>Estimated Cost</b>	Determined on project by project basis
<b>Funding Secured to Date</b>	\$1.25 million is available annually
<b>Funding Sources</b>	National Fuel - Funding is available through an agreement with the New York State Public Service Commission (NY PSC)
<b>Program Lead</b>	Cathryn Hilliard
<b>Other Stakeholders Involved</b>	None
<b>Timeframe (include commencement and anticipated completion dates)</b>	Typically takes 2 - 3 months to be approved for grant from time of application

<b>Program Name</b>	CHP Capital Buydown Program
<b>Brief Program Description</b>	National Fuel’s Combined Heat & Power (CHP) Capital Buydown Program may be able to assist your company in the purchase of CHP equipment. The program is designed to improve customer’s project economics by reducing the payback period of the project through a one-time cost buydown of the associated costs of CHP. The program provides buydowns typically in the range of \$50,000 - \$150,000 per customer, based on the size and type of equipment installed. To be approved for funding, projects must meet the following criteria (1) Involve the purchase of CHP equipment which will expand natural gas usage. (2) Ability to sign a performance contract with a term of up to 6 years as well as provide security to cover National Fuel’s buydown amount. (3) Provide National Fuel with data annually to track the effectiveness of the program, as well as performance of individual CHP projects for reporting to the NY PSC
<b>Estimated Cost</b>	Determined on project by project basis
<b>Funding Secured to Date</b>	\$1 million available annually
<b>Funding Sources</b>	National Fuel - Funding is available through an agreement with the New York State Public Service Commission (NY PSC)
<b>Program Lead</b>	Cathryn Hilliard
<b>Other Stakeholders Involved</b>	None
<b>Timeframe (include commencement and anticipated completion dates)</b>	Typically takes a month to be approved for grant from time of application

<b>Program Name</b>	Natural Gas Vehicle (NGV) Capital Buydown Program
<b>Brief Program Description</b>	Funding is available annually to help customers reduce the cost of installing Natural Gas Vehicle (NGV) Refueling Stations and/or purchasing new vehicles to improve their payback. The program is designed to improve customer's NGV project economics by reducing the payback requirements of the customer through a one-time cost buydown of the NGV Refueling Station facility installation and/or purchase of NGVs. The program provides capital buydowns typically in the range of \$10,000 - \$200,000 per customer, depending on the type and number of NGVs purchased. To be approved for funding, projects must meet the following criteria (1) Involve the purchase of Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) vehicles and/or the installation of a NGV fast-fill or time-fill Refueling Station. (2) Ability to sign a performance contract with a term of up to 6 years as well as provide security to cover the Company's buydown amount. (3) Provide National Fuel with data annually to track the effectiveness of the program, as well as performance of individual NGV projects for reporting to the NY PSC
<b>Estimated Cost</b>	Determined on project by project basis
<b>Funding Secured to Date</b>	\$1 million available annually
<b>Funding Sources</b>	National Fuel - Funding is available through an agreement with the New York State Public Service Commission (NY PSC)
<b>Program Lead</b>	Cathryn Hilliard
<b>Other Stakeholders Involved</b>	None
<b>Timeframe (include commencement and anticipated completion dates)</b>	Typically takes a month to be approved for grant from time of application

<b>Program Name</b>	Natural Gas Equipment Capital Buydown Program
<b>Brief Program Description</b>	<p>Funding is available annually to defray the capital cost of system improvements, associated piping, and/or customer gas-fired equipment that would enable additional natural gas consumption.</p> <p>The program provides upfront capital buydowns for specific projects in order to aid large commercial and industrial customers in installing incremental gas-fired equipment at their facilities within National Fuel’s service territory. To be approved for funding, projects must be natural gas-related and meet the following criteria (1) Stimulate investment in infrastructure for the development or redevelopment of underutilized industrial or commercial property. (2) Installation of incremental gas-fired equipment at existing facilities. (3) Increase system throughput and/or better utilize available system capacity. (4) Ability to sign a performance contract with a term of up to 7 years as well as provide security to cover National Fuel’s buydown amount. (5) Provide National Fuel with data annually to track the effectiveness of the pilot program, as well as performance of individual projects for reporting to the NY PSC</p>
<b>Estimated Cost</b>	Determined on project by project basis
<b>Funding Secured to Date</b>	\$2 million available annually
<b>Funding Source</b>	National Fuel - Funding is available through an agreement with the New York State Public Service Commission (NY PSC)
<b>Program Lead</b>	Cathryn Hilliard
<b>Other Stakeholders Involved</b>	None
<b>Timeframe (include commencement and anticipated completion dates)</b>	Typically takes a month to be approved for grant from time of application

<b>Program Name</b>	Excelsior Jobs Program Rates
<b>Brief Program Description</b>	A transportation rate discount is available for business with a qualifying SIC code that have been awarded a NY State Excelsior Jobs Program Certificate, and meet at least one of the following requirement (1) New facility with a minimal annual usage of 12,000 Ccf. (2) Existing facility purchased or leased and vacant for six months or more with a minimal annual usage of 12,000 Ccf. (3) Expansion of an existing facility with a minimal annual incremental usage of 6,000 Ccf
<b>Estimated Cost</b>	N/A
<b>Funding Secured to Date</b>	N/A
<b>Funding Sources</b>	National Fuel
<b>Program Lead</b>	Cathryn Hilliard
<b>Other Stakeholders Involved</b>	NY State – Must have a NY State Excelsior Jobs Program Certificate
<b>Timeframe (include commencement and anticipated completion dates)</b>	Approval is typically given in a few weeks after application is received

## B. Buffalo Niagara Regional Agenda



2020

# ADVOCACY AGENDA





# 2020 ADVOCACY AGENDA



Once again this year, our members ranked advocacy as their top expectation of the Buffalo Niagara Partnership in our annual member survey. As the area's regional chamber of commerce, it is a responsibility we take very seriously.

And we are proud of our track record. Effective advocacy is at the heart of what has made the Partnership the premier employer organization in our region.

But don't take our word for it.

"I don't know any group in Western New York that can speak more effectively for the business community and for economic opportunity than the Partnership. They have so many members across so many different businesses and industries that can exact a higher order of influence in their advocacy work."

**Richard Gold, President & COO, M&T Bank**

"The Partnership's work in advocacy is second to none. I have been fortunate enough to be in Albany to see the Partnership team in action. Whatever the issue, they always make their case with detailed information and supporting statistics."

**Rhonda Frederick, President & CEO, People, Inc.**

"The Partnership carries the ball as the advocate on issues that affect our business community, from workforce to government mandates. If not them, who?"

**Art Wingerter, President, Univera Healthcare**

As we release our 2020 Advocacy Agenda, please know that despite the challenges that await us, the Partnership has never been more committed to fighting for job growth, private investment, and a stronger and more inclusive regional economy.

Sincerely,



Dottie Gallagher  
President & CEO



Grant Loomis  
Vice President, Government Affairs

POLICY PRIORITY KEY:

- FEDERAL
- STATE
- LOCAL

# TAXES & REGULATIONS

## Lower the Cost of Doing Business

► Making the state's property tax cap permanent in 2019 was a significant step forward, but absent real reform and lasting relief, New York's regulatory burden, high taxes, and escalating labor costs will continue to stifle the region's economic competitiveness. The Governor and State Legislature must work together to:

- Protect the property tax cap
- Reduce unfunded mandates driving high property taxes
- Allow commercial property owners to benefit from property tax relief efforts
- Increase personal income tax exemption for small employers filing via personal income tax
- Reduce corporate tax rate for small businesses
- Expand 0% corporate franchise tax to small manufacturers not currently covered under exemption
- Block new employer mandates driving up costs
- Oppose expansion of Paid Family Leave
- Lower healthcare costs
- Limit "emergency rulemaking" authority
- Improve job impact analyses for new regulations
- Oppose efforts to overly regulate the "gig economy" which will drive up costs, limit service access, and stifle innovation
- Continue to deliver on workers' compensation savings derived from 2017 reforms and pursue additional initiatives to improve the system and lower costs

### Tax Climate Ranking



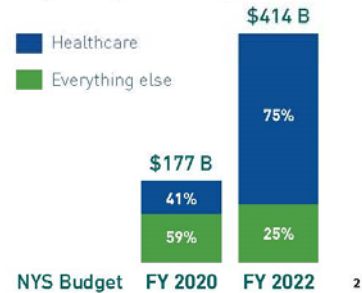
**2<sup>nd</sup> WORST**  
state business tax climate  
in the country



## Single Payer Healthcare

► Oppose creation of single payer healthcare system in NYS

### Budget Impact of Single Payer



## Climate Action Council (CAC)

► Ensure employer impacts are considered as the CAC implements the Climate Leadership & Community Protection Act – the most sweeping and aggressive climate law in the country. Manufacturers and other industries vital to Buffalo Niagara's economy must continue to have reliable access to affordable energy as the state mandates a transition to renewables.

## Protect Employers in Marijuana Legalization

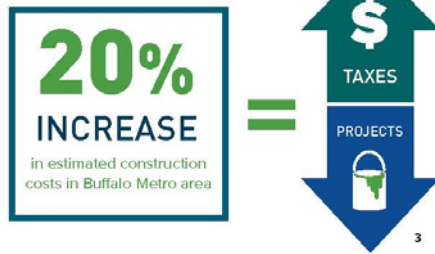
► Ensure efforts to legalize the adult use of recreational marijuana fully protect an employer's right to operate a drug-free workplace.

# DEVELOPMENT & CONSTRUCTION

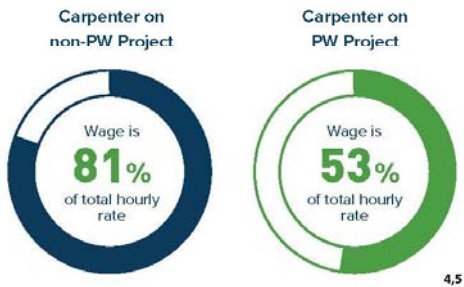
## Prevailing Wage

- ▶ Oppose expansion of prevailing wage mandate to private projects

Prevailing wage already inflates the cost of public projects



Fringe benefits account for nearly **HALF** of inflated "prevailing" wage hourly rate



## Scaffold Law

- ▶ Reform the Scaffold Law by replacing absolute liability with a comparative negligence standard, allowing liability to be apportioned based on fault – the standard that exists in every state except New York

## Adaptive Reuse

- ▶ Maintain and strengthen Erie County Industrial Development Agency's existing Adaptive Reuse policy

## Mandated Inclusionary Zoning

- ▶ Oppose mandated inclusionary zoning which inflates the cost of developing new, affordable units in a market with high construction costs and low rental rates. Instead, the public and private sectors must come together to urgently address the findings of the Buffalo Housing Opportunity Strategy report, including the need for focused investment around community assets to build market confidence and create mixed income neighborhoods.

## Infill Development

- ▶ Establish an incentive program to stimulate infill development in downtown Buffalo to help build walkable, complete neighborhoods

## Historic Tax Credit

- ▶ Support expansion of NYS Historic Tax Credit program by increasing credit from 20% to 30% for projects under \$5 million

Over the last 10 years, the Historic Tax Credit program has facilitated

**\$1.4 BILLION**

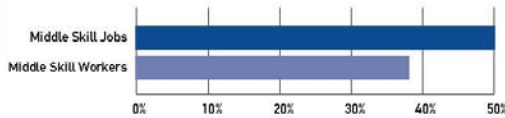
in investment in WNY

**45** current program applications pending in WNY

# WORKFORCE & TALENT ATTRACTION

## JOBS Act

- ▶ Support passage of the JOBS Act to expand Pell Grant eligibility to students enrolled in quality, short-term education and training programs leading to employment in high-demand industry sectors or careers



**HALF of the jobs in NYS require middle skills but only 38% of the state's workers are trained to the middle skill level.**

Middle skill jobs require education beyond high school but not a four-year degree

7

## Immigration Reform

- ▶ Support refugee resettlement in Buffalo Niagara and oppose efforts to drastically reduce the number of refugees admitted into the United States
- ▶ Support comprehensive H-1B visa reform that increases the number of high-skilled visas issued and allows Buffalo Niagara to compete for top talent

### Immigration Impact on Buffalo Niagara

**\$622M** Taxes Paid by Immigrants

**\$1.5B** Immigrant Spending Power

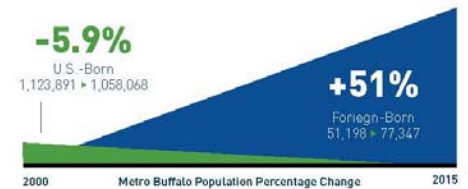
NEARLY

**3,000** Immigrant Entrepreneurs

### Immigration Is Curbing WNY's Population Losses

From 2000-2015, Buffalo Niagara's foreign-born population grew by a more than 50%.

Without these gains, the area's total population would have declined by 5.6% instead of 3.4%.



## Child Care Access

- ▶ Expand non-temporary child care benefits to working individuals participating in training and/or on-the-job upskilling to achieve the necessary skills to attain higher wages

## Higher Education Access

- ▶ Increase Tuition Assistance Program (TAP) awards and income eligibility for students and families
- ▶ Increase operational support for the region's SUNY institutions

## Pipeline Development

- ▶ Support operational and capital investment in the University at Buffalo's Jacobs School of Medicine and School of Engineering and Applied Sciences, respectively. Both schools are critical to Buffalo Niagara's current workforce and play a leading role in developing the region's future physicians, other healthcare professionals, and engineers.

**800** UB residents working in area hospitals

**84%** of clinicians at Kaleida hospitals are UB faculty members

8

## Destination Promotion

- ▶ Increase investment in Visit Buffalo Niagara's destination marketing to not only continue to attract tourists, but improve Buffalo Niagara's brand – a critical component of the region's workforce attraction and retention efforts

# TRANSPORTATION & INFRASTRUCTURE

## Transportation Funding

- ▶ Support passage of a comprehensive infrastructure plan that addresses America's current challenges and future needs, appropriates real dollars to deliver real results, and provides a path forward for the economy and workforce of tomorrow
- ▶ Push for funding parity between upstate and downstate as lawmakers develop New York's next five-year capital plan
  - Help ensure WNY (Region 5) receives its 'fair share' of NYSDOT funding
  - Help ensure NYS honors its commitment to provide Niagara Frontier Transportation Authority with \$80 million over next four years to address existing Metro Rail capital needs



10

## Energy Infrastructure

- ▶ Natural Gas Transmission System
  - Support development of New York's natural gas transmission system to improve reliability, keep consumer prices low, and spur investment and job creation
- ▶ Power Grid Upgrades
  - Support upgrades to New York's aging power grid to improve reliability and ensure Buffalo Niagara's economy benefits from moving locally produced electricity downstate



11

## Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI)

- ▶ Support passage of the GLRI Act of 2019 which reauthorizes the program for another five years and increases funding from \$300 million to \$475 million by fiscal year 2026



12

## Telecommunications Network

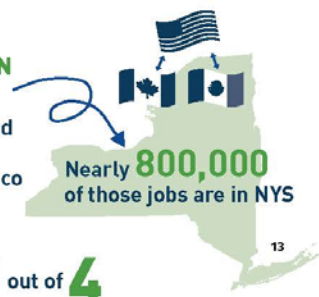
- ▶ Support policies encouraging continued network deployment and investment to expand high-speed connectivity necessary to conduct business in today's economy and oppose state efforts to rollback current federal policies promoting an internet ecosystem free from layers of burdensome and costly regulation

# CROSS-BORDER ECONOMY

## Free & Fair Trade

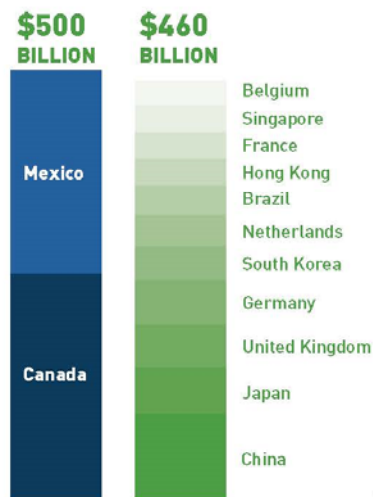
- ▶ **United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA)** Support the passage of the USMCA to strengthen Buffalo Niagara's bi-national economy and vital trade relationship with Canada
- ▶ **So-called 'Buy American' Policy** Oppose protectionist state contracting policies that undermine the strength and viability of our integrated cross-border economy

More than **12 MILLION JOBS** in the U.S. depend on trade with Canada and Mexico



**1 out of 4** NYS manufacturing firms export to Canada & Mexico <sup>14</sup>

Manufacturers export more American-made goods to Canada & Mexico than the next 11 largest markets combined



15

## Border Efficiency

- ▶ Support border efficiency measures to better move goods and people across Buffalo Niagara's international border crossings, including:
  - Completion of regulatory reform requiring mandatory filing of e-manifests for all trucks
  - Completion of regulatory reform requiring pre-payment of all commercial border crossing fees
  - Implementation of technological enhancements for commercial crossings, including placement of technology in Canada to derive the benefits of pre-clearance
- ▶ Support passage of the Border Officer Utilization for National Defense (BOUND) Act to set a minimum staffing requirement for Customs and Border Protection officers stationed at northern border ports of entry to ensure the U.S.-Canada border remains an economic engine

## CITATIONS

- 1 Tax Foundation, "2020 State Business Tax Climate Index," October 2019
- 2 Analysis performed by Empire Center for Public Policy
- 3 Empire Center for Public Policy, "Prevailing Wage: New York's Costly Public Works Pay Mandate," 2017
- 4 Merit shop journeyman Carpenter. Average wage and benefit rates provided by Associated Builders & Contractors Empire State
- 5 New York State Department of Labor, Prevailing Wage Rates for 07/01/2019 - 06/30/2020
- 6 New York State Historic Preservation Office. Investment figure reflects amount leveraged from combination of federal and state HTC.
- 7 National Skills Coalition, "Middle skills jobs state by state, New York's forgotten middle," February 2017
- 8 University at Buffalo, The State University of New York
- 9 New American Economy, "New Americans and a New Direction: The Role of Immigrants in Reviving the Great Lakes Region," October 2017 and [www.newamericaneconomy.org/city/buffalo/](http://www.newamericaneconomy.org/city/buffalo/)
- 10 TRIP, "Preserving Buffalo Niagara Falls Bridges: The Condition and Funding Needs of Buffalo-Niagara Falls Aging Bridge System," September 2019
- 11 New York Independent System Operator, "Power Trends: New York's Evolving Electric Grid," 2017
- 12 Great Lakes Commission & Council of Great Lakes Industries, "Assessing the Investment: The Economic Impact of the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative," September 2018
- 13 U.S. Chamber of Commerce
- 14, 15 National Association of Manufacturers

# 2020 Regional Priority Projects



## **Agriculture Industrial Park with Complete Streets & Intermodal Connectivity**

### **Erie County**

This project will utilize existing Class 1 rail infrastructure and be constructed with a complete streets design element to better connect Angola's village center with the nearby industrial corridor job hub. In addition, the construction of the park will boost local agriculture—an industry extremely important to the regional economy.

## **Cars Sharing Main Street Completion**

### **City of Buffalo**

Funding is necessary to rapidly complete the Cars Sharing Main Street initiative to expedite the economic development benefits of returning two-way vehicular traffic to Main Street in downtown Buffalo. Securing the necessary funding incrementally will lead to years of construction and delay efforts to improve the quality of life in downtown Buffalo.

## **Metro Rail Extension**

### **Buffalo Niagara Partnership**

Extending NFTA-Metro Rail to the north and south will better connect people to jobs and stimulate significant economic development opportunities throughout the region. State funding is necessary to secure matching federal investment to advance this project through the next critical stage of planning and design.

## **Niagara County Rural Bridges Initiative**

### **Niagara County**

This project involves the replacement of five strategically located bridges in eastern Niagara County. The structurally deficient bridges are part of a critical rural infrastructure network that supports the county's agricultural industry. They also provide vital access to fire protection, schools, and jobs. The project will strengthen the county's agribusiness sector, improve safety on bridges worn by decades of use by farm equipment and other heavy vehicles, improve supply chain access to key points in the county's agribusiness network, and support access to jobs and services within rural areas.

## **Niagara Scenic Parkway - Riverway Phase 2 & Hyde Park Roundabout**

### **City of Niagara Falls**

This project will connect Hyde Park Boulevard and the Niagara Scenic Parkway by constructing a new roundabout/intersection, as well as removing all expressway features and replacing existing infrastructure with a two-lane extension of 'Riverway' eastward to the new Hyde Park roundabout. Once complete, this project will reclaim hundreds of acres for park use and reroute motorists back onto the city's street network spurring redevelopment opportunities throughout Niagara Falls.



[thepartnership.org](http://thepartnership.org)

## C. Economic Development Partners

- Niagara County Legislature
- Niagara County Department of Economic Development
- Niagara County Economic Development Alliance
- Niagara County Industrial Development Agency (NCIDA)
- Buffalo Niagara Enterprise (BNE)
- Chamber of Commerce of the Tonawandas
- City of Lockport Greater Lockport Development Corporation
- City of Niagara Falls Department of Economic Development
- City of Niagara Falls Renewal Community
- City of North Tonawanda Lumber City Development Corporation
- Cornell Cooperative Extension of Niagara County
- Destination Niagara USA
- Empire State Development Corporation
- International Joint Commission (IJC)
- Leaders Encouraging Action & Progress (LEAP)
- National Fuel
- National Grid
- New York State Electric & Gas
- NCCC Small Business Development Center
- New York Business Development Corporation
- New York Power Authority
- New York State Department of Environmental Conservation
- New York State Department of Labor
- New York State Department of State
- New York State Energy Research & Development Authority
- Niagara County Community College
  - Niagara County Department of Employment & Training
  - Niagara County Department of Social Services
  - Niagara County Farm Bureau
  - Niagara County Soil & Water Conservation District
  - Niagara County Workforce Development Board (WDB)
- Niagara Falls Bridge Commission
- Niagara Falls Culinary Institute
- Niagara-Orleans Regional Alliance
- Niagara River Region Chamber of Commerce
- Niagara USA Chamber of Commerce
- Orleans Niagara BOCES
- Town of Lockport Industrial Development Agency
  - University at Buffalo Business Alliance
  - U.S. Department of Agriculture
  - U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
  - U.S. Small Business Administration
- USA Niagara Development Corporation
- WNY Regional Economic Development Council



## **D. CEDS Committee**

### **1. Organization**

The Niagara County Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Committee represents all sectors of the economy, citizenry, elected officials at the local, county, state and federal levels, and public service professionals. The willingness of people to continue to serve on the committee sustains the productive dynamic evidenced by the quality of past documents. The Niagara County Economic Development Alliance (NCEDA) remains as the core of the committee. NCEDA, which is an informal alliance of public and private agencies from throughout the county, meets quarterly to discuss issues such as business attraction/retention, business assistance, and economic development opportunities. NCEDA has at its core a cadre of experts who work on economic development issues on a daily basis, which adds substantively to the effort to plan for, manage, and track economic growth in the county.

The Niagara County Legislature, through its Economic Development Committee and the Niagara County Manager, actively supports an agenda that places significant emphasis on comprehensive economic development. Through the daily efforts of the Niagara County Center for Economic Development (NCCED), this agenda is transformed into actions which seek to leverage the potential for sustainable prosperity in all twenty of the county's municipalities. NCCED staff work in concert with the CEDS Committee to determine and articulate a shared vision for economic development that best meets the needs of all the county's residents and businesses. The CEDS is seen as an opportunity to "fine tune" a tool considered critical to the effort to coordinate, for mutual benefit, the initiatives at the county level and among the local governments to stake a claim to future prosperity in Western New York.

### **2. Members**

The CEDS Committee members are selected and appointed annually by the Niagara County Legislature. Members appointed to serve on the CEDS Committee represent a cross-section of the entire county and include representatives from the business community, key industry sectors, and economic development organizations. A complete list of CEDS Committee members can be found at the beginning of the document.

### **3. Staff**

The NCCED serves as staff to the CEDS Committee. This group updates the report, gathers and analyzes statistical data, canvasses committee members and local officials for input, prepares and distributes meeting notices, agendas, meeting minutes and draft reports for approval by the CEDS Committee. NCCED staff assigned to the CEDS Committee are:

- ❖ **Michael A. Casale**, Commissioner, Niagara County Department of Economic Development
- ❖ **Cathie L. Synor**, Confidential Assistant/CEDS Coordinator, NCDED
- ❖ **Andrea L. Klyczek**, Deputy Commissioner, NCDED
- ❖ **Benjamin J. Bidell**, AICP, GISP, Senior Planner, NCDED
- ❖ **Amy E. Fisk**, AICP, Brownfield Program Manager, NCDED
- ❖ **Jeffery P. Degnan**, Graphic Artist, NCDED
- ❖ **Susan C. Langdon**, Executive Director, Niagara County Industrial Development Agency