



Growing Better Together

Written Submission for the Pre-Budget Consultations in Advance of the Upcoming Federal Budget

Niagara  Region

February 2024



Recommendation

- **Recommendation:** That the Ministry of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities introduce an infrastructure program offering a one-third cost sharing structure with federal, provincial and local governments.

Letter from Jim Bradley Niagara Regional Chair

Dear Minister Freeland,

On behalf of Niagara Regional Council, thank you for the opportunity to participate in Canada's 2024 pre-budget consultation. As our governments continue to tackle a number of shared issues, such as the ongoing housing crisis and affordability across our country, one thing remains clear; increased collaboration is needed to ensure we are adequately supporting today's residents and businesses while preparing for tomorrow's growth.

Supporting economic growth and faster housing development across Niagara remains a top priority for Regional Council. We are grateful for the investments your government has made within many of our local communities to help us advance these objectives. The \$22.7 million investment from the Ministry of Transportation to revitalize Port Colborne wharfs will add significant freight capacity to the area, strengthening both our local economy and the national supply chain. Additionally, the recent \$25.7 million investment from the Housing Accelerator Fund in St. Catharines will have a significant impact on our shared goal of introducing more attainable and affordable housing.

Although these investments help ensure Niagara's local municipalities are well positioned to welcome new growth, large scale economic expansion and housing intensification can only occur if there is Regional infrastructure in place to support it.

That is why Niagara Region's core request for the Government of Canada's 2024 Budget is that an infrastructure program offering a one-third cost sharing structure with provincial and local governments be introduced. By doing so, your government will ensure municipalities across the country have the ability to introduce the infrastructure required to support future economic and population growth.

Regional Council is committed to collaborating with our federal partners to create a stronger Niagara. I look forward to collaborating on the abovementioned initiative so that we can continue Growing Better Together.



Jim Bradley, Chair
Niagara Region

About Niagara Region

Endless Opportunity Ready to be Harnessed

Located within the Southern Ontario Greenbelt, Niagara is home to over 496,000 residents living in a mix of 12 urban and rural local area municipalities (LAMs), each with their own distinct characteristics. Situated within 800 kilometres of 130 million people and in close proximity to Toronto and the USA, Niagara is at the heart of one of North America’s business trade corridors. In 2021, \$842.9 billion worth of Canadian/US imports and exports passed through Niagara and the region has been designated as a Foreign Trade Zone Point, reaffirming the critical role our community plays in facilitating trade.

Niagara is the best region to work in and call home, and provincial growth projections confirm that our community remains an area of choice for Canadians. With an estimated 200,000 new residents and 85,000 new jobs coming to our region by 2051, Niagara offers significant social and economic potential for both our community and the country as a whole.

Our two tiers of local government remain committed to continuous improvement and implementing innovative services that meet the needs of residents while achieving efficiencies and maximizing economies of scale.

From providing high-quality drinking water and maintaining regional roads, to operating long-term care homes and administering public health, Regional services support residents throughout every stage of life. Lower tier services, such as licensing and cultural and recreational services ensure day-to-day public programs are responsive to community needs. Shared services, such as Niagara Region Transit, are delivered by our two levels of government. This collaborative approach ensures consistent customer service across our local area municipalities and allows for enhanced coordination of growth across the region.

Our population is growing, new businesses are being created and we continue to work together to deliver innovative and customer focused services to our residents.



694,000
2051 projected population
43% increase



5 international
border crossings
into the U.S



272,000 jobs
2051 projected employment
23% increase



\$683.2 million
2022 non-residential
building construction



Introduce an infrastructure program offering a one-third cost sharing structure with provincial and local governments

Niagara Region is planning today for tomorrow's infrastructure. Once completed, the South Niagara Wastewater Solutions Project (SNWSP) will support growth by:

- Allowing for greater flexibility in development servicing in five local communities to support infill and net new development.
- Enabling economic growth, including supporting large-lot employment sites along the Queen Elizabeth Way.
- Providing servicing for the forthcoming South Niagara Hospital.

This infrastructure project will also support shared sustainability goals of the Region and Federal Government. New technology and system improvements will help protect the Great Lakes by reducing combined sewer overflows by approximately 60 to 70 per cent.

In May 2023, members of Regional Council secured a commitment, in principle, from the Honourable Premier Doug Ford for one-third of project funding. This commitment was predicated on the Government of Canada introducing an infrastructure program that would support a cost sharing structure with provincial and local governments.

While the Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program's (ICIP) Green Infrastructure Stream provided resources for wastewater projects under the environmental quality sub-stream, funding was only available for infrastructure upgrades and/or portions of project costs. There are currently no federal-provincial cost sharing programs that will support this critical growth-related infrastructure project.

The SNWSP represents one of the most significant Regional capital investments ever. However, without a one-third investment from each of the federal and provincial governments it cannot move forward.

Aligning with Federal Priorities

Collaborating on this project supports the Government of Canada's infrastructure priorities of providing clean water, increasing resiliency to climate change and ensuring Canadians have modern, reliable services that improve quality of life.



\$400 Million
Estimated total cost of project



Investment Partnership Required

1. Regional Investment
2. Provincial Investment
3. Federal Investment



Growing Better Together

Federal Pre-Budget Submission

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Niagara  **Region**

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