



Critical Indicators For Reflecting On Life In Niagara

Niagara Research and Planning Council

LIVING IN NIAGARA 2011

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Critical Indicators
For Reflecting On
Life In Niagara



Niagara Research and Planning Council



Living in Niagara - 2011

Brought to you by the Niagara Research and Planning Council.

The Niagara Research and Planning Council (NRAPC) is comprised of community volunteers, and supported by Niagara-wide community partners. Our mission, vision and guiding principles were created by the community of Niagara.

Our Mission: Generating knowledge that drives community action

Our Vision: With an end goal of community action and a more vibrant Niagara in mind, the Niagara Research and Planning Council:

- Builds community capacity for Niagara-wide research and planning;
- Facilitates coordinated stakeholder action toward developing a stronger Niagara; and
- Is recognized as an integral part of the Niagara community, and is a sustainable community entity.

Guiding Principles:

- Research and activities are guided by communities;
- Different interests are engaged to work together mobilizing for change; and
- NRAPC links community strengths, research, and evidence in order to plan for a stronger Niagara.



Niagara Research and Planning Council

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Each section has a cover page with information about why that sector is important, what we are doing well and where we can improve. Each section describes the key indicators related to that sector, including trends and available comparative data.

All tables, figures and references are embedded in the full report document, and references are identified by their citation or access hyperlink. They were retrieved February to August of 2011. A list of Tables, Figures and References are available on request as an Appendix. The full document with tables and figures is at: www.livinginnigarareport.com and on the NRAPC website: www.nrapc.ca



Purpose of the Living in Niagara - 2011 report

This report maps indicators of the vitality of the community of Niagara. It identifies significant trends providing insights into issues that make a difference in the lives of Niagara residents.

It can be used as:

- an effective tool to encourage discussion about key areas of importance to quality of life in Niagara;
- a catalyst for community action; and
- a basis for evidence-informed planning and decision-making that will strengthen our region.

Applied research will guide solution generation, innovation and community action.

Living in Niagara - 2011

It is an exciting time to live here. Together, we can make Niagara even better!

Living in Niagara - 2011 provides a description of:

- 12 critical sectors that describe life in Niagara and a total of 127 critical indicators associated with these sectors.
- Niagara as a place to live, learn, work, play and grow.
- How well we are doing in comparison to provincial and national trends in 12 areas critical to quality of life in this region.

This report is not intended to cover all available information. Rather, it provides a snapshot of Niagara at one point in time. It is available as a summary hard copy document, and in a longer format on the www.nrapc.com website to be read, discussed and used in planning leadership and community action initiatives. Data gathering was conducted by Niagara community leaders and organizations with the assistance of a research team.

Living in Niagara - 2011 highlights fundamental trends affecting our community's vibrancy and quality of life and was compiled by a team of research professionals using available data from numerous reliable and respected sources.

The 12 sectors and their indicators were identified, described and quantified with currently available data and research about Niagara. The process attempted to measure key determinants of a vibrant community, to assist groups and individuals to reflect on the critical indicators of life in our region, better understand its vitality now, and then focus on action for a better future.

The Niagara Research and Planning Council offers this dynamic document, in the spirit of community capacity-building and collaboration, as a relevant and vital tool for current and future use. The intent is that citizens and leaders will:

- reflect on information about Niagara over time compared to fundamental trends provincially, nationally and in other regions in Canada; and then
- engage in future dialogue about planning and actions for improvement.

Living in Niagara - 2011

This is a status report of Niagara describing twelve sectors that are critical to quality of life in Niagara now and for the future.

It will lead to better-informed decision-making for a stronger Niagara as a place to live, learn, work and grow.

Niagara Research and Planning Council (NRAPC)



Niagara Research and Planning Council

Generating knowledge that drives community action

Origins of the Niagara Research and Planning Council (NRAPC):

2005 - A group of Niagara-based "for social profit" leaders met to discuss creating a Niagara-wide approach to integrated social and community planning. The Niagara Integrated Social and Community Planning Project (NISCPP) began.

2006 - The NISCPP hosted a facilitated meeting of interested citizens from across the region, to define the vision. Strong support was expressed for creating a community-driven body to champion Niagara-focused, collaborative, evidence-based planning to leverage Niagara's assets for focused planning and a stronger future throughout the region.

2007 - As a result of this community action, the Niagara Research and Planning Council (NRAPC) formed.

2008 - NRAPC released the first Living in Niagara report - a baseline snapshot of Niagara's asset-based strengths, as well as challenges affecting life in Niagara. The Living in Niagara report is widely-cited by planners throughout the region.

2011 - The second Living in Niagara report is produced. Construction begins on the Niagara Knowledge Exchange, a digital platform for horizontal knowledge-sharing that leads to a stronger Niagara.

NRAPC works in partnership with public, private and not-for-profit organizations as well as citizens of Niagara. The Council is involved in several partnerships and community leadership initiatives:

- Producing the Living in Niagara report for community insight, reflection, planning and action.
- Facilitating the development of Niagara Knowledge Exchange capacity in the region.
- Hosting an online gathering place at www.nrapc.com, to keep citizens up to date, and engage people who wish to connect with sectors, to work and take leadership.
- Facilitating community dialogue and action plans based on the best information and leadership available.
- Partnering in the Niagara Age-Friendly Community Initiative which is based on a global effort led by the World Health Organization. The goal is to create safe and secure environments that foster community participation, personal health and well-being.
- Working with Niagara-wide partners on emerging issues, to identify, conduct, analyze and facilitate specific research and action projects.
- Working with the community to facilitate civic action.

NRAPC will regularly update the online version of Living in Niagara - 2011. The 12 sectors of this report provide the framework for the Niagara Knowledge Exchange - a digital platform for horizontal sharing of relevant, reliable, Niagara-focused data, documents, mapping and reports, to support evidence-informed planning and focused decision-making.

History of identifying 12 sectors and indicators to describe quality of life in Niagara

For the first Living in Niagara report (2008), an online survey tool was used to contact citizens who took part in the Niagara Integrated Social and Community Planning Project (NISCPP), to identify eleven (11) key sectors that would describe life in Niagara. They also outlined relevant indicators to measure Niagara's progress in these sectors.

For Living in Niagara - 2011, the "Recreation and Sports" sector was added, for a total of twelve (12) sectors. Indicators in each sector were selected for inclusion, using the following criteria:

- Relevance to the sector;
- Reliability of information;
- Perceived public interest;
- Understandability;
- Measurability;
- Ease and cost of data collection;
- Frequency of data collection, for future use and comparisons over time; and
- Niagara Region as the primary scope of information to be collected and reported.

Data included in this report:

- Existing research data from Statistics Canada, reports from governments, agencies, and planning bodies, as well as research studies were collected, reviewed and analyzed for reliability and validity for inclusion. Summary reports and data exist from local municipalities, Niagara Region, and the Local Health Integration Network (LHIN) that includes Hamilton, Niagara, Haldimand and Brant.
- Census data is made available by community profiles broken down by Census Tract Areas, Municipalities, Regions or Census Metropolitan Areas (CMAs). Niagara Region participates in the Ontario Municipal Benchmarking Initiative (OMBI), gathering data with 25 other Canadian Municipalities for comparative purposes, as well as the Federation of Canadian Communities (FCM) Quality of Life Reporting System (QOLRS), which includes 20 Canadian municipalities. Also included is data from Statistics Canada's most recent General Social Surveys and Canadian Community Health Surveys.
- Where possible, Niagara data was compared to provincial, national, other municipal data or existing standards. When available, trends for Niagara over time are presented. Websites were accessed and data retrieved, studied and summarized from January to August, 2011. NRAPC decided that the data required for the report would primarily be regional in focus. Niagara data is beginning to be mapped and collected by neighbourhoods, by groups such as Early Years Niagara, and the Niagara Prosperity Initiative.
- Community leaders were engaged via online contact and face-to-face dialogue, to identify sources of data for each of the sectors. Through this process, the research team learned about existing data being collected and reported locally by various organizations. Groups shared their information generously.
- A commitment to using evidence-based planning, and a new spirit of collaboration are emerging in the community of Niagara. NRAPC identified more than 36 community expert opinion leaders (approximately 3 per sector) who could help identify data, review the report and provide leadership in the follow-up engagement and action phases resulting from the findings of this report.



Overall process, strengths and challenges

Challenges in bringing this report to you:

- A variety of data is available for each sector from several organizations and sources. The data is not all collected in the same way and at the same time.
- Data is often collected using a variety of research methods.
- Data is presented and disseminated in a variety of reporting formats.
- Data collection is often not done on uniform time frames, so that some indicators do not have current, compatible or comparable data.
- The report is limited to use of existing data as of this writing and publication time. 2011 Canadian Census data was not available for this report. Current local, provincial and national data sources were utilized in the writing of this document.

Strengths of this report:

- A variety of Niagara-wide reports are now being produced to map data over time.
- More sharing of information is occurring, as is evident in reports such as 'Health Story of Niagara' (Niagara Region Public Health), and 'Creating a Healthier Niagara' (Healthy Living Niagara).
- Region-wide planning initiatives are emerging within each sector.
- Many examples of Niagara-wide planning bodies and approaches now exist, such as the Niagara Workforce Planning Board, Niagara Regional Culture Committee, the Coalition to End Violence Against Women, Niagara Children's Services Sector Forum, Niagara Region's Sustainable Niagara plan, Niagara Prosperity Initiative, Early Years Niagara, Niagara Agricultural Task Force, and the Healthy Living Niagara partnership.
- Canadian data is being drawn from Census Metropolitan Areas (CMA's), Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM), Ontario Municipal Benchmarking Initiative (OMBI), Statistics Canada General Social Survey and Canadian Community Health Survey.

The report is:

- A snapshot in time using available, most current research and data in each area.
- A way to access full reports, analysis and data from the original sources.

The report is not:

- A full accounting of all research data that is available.
- A listing of all the programs, organizations and services available in Niagara - see Information Niagara, www.informationniagara.com or call 211 for such information.

Principles of community engagement, and community capacity building

The Niagara Research and Planning Council uses principles of collaboration, information sharing, dialogue, partnership building, shared decision making and communication as it develops a community-driven planning model for Niagara. Creation of the Living in Niagara report emerged from this community engagement process. The community made existing research data available for the report. Opinion leaders were engaged in rating Niagara's progress, and identifying suggested actions to be taken.

Perspectives on a healthy community and partnerships for community capacity building

While there are 12 separate sectors in the report, it is imperative to note that each of them are interconnected as determinants of health that influence each other and the health of individuals, families, organizations and the community of Niagara as a whole.

Determinants of health - From a population health perspective, the determinants of health include housing, transportation, lifestyle, the environment, education, employment, recreation and access to health care, in addition to genetic and other psychosocial determinants.

Population health - is defined as "the health outcomes of a group of individuals, including the distribution of such outcomes within the group". It is an approach to health and health care planning that aims to improve the health of an entire population. It is "the capacity of people to adapt to, respond to, or control life's challenges and change".
(http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Population_health)

Health - is "a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being and not just the mere absence of disease" (WHO, 1948). Note: "spiritual well-being" has also been added in many recent definitions.

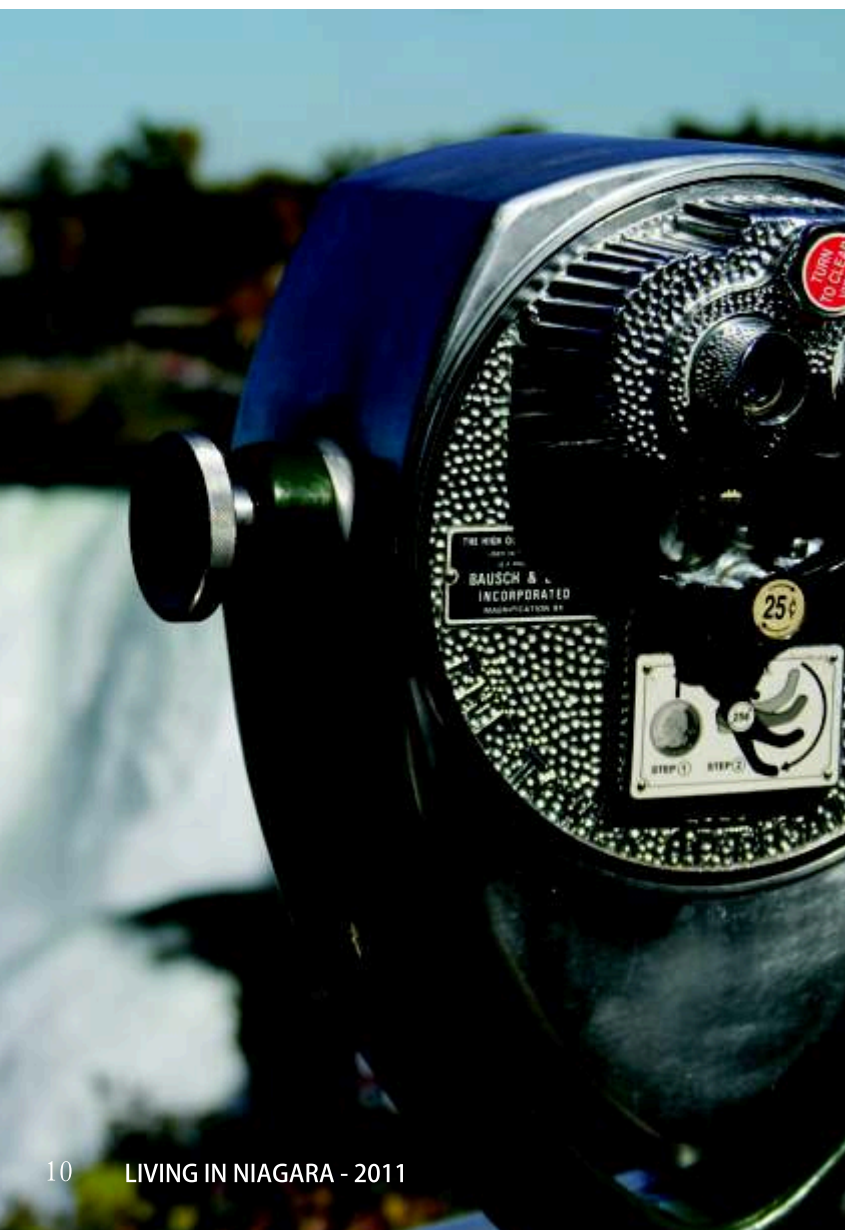
Primary Health Care (PHC) - is both a philosophy of care and a model to provide health services to all. The 5 principles of PHC are: accessibility; public participation; health promotion; appropriate skills and technology; and inter-sectoral cooperation. (WHO, 1978; CNA, 2002)

Source: Statistics Canada, Health Indicators -2008 no. 82-221-XIE

Read this report and rate the 12 sectors of our community. Provide feedback about how you think Niagara is doing in each sector. Go to www.nrapc.com for more information.



Adopting different lenses when reviewing each sector in the report...



Data about the indicators is covered specifically in each sector of the report. It is important to note that there are several overall lenses through which the reader can see how life truly is in Niagara for segments of the population.

The age lens ... Life in Niagara is experienced differently, depending on your age. Look for information about the region as an age-friendly community and explore information regarding each sector, such as employment, poverty, mental health, wellness and housing as experienced by different age groups throughout the region.

The gender lens ... Life in Niagara is experienced differently, depending on your gender. It is important to see how employment, housing, poverty, domestic violence and other issues are experienced by males and females.

The socio-economic lens ... Life in Niagara is experienced differently, depending on income and socio-economic factors. It is important to note that those living in poverty experience each sector differently regarding access to everything including housing, transportation, employment, education, and recreation. Aboriginal populations, those with mental health challenges, persons with disabilities, and the immigrant population experience education, safety, housing, transportation, arts, culture and poverty differently.

Language and culture lens ... Access to Niagara's assets, including health may be facilitated or hindered, depending on the quality of information made available. Niagara is a bilingual community with a large French speaking population, especially in Welland.

The integrated or not integrated lens ... Within each sector, and between sectors, it is important to look through the lens of collaboration and overall planning to see how connected or unconnected each sector is. Collaboration and coordination in each sector is emerging and some region-wide planning bodies have been developed - some are well developed and others are just beginning. The Niagara Research and Planning Council, Early Years Niagara, the Niagara Children's Services Sector Forum, the Coalition to End Violence Against Women, Niagara Region Integrated Community Planning and other groups are working on overall planning and connecting strategies.

To make this report and its actionable outcomes possible and measurable going forward, the Niagara Research and Planning Council is taking leadership on increasing community capacity by strengthening intersectoral partnerships. This follow-up phase will provide many opportunities for social change through civic action and engagement.

Rating how we are doing

When the baseline Living in Niagara (2008) was created, a rating scale was developed for each of the report sectors and their critical indicators. The report was given to a group of 100 citizens to grade how Niagara was doing based on the research evidence presented. Each area and indicator was graded using the following grading levels:

Level 1. In dire need of corrective action

Level 2. Of concern, needs attention

Level 3. Progress is being made

Level 4. We're doing well and headed in the right direction

Level 5. We're doing great - Niagara is a leader

In preparing the 2011 report, two sources of information were used to rate how Niagara was doing in each sector:

Method # 1: Expert opinion leaders input:

Thirty-six (36) community opinion leaders were identified by the Niagara Research and Planning Council – approximately 3 attached to each of the twelve sectors. Data was requested from many of them for the report. Selected community members also gave input on recommended opportunities for action in their sector. They provided input on ratings about how Niagara is doing in the sectors for which they have expertise. For 2011, the same rating levels were used as for the 2008 report, except that the category of Level 3 – Progress is being made was broken into more specificity, with 3a) being: A little progress being made; and 3b) Some progress being made. Thus, the 2011 rating scale is:

Level 1. In dire need of corrective action

Level 2. Of concern, needs attention

Level 3. Progress is being made

a) A little progress being made

b) A lot of progress being made

Level 4. We're doing well and headed in the right direction

Level 5. We're doing great – Niagara is a leader

Method #2: Rating by the general public:

Through the online version of this report, the NRAPC will facilitate a process whereby citizens of Niagara may access the findings, rate the sectors, and indicate their interest in connecting with sector leaders to take action.



Opportunities



OVERALL OPPORTUNITIES SUGGESTED FOR ACTION

The following are overall action areas identified in the Living in Niagara - 2011 report, and suggested in interviews with community expert opinion leaders. For sector-specific action items, see the following pages. Visit the Niagara Research and Planning Council website: www.nrapc.com for the full Living in Niagara – 2011 report.

- 1. Increase planning and coordination within sectors** - Coordination, planning and partnerships are emerging and evident within many of the 12 sectors. Some planning efforts are well-established and have moved toward actionable and measurable initiatives. Some show evidence of beginning Niagara-wide planning and partnerships.
- 2. Increase inter-sectoral development and partnerships** - There could be more inter-sectoral development, planning and partnerships for mutual benefit for Niagara.
- 3. Increase knowledge exchange capacity building** - The opportunity and community support for horizontal knowledge exchange, current information and evidence is vital to positive development in all sectors, as well as to inform all indicators covered in this report.
- 4. Reduce poverty** - Poverty persists in Niagara and is evident across all sectors. Focusing on strengthening Niagara's investments in reducing poverty will benefit all of Niagara. All sectors contribute to the economy in varying degrees and drive increased prosperity for the region.
- 5. Strengthen services and approaches for mental health** - Strengthen the continuum of mental health care to include linkages between health promotion, risk prevention, treatment and care across the region and across the lifespan.
- 6. Make Niagara age friendly for all ages.** Continue to support the work of creating a region that is age-friendly, accessible and inclusive of all ages.
- 7. Strengthen and acknowledge the not-for-profit sector** - This sector contributes a great deal to the economy and quality of life by creating economic activity, and giving time, talents and leadership. This contribution should be described, quantified and considered in any economic development planning.
- 8. Create quality employment opportunities and a coordinated economic strategy for Niagara** - Quality employment opportunities, increased innovation, and a coordinated economic development strategy are essential for quality of life and growth for Niagara.
- 9. Focus on children and youth** - Investment in children and youth and their health, education, well-being and resiliency is essential and vital for Niagara's future.
- 10. Focus on seniors and the aging population** - The number of seniors in Niagara is growing. Their well-being, as well as their potential for contribution as leaders and citizens needs to be better described.
- 11. Inventory, measure and protect the natural assets of Niagara** - We have rich natural assets and we need to describe, measure, and monitor their status in order to plan for future growth and sustainability.
- 12. Create social spaces** - Create actual, virtual and relational spaces where community dialogue and innovative action strategies can be nurtured. An inclusive approach to community engagement and development is essential for this process.
- 13. Strengthen and increase the assets of Niagara** - Niagara has many assets (human and natural) and emerging strategies to make positive change. Now is the time to connect and innovatively link all those positive assets to make a quantum leap for Niagara.



The Niagara Region



The Niagara Region is a dynamic, unique and beautiful place in which to live.

Niagara Region is made up of 12 unique and distinct municipalities with an urban and rural mix: Fort Erie, Niagara Falls, Niagara-On-The-Lake, Port Colborne, Welland, Thorold, St.Catharines, Wainfleet, Pelham, Lincoln, West Lincoln, and Grimsby. The region covers 1,852 square kms. The boundaries of the region include a shared border with the United States along the Niagara River, with 5 border crossings, 4 by road and 1 by rail. Lake Ontario and Lake Erie border the region, with the Welland Canal section of the St. Lawrence Seaway providing a shipping route between these two Great Lakes. The Niagara Escarpment runs through Niagara from the point where the Bruce Trail begins in the village of Queenston and extends 800 miles north to Tobermory. In 1990, UNESCO designated the Niagara Escarpment as a World Biosphere Reserve. Niagara is part of what is referred to as Ontario's Golden Horseshoe. Its history, environment and present changes and composition makes Niagara a unique part of Canada. This report becomes part of Niagara's ongoing story as recorded in 2011 across 12 sectors, with critical indicators that contribute to quality of life across the region described for each sector.

Niagara residents share space, resources, talents, ideas, values and time together. They live, learn, work, play, shop and relate with one another. The diversity of ages, histories, ethnicities and perspectives of its residents makes Niagara both dynamic and stable. The rich variety of its physical bounties and the talents, contributions and needs of its people are all important aspects of life across the region. This report describes Niagara. However, planners and citizens can further the work of the report by identifying relevant trends, assets, and areas of needed improvement for positive change. A sustainable and positive outlook for Niagara will be determined by collective consciousness of our history, our present, and a focused vision for an even better future.



Source: Niagara Region

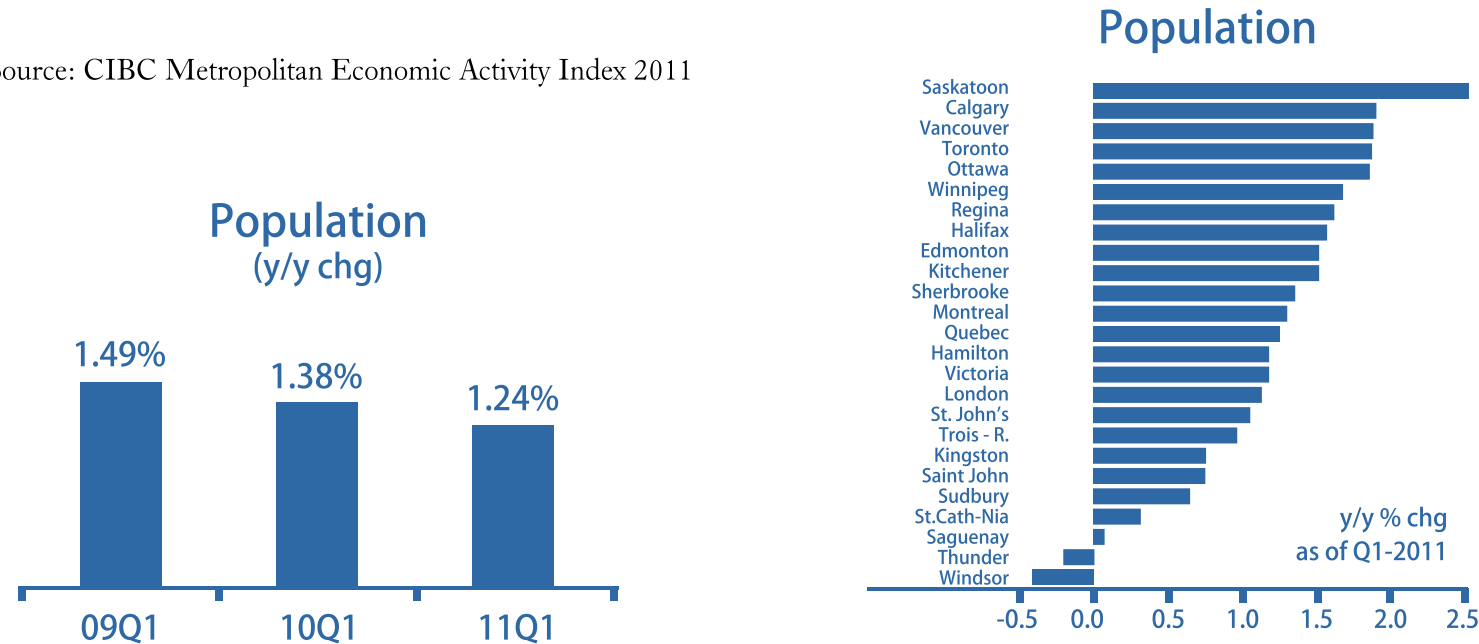


The population of Niagara

Niagara is described in different ways by different data sources. This affects the data collection, trend analyses and possible comparisons with itself over time, or with other municipalities. Niagara is described in two different ways by Census Canada: (1) as the Census Metropolitan Area (CMA) of St. Catharines-Niagara (which does not include the municipalities of Grimsby and West Lincoln); and (2) as the Regional Municipality of Niagara. Some health data is reported by our "local public health unit" (a designation by the Province of Ontario), as Niagara Region Public Health (NRPH) or as part of the Local Health Integration Network (LHIN) that includes Niagara, Hamilton, Haldimand and Brant.

At the time of writing this present report, the full Census 2006 data was the only set available, with some updates by CANSIM (Canadian Socio-economic Information Management System, Statistics Canada). The 2011 Census was conducted in May of 2011; any data that is made available from that source up until the time of publication of this report will be included. The population of Niagara showed a 1.49% increase from 2008 to the first quarter of 2009; a 1.38% increase to the first quarter of 2010; and a 1.24% increase to the first quarter of 2011. The year to year growth change in population for St. Catharines-Niagara CMA was very low compared to 25 other municipalities in Canada. We ranked 21 out of 25 and only 3 other areas in Canada were below our CMA in population growth as of the first quarter of 2011.

Source: CIBC Metropolitan Economic Activity Index 2011



Census 2006 reported a Niagara population of 427,421, up 4.1% from 2001. Ontario's population increased 6.6% from 2001 and Canada's rose 5.4%. The foreign-born population in Niagara was 18% of the population (10.4% recent immigrants from 2001-2006). In 2006, 6,930 people in Niagara declared they are Aboriginal.

Families and households in Niagara

Statistics Canada's annual demographic estimate indicates the median age in St. Catharines-Niagara in 2010 had reached almost 43 years, up from just over 39 years in 2001. Provincially, only Thunder Bay and Peterborough had a higher median age. The median age for Canada is younger, at less than 40 years. Niagara is an attractive destination because of its affordability, proximity to major centers, and its relatively mild climate. There has been an influx of migrants from centers with a higher cost of living, such as the Greater Toronto Area (GTA), in recent years. From 2005 to 2009, there has been a steady flow of middle-aged families, retirees, and pre-retirees moving into Niagara. During that same time period, there was a net loss of young people between the ages of 18 to 24. In 2010, this younger age group made up less than 10 per cent of the total population in Niagara.

We await Census 2011 updates from Statistics Canada, to track changes in data about age, gender and household makeup for the population in Niagara. In 2006, the Niagara Region was home to 73.3% married couple families; 10.3% common-law couple families; 13.1% female lone parent families; and 3.2% male lone-parent families. A total of 163,334 households were in Niagara. The median age of Niagara's population was 41.9 years in 2006, compared to 39.0 years in Ontario. 83.2% of the population of Niagara was over 15 years of age (81.8% in Ontario). A total of 16.8% were 0-14 years of age, 65.8% were 15- 65 years of age and 17.4% were over 65. By 2006, 13.6% of Ontario's population was 65 and older, up from 12.9% in 2001 (Ontario 13.6% and Canada 13.7%).

Table 1 Percentage of the Total Population by Age and Gender 2006

	Niagara			Ontario			Canada		
	Total Pop.	Male	Female	Total Pop.	Male	Female	Total Pop.	Male	Female
0 - 14	16.8	8.6	8.2	18.2	9.3	8.9	17.7	9	8.6
15 - 64	65.8	32.3	33.5	68.3	33.5	34.7	68.6	33.9	34.7
65+	17.4	7.5	9.9	13.6	5.9	7.7	13.7	6	7.7

Source: Statistics Canada, Census 2006 Community Profiles

Niagara's population projections

Region of Niagara, Summary of Growth Forecast Scenarios

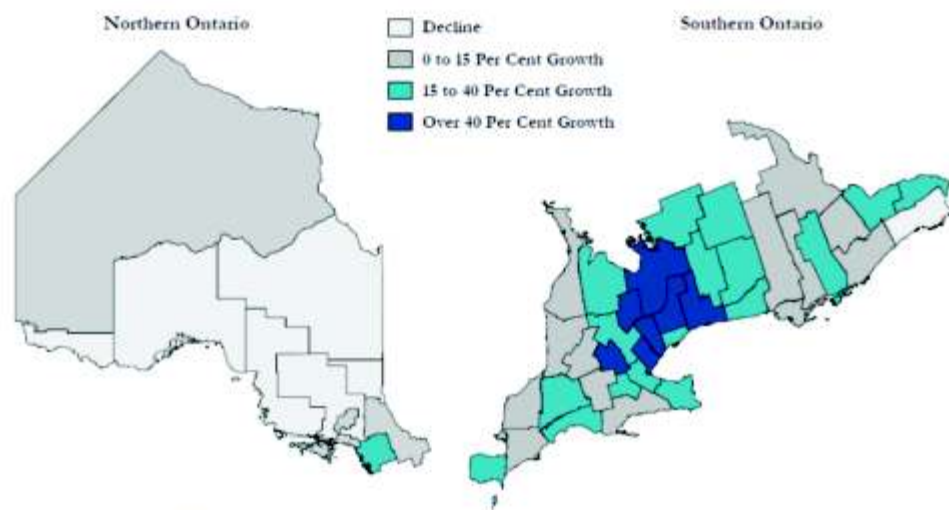
The population projections for Niagara from 2001 to the year 2031 have been calculated as follows: to grow by 84,000 as a low growth scenario; to grow by 118,000 as a medium growth scenario; and to grow by 273,000 as a high growth scenario.

Year	Population		
	Low Growth Scenario	Medium Growth Scenario	High Growth Scenario
2001	427,000	427,000	427,000
2011	442,000	463,000	467,000
2021	474,000	510,554	554,000
2031	511,000	545,000	700,000
2001-2031	84,000	118,000	273,000

Source: <http://www.niagararegion.ca/government/initiatives/2031/pdf/Anticipating%20Niagara.pdf>

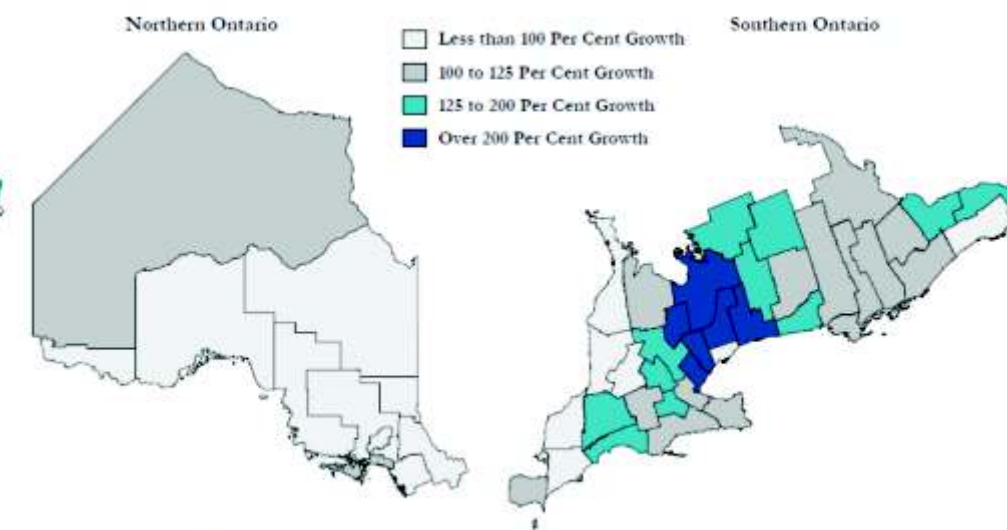
In another forecast, Ontario's population is projected to experience healthy growth over the next 28 years, rising 37.8 per cent, or nearly 4.9 million, from an estimated 12.9 million on July 1, 2008 to 17.8 million by July 1, 2036. A 100 to 125 percent growth in seniors is projected for Niagara, while the general population is expected to only grow by 15-40 per cent in that same time period. From: <http://www.ontla.on.ca/library/repository/mon/23011/295464.pdf>

Population growth/decline by census division over 2008-2036



Source: Ontario Ministry of Finance projections.

Growth in numbers of seniors by census division, 2008-2036



Source: Ontario Ministry of Finance projections.

Sectors and Indicators



2011 Rating

4

We are doing well and headed
in the right direction.

Expert Opinion Leader Rating

ARTS, CULTURE AND HERITAGE IN NIAGARA

Sector No.1

Creative expressions of the arts, culture and heritage provide a distinct identity for individuals and a region. They provide a climate of creativity, vitality, diversity and inclusion for its citizens. The arts, culture, and heritage are significant economic drivers of tourism and related activities. The arts include performing, written, visual and media arts.

The arts entertain, stimulate and inspire citizens and societies.

Heritage resources include the historical sites, stories and traditions of an area. Niagara's heritage is evident in the buildings, collections, sites, events and written accounts of life in Niagara over time. Cultural spaces are environments where creative planning and innovation thrive. Culturally rich and vibrant communities contribute to the health and imagination of Niagara's citizens. They support diversity, enhance tourism and contribute to the health of the local economy.

By working together, we can improve arts, culture and heritage in Niagara

We can increase our efforts to cultivate an environment where cultural and creative work, innovation, creative thinking, the arts and entrepreneurial endeavours can flourish. Increased cross-sectoral investment in cultural endeavours will be required. This sector would benefit from increased networking, economic impact monitoring and recognition, planning infrastructure and a system to keep a current, publicly-available inventory of cultural assets. With increased capacity, we could attract and retain more cultural workers and artists to Niagara to work and make their living. While there is significant government spending on large-scale projects, funding for smaller community projects is not consistent or sustained. We could work together on the actionable strategic directions outlined in the Niagara Culture Plan and the Sustainable Niagara Goal Areas.

What we are doing well...

The Niagara Culture Committee completed a cultural assets inventory for Niagara (1,847 assets) and the region adopted a Niagara Culture Plan in 2010. The plan outlines the strategic future directions for Niagara related to developing a creative economy; creative places; creative people; and a creative identity. The Niagara Culture Committee mapped the many cultural assets of Niagara, beginning with tangible resources. The more intangible resources of the stories and traditions also define the region. Niagara offers a rich diversity of multi-cultural celebrations, and many musical, artistic and performing cultural venues and festivals. These employ artists and cultural workers who attract local, national and international audiences. Financial support for arts, culture and heritage are not always consistent and sustained, but are derived from a variety of sources. These include: levels of government, multi-cultural centres, the Ontario Trillium Foundation, Canada Council for the Arts, the Department of Canadian Heritage, user fees and patrons. Niagara libraries continue to increase their number of cardholders and visits in person and electronically.

EMERGING ACTIVITY

A collaborative venture between downtown St. Catharines and Brock University is underway to complete an Academic and Cultural Arts Centre to open in 2014. It is planned to have 7 performance venues, 1 film venue, 2 studios and an 800 seat concert hall.



Niagara has been designated a Cultural Capital of Canada for 2012 by the Department of Canadian Heritage, in recognition of Niagara's vibrant arts scene, and in support of heritage events marking the bicentennial of the War of 1812.



Sector No.1 ARTS, CULTURE AND HERITAGE IN NIAGARA



Indicators

affecting life in Niagara that are described and quantified in Living in Niagara - 2011 (a total of 10 indicators for this sector):

- 1) Involvement and time spent on arts, culture and heritage activities in Niagara.
- 2) Library cardholders and use.
- 3) Mapping of cultural assets in Niagara.
- 4) Cultural heritage sites and designated areas in Niagara.
- 5) Natural cultural sites in Niagara.
- 6) Cultural activities and groups in Niagara.
- 7) Spending and economics related to arts, culture and heritage in Niagara.
- 8) Employment, earnings and working conditions of artists and cultural workers.
- 9) Composition of creative class of workers.
- 10) Connections with other sectors.

Visit the Niagara Research and Planning Council website: www.nrapc.com for the full Living in Niagara - 2011 report. It includes the accompanying data, descriptions, trends, comparisons, tables, figures, sources and discussion of implications for all report sectors.

SUGGESTED ACTION STEPS that emerged from the data, and discussions with community expert opinion leaders:

- 1 Develop a system to keep the Niagara inventory of cultural assets current, well-described and available to the public.
- 2 Build a coordinated system to secure consistent and sustainable funding for arts, culture and heritage in Niagara.
- 3 Describe and monitor the impact of this sector as an economic driver in Niagara as well as its impact on other sectors.
- 4 Support the actionable goals and objectives as outlined in the Niagara Culture Plan and Sustainable Niagara's Goal Areas.



2011 Rating



A lot of progress being made.
Expert Opinion Leader Rating

EMERGING ACTIVITY

GO Transit service has been expanded to Niagara Falls and St. Catharines, with improved travel connections to Toronto.

Niagara Region Transit has invested \$3.7 million to pilot inter-municipal bus lines beginning in the fall of 2011.

The Province (MTO) continues to study all modal options to add capacity to the transportation systems linking Niagara to the GTA.

The Regional Niagara Transportation Strategy is currently being reviewed and updated.

Niagara's assets can only be leveraged if transportation within municipalities, between municipalities and beyond the region's borders is possible. It is important to be able to move from one place to another to work, learn, live, play, visit, volunteer, shop and access services. To have available and accessible modes of transportation to get around with ease, at an affordable cost and with low impact on the environment will contribute to positive living in Niagara. Transportation impacts the economy as resources, goods and people move within and through Niagara; the sector is also important to employment and economic sustainability.



What we are doing well...

This region's citizens continue to use the automobile as the most-reported mode of transportation. The fact remains that Niagara covers a large geographic area - 1,852 square miles and 12 municipalities, including a rural and urban mix of: 5 cities, 5 towns, 2 townships and 5 international border crossings, 4 by road and 1 by rail. Niagara Region offers transit bus lines within each major city and connections to Brock University and Niagara College. Niagara has excellent walking trails in designated municipal areas and on the Niagara portion of the Bruce Trail. There are 522 km of cycling networks along the Niagara River and the Welland Canal, as well as a growing number of bicycle lanes. The Niagara Specialized Transit system has been operating since 2007; its use is increasing for access to medical care, employment and education. We are located close to international airports: Toronto, Buffalo and Hamilton. Vessels travel through the Welland Canal with lake to lake and international connections.

By working together, we can improve transportation and mobility in Niagara

Niagara covers a large geographic area and public transportation exists mostly within cities, with limited weekend and evening routes. Niagara is not well-connected with public transportation between cities and towns, especially for those who have special mobility challenges and those with a low income. Region-wide transportation services have been identified as a priority and a regional Transportation Committee is working toward this goal. Services, including some in the area of health care are becoming more centralized, and this poses a challenge of access for some citizens. Reliable, affordable transportation is required for citizens to have full access to the excellent cultural and recreational offerings in the region. Getting to work and to school can be a challenge, especially for those without cars or with low wages; increasing fuel prices are also a concern. Peak times of the year and day create congestion on major roads in the region. Long-term capacity expansion planning for transportation links between Niagara and the GTA will benefit Niagara's economic future.



Sector No.2 TRANSPORTATION AND MOBILITY IN NIAGARA

Indicators

affecting life in Niagara that are described and quantified in Living in Niagara - 2011 (a total of 10 indicators for this sector):

- 1) Use and availability of transportation to get to work.
- 2) Commuting and distances to work.
- 3) Rail, land, air and water transportation available in Niagara.
- 4) Use of buses and public transportation.
- 5) Use of the Niagara Specialized Transit.
- 6) Annual costs and affordability of transportation.
- 7) Paved and unpaved roads in Niagara.
- 8) Volume of traffic on Niagara roads.
- 9) Busy transportation routes and congestion.
- 10) Accident rates on major highways in Niagara.

Visit the Niagara Research and Planning Council website: www.nrapc.com for the full Living in Niagara - 2011 report. It includes the accompanying data, descriptions, trends, comparisons, tables, figures, sources and discussion of implications for all report sectors.

SUGGESTED ACTION STEPS that emerged from the data, and discussions with community expert opinion leaders:

- ① Continue to develop the Regional Niagara Transportation Strategy with a focus on accessibility and options for public transportation linkages across Niagara.
- ② Fine-tune the inter-municipal transportation system for students to better reflect their variant study schedules.
- ③ Minimize costs of transportation for citizens to get around Niagara.
- ④ Support long-term transportation capacity planning.

THE ENVIRONMENT IN NIAGARA

2011 Rating

3a



3b

Between a little progress being made and
a lot of progress being made.
Expert Opinion Leader Rating

THE ENVIRONMENT IN NIAGARA

Sector No.3

Our region's iconic natural assets contribute to citizens' enjoyment of their surroundings, as well as to Niagara's economic, recreation, agriculture and tourism potential. Geography influences where and how we work, learn, live, travel and play. The quality of our air, water, land, wetlands and ecosystems supports life for both local residents and those beyond our boundaries. Governments and citizens share responsibility for planning and acting to protect the environment in Niagara, for everyone's health, and for sustainability. What happens on land, affects water; what happens in the air, affects the water and the land - it is all connected.

What we are doing well...

Niagara is bounded by Lake Erie, Lake Ontario and the Niagara River with its famous Niagara Falls. The Niagara environment and unique microclimate provides great beauty, access to an abundance of fresh water, and rich agricultural land for tender fruits, vegetables, field crops,

vineyards, wineries, nursery crops and greenhouses, as well as farms raising livestock and poultry. The Welland Canal provides for shipping, tourism and recreation along its banks. Niagara has a world class rowing course in Port Dalhousie as well as rowing venues along the old ship canal in Welland. The Niagara Escarpment and the Bruce Trail run through Niagara. Monitoring agencies are reporting and tracking air and water quality. In 1990, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) named the Niagara Escarpment a World Biosphere Reserve. The designation recognizes the natural features and ecological importance of the escarpment and endorses the Niagara Escarpment Plan (1973) that is Canada's first large-scale environmental land use plan. It balances protection, conservation and sustainable development to ensure the escarpment will remain a natural environment for future generations. Both the Escarpment Plan and the Ontario Greenbelt Plan (2005) identify areas not suitable for urban growth. A majority of Niagara's land base is classified Prime Agricultural.

By working together, we can improve the environment in Niagara

While there is cause for celebration that Niagara is an area with much natural beauty, there is also cause for concern to protect our air, lands and water and to balance protection of agricultural lands with appropriate development. While Niagara has increased its recycling and composting programs, a large percentage of waste is still being diverted to landfill sites. Costs of treating waste water and diverting waste to landfill sites are significant. Niagara reports a higher than average sewage bypass treatment. Of concern are pollution of our Great Lakes and Niagara River, as well as beach postings when E.coli is high. We could improve the monitoring of industrial and residential waste that goes into the water shared by the US and Canada. Reducing Green House Gas Emissions (GHGE) involves complex strategies for change, including the challenge of increasing the public transit system in Niagara to help reduce auto use. Southern Ontario is one of the smoggiest regions and highest ground-ozone level areas in Canada. Factories in the United States and Canada release pollutants into the air that affect Niagara. We are challenged to make Niagara more environmentally friendly, and adopt sustainable economic plans, with environmental health in mind.

EMERGING ACTIVITY

The Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority (NPCA) conducted a Niagara Areas Inventory (NAI), a project to inventory, describe and sample the soils, water, birds, and animals in detail for areas across Niagara.



The Niagara Agricultural Impact Study (updated 2010) highlights the growing economic and tourism impact of Niagara agriculture and its increasing importance to the province as a source of fresh local food. The study cites concerns around the rising average age of farmers, and farmers' rising cost to revenue ratio.



Sector No.3 THE ENVIRONMENT IN NIAGARA

Indicators

affecting life in Niagara that are described and quantified in Living in Niagara 2011 (a total of 21 indicators for this sector):

- 1) Amount of water used in Niagara per capita.
- 2) Water quality in Niagara.
- 3) Number of boil water advisories.
- 4) Treatment of water in Niagara - megalitres per 100,000 population.
- 5) Treatment of wastewater in Niagara - megalitres per 100,000 population.
- 6) Water quality monitoring and ratings for Niagara and the Great Lakes.
- 7) Costs of treating and disposing of wastewater in Niagara.
- 8) Rates of sewer bypass in Niagara.
- 9) Niagara's wetlands and watersheds.
- 10) Beach monitoring, postings for E. coli and swimming days lost.
- 11) Air Quality Index ratings.
- 12) Number of days air quality reported poor or moderate.
- 13) Number of smog advisories and days for each advisory.
- 14) Residential waste, recycling and landfill disposal rates in Niagara.
- 15) Costs of dealing with garbage.
- 16) Green space.
- 17) Agricultural lands and farming.
- 18) Ecological footprint.
- 19) Green House Gas Emissions (GHGE), carbon footprint and climate protection.
- 20) Ground level ozone levels in Niagara.
- 21) Pesticide use.

Visit the Niagara Research and Planning Council website: www.nrapc.com for the full Living in Niagara - 2011 report. It includes the accompanying data, descriptions, trends, comparisons, tables, figures, sources and discussion of implications for all report sectors.

SUGGESTED ACTION STEPS that emerged from the data, and discussions with community expert opinion leaders:

- 1 Create a publicly-released environmental report card with measures that are linked to established targets for change.
- 2 Support a sustainable Niagara, and take into account the environment in cross-sectoral decisions.
- 3 Coordinate and stimulate environmental research with academic and community partners.
- 4 Create a plan and action steps to increase recycling rates, decrease water use and reduce sewer bypass rates.
- 5 Maintain the environmental assets inventory and adopt a plan to protect these assets.
- 6 Support sustainable expansion of agri-tourism, value-added agriculture and agri-food innovation in Niagara.

LEARNING AND EDUCATION IN NIAGARA



2011 Rating

3b

A lot of progress being made.
Expert Opinion Leader Rating

EMERGING ACTIVITY

The Niagara Children's Charter Enacted reports on Niagara's positive steps to shape education and services for children.

The Early Development Instrument (EDI), through Niagara's neighbourhood mapping, has identified areas that are strong, and ones that are suppressed.

Full-day kindergarten is being implemented across Niagara and may have positive impacts on children, families, employment levels and the economy.

The Early Years Niagara Planning Council is overseeing planning and strategic directions for improving the lives of children in Niagara.

Evidence of support for early learning for children and youth, as well as lifelong learning for all ages is a measure of a region's success and the health of its citizens. Learning for employment, living together and quality of life strengthens all of us. Work, creativity, prosperity and health are all linked to education and literacy. Continual building of a strong learning community with a capacity for knowledge exchange and generation in Niagara will help our citizens to have the skills and creativity to deal with change, to work in the new economy and innovate together.



What we are doing well...

Niagara is well-served by its many schools, learning institutions and organizations that offer literacy services, education, skills development, professional development, and English as a Second Language (ESL). There are many learning opportunities for both residents and those who come to our region for an education. Brock University, Niagara College, the District School Board of Niagara, the Niagara Catholic School Board, the Conseil scolaire de district catholique Centre-Sud and the Conseil scolaire public de district Centre-Ouest contribute to our investment in the education of children, youth and adults. While Niagara rates are comparable or higher than Ontario for high school completion and trades certificates, significantly fewer people in Niagara complete a university education. Access to the internet from home, work and libraries is increasing. Niagara school boards are making great strides in the performance of our students on the provincial EQAO (Education Quality and Accountability Office) tests.

By working together, we can improve learning and education in Niagara

Increased post-secondary completion rates, and support for literacy levels across the region will assist our citizens to be educated, employed, to earn a living wage and to be able to function safely and well in society. Access to the internet is at an all time high in Canada. While Niagara citizens' internet access from home, work and libraries is increasing, we are still slightly behind compared to other parts of the nation. Educating for the skills of a new economy is a challenge that must be met by Niagara.



Sector No.4 LEARNING AND EDUCATION IN NIAGARA

Indicators

affecting life in Niagara that are described and quantified in Living in Niagara - 2011 (a total of 6 indicators for this sector):

- 1) Completion of higher education in Niagara.
- 2) The Composite Learning Index (CLI) scores in Niagara (learning to know, to do, to live together and to be).
- 3) Literacy levels in Niagara.
- 4) Scores in Niagara on EQAO testing for grades 3 and 6 - reading, writing and math; grade 9 - mathematics; and grade 10 - literacy.
- 5) Internet access and use in Niagara.
- 6) Early Development Instrument (EDI) in Niagara.

Visit the Niagara Research and Planning Council website: www.nrapc.com for the full Living in Niagara - 2011 report. It includes the accompanying data, descriptions, trends, comparisons, tables, figures, sources and discussion of implications for all report sectors.

SUGGESTED ACTION STEPS that emerged from the data, and discussions with community expert opinion leaders:

- 1 Continue to support educational organizations and the community to increase post-secondary completion rates in Niagara.
- 2 Support work being done to facilitate accessible pathways across education streams, institutions (college to university; university to college) and programs.
- 3 Maintain the advances made in our school systems in testing and EQAO achievement results.
- 4 In collaboration with adult literacy partners, undertake and resource a comprehensive and collaborative regional and area mapping of current literacy rates and issues and set new targets for Niagara-wide action.
- 5 Continue to embrace full-day kindergarten as part of a broader transition toward a comprehensive early learning and childcare system to meet the needs of Niagara families and children.
- 6 Describe and analyze the impact of full-day kindergarten on children; families; employment; and Niagara's economy.
- 7 Support the approaches and actions outlined in the four pillars of the Niagara Early Years Planning Council strategy: families are strong, stable and connected; children are healthy; children are learning; and children are safe.
- 8 Explore The Search Institute's *40 Developmental Assets Model* across sectors, to prepare youth to create their own healthy future.



HOUSING AND SHELTER IN NIAGARA

2011 Rating

3b

A lot of progress being made.
Expert Opinion Leader Rating

HOUSING AND SHELTER IN NIAGARA

Sector No.5

Safe and affordable housing is fundamental for individuals and families striving to build a strong future for themselves and their communities. It provides the foundation families need to raise children and pursue education, jobs and wellness.

Affordable housing can help people break the cycle of poverty.

To afford housing is to be able to afford rent or mortgage payments, electricity, water, heating, maintenance and repairs. Appropriate housing has to take the seasons into account: to have a safe place in Niagara's cold winters and hot summers. Citizens' access to necessary supports and resources for living improves when they have housing close to transportation, churches, schools and health care. A sustainable building industry with growing trends in housing starts is considered an indicator of a healthy economy and job opportunities.

By working together, we can improve housing and shelter in Niagara

The Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) rental affordability index for Niagara indicates that 50% of renters spend more than 30% of their gross income on rent. In 2010, utilities became subject to the provincial portion of the HST, resulting in more renters in Niagara paying greater than 10% of their income on utilities, leading to significant 'fuel poverty'. Compared to the provincial average of 17.7%, Niagara has seen a 30.6% increase in the number of households going on the wait list for affordable housing. This is attributed in part to improved planning for citizens at risk of homelessness, the sharp rise in cost of utilities and the economic downturn. The waiting time can range from 2.25 to 8.75 years, resulting in some citizens living in substandard housing, and struggling to buy food. Although these statistics reflect our recent past, Niagara Regional Housing is implementing a strong plan for increasing affordable housing. As a community we need to be aware of how individuals' access to adequate housing affects all of us.

What we are doing well...

A variety of housing, including subsidized and privately-owned homes, is available in Niagara. Compared to other areas in Canada, house prices and rents are lower; interest rates are also low. The rate of home ownership in Niagara is the second-highest in Ontario, and is increasing, especially for townhouses and condominiums (built or converted). With the assistance of the Canada-Ontario Affordable Housing Program, 181 Niagara households have purchased their own home through the Welcome Home Niagara initiative. The provincial government's Aging at Home Strategy supports seniors to live in their own home, and the Community Care Access Centre in Niagara coordinates care options, such as Supportive Housing.



EMERGING ACTIVITY

New regulations and standards have been adopted for landowners and property owners regarding property repairs, maintenance, health and building code expectations.

Many of the recent strategies to reduce the risk of homelessness - The RAFT (Resource Association for Teens), Youth Reconnect and the Niagara Regional Supported Transitional Housing programs - are working and homelessness is trending downward.

Niagara Regional Housing (NRH) is overseeing the development of over \$38 million of new affordable housing communities in various stages of development, with an emphasis on accessibility and energy-efficiency. This includes 133 new affordable housing units for low-income seniors and families as well as persons with disabilities.

Services such as the Wellness Supportive Living Program, a joint venture between Ontario March of Dimes, Seniors Community Services (Niagara Region), Community Support Services Niagara and Niagara Regional Housing are developing, to assist seniors and others to be able to stay at home with minimum support.



Sector No.5 HOUSING AND SHELTER IN NIAGARA



Indicators

affecting life in Niagara that are described and quantified in Living in Niagara - 2011 (a total of 13 indicators for this sector):

- 1) Variety of housing available in Niagara
- 2) Spending over 30% of income on shelter and housing in Niagara.
- 3) Average Market Rents (AMR) for 2-bedroom in Niagara.
- 4) Average monthly rent trends in Niagara.
- 5) Wait times and availability of affordable and subsidized housing in Niagara.
- 6) Vacancy rates in Niagara.
- 7) Housing starts and the building industry.
- 8) Purchase price of a home in Niagara.
- 9) New Housing Price Index in Niagara.
- 10) Core housing needs in Niagara.
- 11) Homelessness and the use of shelters in Niagara.
- 12) Transitional housing initiatives.
- 13) New housing initiatives and the Disabilities Act.

Visit the Niagara Research and Planning Council website: www.nrapc.com for the full Living in Niagara - 2011 report. It includes the accompanying data, descriptions, trends, comparisons, tables, figures, sources and discussion of implications for all report sectors.

SUGGESTED ACTION STEPS that emerged from the data, and discussions with community expert opinion leaders:

- 1 Support the gains that have been made in addressing youth homelessness through creation of a Niagara-wide, focused sustainability plan.
- 2 Develop specialized and sustainable strategies to assist unique populations with shelter and housing needs. This includes low-income seniors, individuals, families, and those at high risk of homelessness.
- 3 Expand and resource supported housing arrangements for seniors, and persons with disabilities and/or mental health challenges (those not requiring 24 hour supervision).
- 4 Develop cross-sectoral collaboration that emphasizes the value of seniors aging in their own homes.
- 5 Create Niagara-wide cross-sectoral linkages between initiatives to assist women requiring housing because of poverty and/or domestic violence, poverty reduction action plans, and the four pillars of the Niagara Early Years Planning Council Strategy: families are strong, stable and connected; children are healthy; children are learning; and children are safe.

2011 Rating

4

We're doing well and headed
in the right direction.

Expert Opinion Leader Rating

EMERGING ACTIVITY

Although crime rates have decreased, the length of investigations of individual crimes has increased, resulting in the need for more sophisticated police services.

In 2008, the Niagara Regional Police Service (NRPS) formed a specialized domestic violence unit.

In 2008, the Niagara Region Domestic Violence Report Card was launched, led by the Coalition to End Violence Against Women.

The School Resource Officer (SRO) program of the NRPS has been noted as a success, with more officers added, for a total of 4.

In the fall of 2011, COAST Niagara (Community Outreach and Support Team) was launched - a partnership between Canadian Mental Health Association Niagara, Distress Centre Niagara, Niagara Health System, and NRPS - that serves as a regional, mobile and urgent response team comprised of a police officer, mental health workers, nurses and social workers trained in psychiatric crisis response. COAST Niagara will focus on adults with serious mental illness, substance abuse and the homeless; individuals in crisis will be linked to appropriate community services.

Every Niagara resident should be able to live, work and play in safe environments. Citizens can fully participate in a community and enjoy their lives when they feel safe and secure in their homes, neighbourhoods, cars, public places or workplaces. Motor vehicle collisions are one of the main causes of preventable injury. Incidents and rates of crime in an area can affect our personal feelings and perceptions of safety and security. Crime is often rooted in poverty and the social and economic conditions of an area.



What we are doing well...

Niagara continues to have low violent and property crime rates, compared to similar communities in the province. In 2003, Niagara had one of the highest per capita accident fatality rates in the province.

In 2007, the Think and Drive community initiative was launched. This, in combination with increased traffic violation enforcement initiatives by the Niagara Regional Police Service (NRPS), has significantly reduced fatal and life-threatening traffic accidents.

Niagara's Emergency Management Services (fire, police and ambulance) are working together for public safety, and to develop integrated systems for emergency response. The public rates their trust in Niagara police officers favourably.

By working together, we can improve safety and security in Niagara

While awareness of domestic violence against women and its effects on children has increased, interventions could be more focused if we had a better understanding of the impact on children, families and the broader community. Distracted driving is a new area to be addressed. Working with our youth and positively engaging them in our community helps to prevent them from entering the justice system and increases opportunities for them to develop as contributing citizens. Addressing the roots of poverty will have a positive impact on crime, safety and security in Niagara.

Sector No.6 CRIME, SAFETY AND SECURITY IN NIAGARA

Indicators

affecting life in Niagara that are described and quantified in Living in Niagara 2011 (a total of 12 indicators for this sector):

- 1) Feeling safe and secure in Niagara.
- 2) Police officers per 100,000 population in Niagara.
- 3) Overall crime rates and violent crime rates in Niagara.
- 4) Youth crime in Niagara.
- 5) Motor vehicle accidents and fatalities in Niagara.
- 6) Impaired driving in Niagara.
- 7) Calls to police and domestic violence calls in Niagara.
- 8) Domestic violence in Niagara.
- 9) Calls to police, ambulance and fire.
- 10) Fire services
- 11) Emergency Management Services in Niagara.
- 12) Hate crimes in Niagara.

Visit the Niagara Research and Planning Council website: www.nrapc.com for the full Living in Niagara - 2011 report. It includes the accompanying data, descriptions, trends, comparisons, tables, figures, sources and discussion of implications for all report sectors.

SUGGESTED ACTION STEPS that emerged from the data, and discussions with community expert opinion leaders:

- 1 Continue to expand the community policing program and intensify efforts to engage the public, youth and other sectors as partners and leaders in initiatives for community safety.
- 2 Continue to develop the relationships and jurisdictional connections that are clear and well linked in emergency management.
- 3 Continue to support the work of community groups and agencies involved in reducing domestic violence, by ensuring there is a Niagara-wide system of accessible services and safe shelters.
- 4 Continue to develop partnered effective public awareness strategies and campaigns regarding key safety and security issues (eg. Think and Drive).
- 5 Support the work of the Niagara Prosperity Initiative in addressing the roots of poverty in our community.



HEALTH AND WELLNESS IN NIAGARA



2011 Rating

3a

A little progress being made.
Expert Opinion Leader Rating

Health is a state of complete physical, mental, social and spiritual well-being and not merely an absence of disease or infirmity (adapted from World Health Organization, 1948 to include spiritual). The health of a population is influenced by the overall health of its citizens as well as the social, political and economic determinants of health, including employment, education, income, and housing. Accessible, appropriate and timely care across the lifespan includes: health promotion, disease and risk prevention, health education, primary health care, complementary health care, acute care, treatment and rehabilitation to assist citizens to maintain or restore their health and well being. Palliative care, hospice care and compassionate care for terminal illness, and providing dignity and comfort for the dying are essential. Primary health care principles are important in Niagara; they include: accessibility; public participation; health promotion; appropriate skills and technology; and inter-sectoral cooperation.

What we are doing well...

Niagara has four Community Health Centers (CHCs), and Nurse Practitioners are being engaged across the region. Many specific health services across the continuum of care are available throughout Niagara. The Local Health Integration Network (LHIN) and other groups are engaged in health planning. In 2008, the new Niagara campus of McMaster University's Michael G. DeGroote School of Medicine placed medical students and residents in hospitals and care centers across the region; the first 19 graduated in 2010. Brock University offers a Bachelor of Science degree in Nursing, as well as Canada's first Bachelor of Public Health program. Niagara College offers practical nursing, dental health, personal support worker and paramedic programs.



By working together, we can improve health and wellness in Niagara

The health care system in Niagara includes a continuum of health promotion, disease prevention, primary care, treatment, rehabilitation, hospital care, complementary care, palliative and hospice care. A focus on public health priorities and the Healthy Living Niagara community recommendations to reduce obesity, cardiovascular disease and chronic health conditions will help to create a healthier population and reduce the need for hospital services. Attracting health care professionals with the skills required for Niagara's population is a priority. Reducing wait times for some diagnostic services, cancer care and surgeries is also important. It is essential that we develop, strengthen, and coordinate mental health services in Niagara.

EMERGING ACTIVITY

The construction of a new acute care facility is being completed in St. Catharines by the Niagara Health System (NHS) for 2012.

Niagara Public Health has many programs and launched The Health Story of Niagara in 2009, with updates provided as new data is available.

In 2011, Niagara College opened the doors to its new Applied Health Institute on the Welland Campus.

Brock is completing a new Cairns Family Health and Bioscience Complex.

Mental health and wellness for citizens of all ages is identified as an area needing intersectoral coordination.

In 2011, additional funding was approved for mental health services for children and youth in Niagara.

In 2011, Healthy Living Niagara engaged the community in identifying 5 priorities for health promotion and policy development for reduction of rates of obesity, cardiovascular disease and chronic health conditions.

An evidence-based approach is being used by the Niagara Suicide Prevention Coalition to update their regional strategy to minimize the burden of suicides in Niagara.

Niagara Regional Police Service (NRPS), nurses and mental health workers have formed a mobile crisis response unit, COAST Niagara, coordinated by Canadian Mental Health Association Niagara, with a focus on adults with serious mental illness, substance abuse and the homeless.



Sector No.7 HEALTH AND WELLNESS IN NIAGARA

Indicators

affecting life in Niagara that are described and quantified in Living in Niagara - 2011 (a total of 13 indicators for this sector):

- 1) Health planning in Niagara and measurement of key performance indicators.
- 2) Life expectancy in Niagara.
- 3) Lifestyle indicators in Niagara.
- 4) Prevalence of chronic conditions in Niagara.
- 5) Obesity rates in Niagara and adolescent cardiovascular risk factors in Niagara.
- 6) Mental health in Niagara.
- 7) Low birth weight of babies in Niagara.
- 8) Cancer rates in Niagara.
- 9) Emergency response times in Niagara.
- 10) Wait times for diagnostic scans and cancer surgeries in Niagara.
- 11) Health care providers in Niagara.
- 12) Presence of hospitals and community health care facilities in Niagara.
- 13) Adverse health events and death rates.

Visit the Niagara Research and Planning Council website: www.nrapc.com for the full Living in Niagara - 2011 report. It includes the accompanying data, descriptions, trends, comparisons, tables, figures, sources and discussion of implications for all report sectors.

SUGGESTED ACTION STEPS that emerged from the data, and discussions with community expert opinion leaders:

- 1) Raise public awareness of the role of our Community Health Centres and the primary health care services in Niagara. This approach would make better use of skills and resources throughout the entire health services delivery continuum, including hospitals and emergency services.
- 2) Engage the community of Niagara in the development of strategies to enhance public trust and confidence in our region's health care system and its leadership.
- 3) Strengthen the links between services across all sectors that affect the health of the elderly.
- 4) Continue to develop intersectoral collaboration among mental health organizations and service providers in Niagara.
- 5) Encourage inclusion of mental health anti-stigma principles in planning across all human service areas in Niagara.
- 6) Support the evidence-based planning approach of the Niagara Suicide Prevention Coalition.

WORK AND EMPLOYMENT IN NIAGARA



2011 Rating

2

Of concern, needs attention.
Expert Opinion Leader Rating

EMERGING ACTIVITY

A new regional approach to strengthening economic development for Niagara is being established, with preferred models being explored.

A number of initiatives are engaging youth and capturing their ideas for Niagara's workforce future.

Employment initiatives are being targeted to older workers (age 55 to 64) affected by industry transitions.

An innovative business incubation hub is in place at ngen-niagara.com, to help build an interactive digital media cluster in the Niagara region.

Having quality opportunities to work, contribute and earn a living wage is important to the health and wellbeing of a family, an individual and a community. The sustainability of a community is reliant on the employment of its citizens and the utilization of their talents and human capital in creative and purposeful work.

**What we are doing well...**

The Niagara Workforce Planning Board (NWPB) brings together those concerned with labour force planning and employment in Niagara to look at labour opportunities, trends, growth areas, skills, educational demands and employer needs. Many organizations are dedicated to assisting clients with employment and language training. The Niagara Immigrant Employment Council (NIEC) and the Niagara Immigrant Connections Initiative (NICI) were established to enhance the integration of the skills of immigrants in Niagara. There is evidence of collaborative planning to work on employment and labour force strategies for Niagara. While jobs are decreasing in some sectors, they are increasing in others. Traditionally, Niagara's economy was anchored on a small number of large manufacturers employing large workforces. Manufacturing is changing, with a number of new small and medium-sized enterprises generating jobs. The diversification of Niagara's economy is a trend that is in-step with national and global directions.

By working together, we can improve work and employment in Niagara

Niagara would be strengthened by effective, innovative, coordinated and collaborative economic and employment strategies at the local and regional levels. Labour needs in the tourism and service sectors have increased. Diversified manufacturing and business enterprise sectors could be further strengthened. Recognizing credentials and integrating talents of our educated immigrant population into appropriate labour areas is still an issue requiring attention. Attracting increased numbers of educated youth to Niagara, to work and build their businesses, careers and families would be an investment in our future. The employment and earnings of single parents, youth, immigrants, artists, persons with disabilities and the Aboriginal population still lag behind that of the general population in the region.

Sector No.8 WORK AND EMPLOYMENT IN NIAGARA

Indicators

affecting life in Niagara that are described and quantified in Living in Niagara - 2011 (a total of 12 indicators for this sector):

- 1) Regional coordination and planning.
- 2) Employment rates in Niagara.
- 3) Employment growth in Niagara.
- 4) Unemployment rates in Niagara.
- 5) Employment for specific groups in Niagara.
- 6) Shifts in the main employment sectors in Niagara.
- 7) Largest employers in Niagara.
- 8) Employment sectors and revenue generated from different employment sectors.
- 9) Workplace injuries.
- 10) Places where people do their work and commute to work.
- 11) Not-for-profit and unpaid work.
- 12) Employment services in Niagara.

Visit the Niagara Research and Planning Council website: www.nrapc.com for the full Living in Niagara - 2011 report. It includes the accompanying data, descriptions, trends, comparisons, tables, figures, sources and discussion of implications for all report sectors.

SUGGESTED ACTION STEPS that emerged from the data, and discussions with community expert opinion leaders:

- 1 Support the work of economic development partners to attract employers with sustainable employment, and quality job opportunities for Niagara.
- 2 Advocate for government policies and resources that promote economic prosperity.
- 3 Support creation of a culture that helps youth to develop entrepreneurial skills, creativity and innovation.
- 4 In collaboration with adult literacy partners, undertake and resource a comprehensive and collaborative regional and area mapping of current literacy rates and issues and set new targets for Niagara-wide action.
- 5 Measure and describe the not-for-profit sector of Niagara's workforce in terms of its economic impact.





2011 Rating



Between - In dire need of corrective action
AND of concern, needs attention.
Expert Opinion Leader Rating

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, POVERTY AND PROSPERITY IN NIAGARA

Sector No.9

Investing in economic development and reduction of poverty in a region is a wise strategy to help individuals, companies and families to prosper. Mobilizing assets, while effectively identifying and addressing needs will strengthen approaches to enhancing region-wide prosperity. The gap between the rich and poor is widening and deepening in many Canadian communities, including Niagara. Inequities and poverty are evident, with related negative impact for all citizens - significant costs in terms of human lives, unrealized potential, and loss of real dollars in the economy. The level of poverty, child poverty, low income, unemployment and homelessness in a region affects the health and well-being of individuals, families, businesses, government, and society as a whole. Niagara cannot afford the underutilization and non-inclusion of citizen assets that result from poverty. Collaborative efforts to ameliorate poverty involve changes in policy as well as initiatives to address inequities, adequate income levels, and increased employment opportunities.

What we are doing well...

Following the 2007 release of the report: *"A Legacy of Poverty? Addressing Cycles of Poverty and the Impact on Child Health in Niagara Region"*, the Region of Niagara began investing \$1.5 million annually to help those living in poverty. Beginning in 2008, 55 different agencies were funded to deliver 136 projects. Goals of the Niagara Prosperity Initiative Advisory Committee include: dispelling the myths about living in poverty; improving collaboration and actions in poverty reduction efforts by all stakeholders; and engaging and including all individuals in the community. Shelters, food banks and services throughout the region are dedicated to supporting those in need. Niagara Region's Community and Social Services Department offers financial assistance, Ontario Works benefits, and subsidized housing and day care. Groups have been established to focus on issues of homelessness and the integration of new immigrants into the region. Work is underway to provide a Niagara perspective on the Ontario Partnership Project finding, that the 'for social profit' sector is a \$50 billion driver in Ontario's economy.

EMERGING ACTIVITY

▶ A unique Niagara Neighbourhood Mapping tool has been developed and used to measure the impact of neighbourhood action initiatives.

▶ Work is underway to better coordinate, integrate and strengthen regional economic development strategies.

▶ Awareness is building that effective economic development in Niagara needs to recognize linkages between, and magnify strengths of both private enterprise and the 'for social profit' sector.

By working together, we can improve economic prosperity in Niagara

The gap between high and low income earners in Niagara is steadily growing. We have little to cheer about when a large percent of Niagara's children and families live below the poverty line, and struggle to have necessities of shelter and food. The statistics are made up of real people in our midst who face daily barriers to keeping their housing, finding work, raising families and eating well. There are several areas across our region where levels of unemployment, low income and poverty are higher than average. A closer look reveals that within these areas, there is inequity in the way populations experience housing, health, education, income and unemployment. To make our region robust, inclusive, sustainable and liveable for everyone, it is important to address the underlying issues that contribute to poverty. Strengthening the sustainability of core human services and their inter-connective links will be an important step. Efforts to strategically address Niagara-wide economic issues will improve prosperity for all.



Sector No.9 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, POVERTY AND PROSPERITY IN NIAGARA

Indicators

affecting life in Niagara that are described and quantified in Living in Niagara - 2011 (a total of 10 indicators for this sector):

- 1) Overall economic development in Niagara.
- 2) Income and earnings in Niagara.
- 3) The low-income cut-offs (LICO) poverty measure in Niagara.
- 4) The gap between the rich and poor and for different groups in Niagara.
- 5) Market Basket Measure in Niagara.
- 6) Food security, food bank use in Niagara.
- 7) Hunger Count Survey for Niagara.
- 8) Social assistance in Niagara.
- 9) The number of personal and business bankruptcies in Niagara.
- 10) Niagara poverty reduction and prosperity initiatives.

Visit the Niagara Research and Planning Council website: www.nrapc.com for the full Living in Niagara - 2011 report. It includes the accompanying data, descriptions, trends, comparisons, tables, figures, sources and discussion of implications for all report sectors.

SUGGESTED ACTION STEPS that emerged from the data, and discussions with community expert opinion leaders:

- 1 Adopt an action plan that recognizes that poverty is complex and its amelioration requires a system of approaches, both at the macro (regional) level and micro (neighbourhood) level.
- 2 Focus on policy change and infrastructure improvements to ensure a living income above the poverty line for people receiving social assistance. Align this safety net with current realities of labour market and work trends.
- 3 Base community-wide dynamic planning on tracking and analysis of the 100 indicators of poverty as identified in the report "*A Legacy of Poverty? Addressing Cycles of Poverty and the Impact on Child Health in Niagara Region*".
- 4 Stabilize commitments to child care and core human services for people living in poverty in Niagara.
- 5 Structure government response to poverty reduction on the basis of prevailing evidence, community involvement and ideas.
- 6 Link economic growth and development strategies to community assets such as: adequate, safe and affordable housing, quality employment, access to health care services, education, and transportation.
- 7 Develop ways to include the perspectives and utilize the talents and contributions of those living in poverty.
- 8 Extend entrepreneurial and innovative thinking to human services planning and delivery.
- 9 Develop new leadership approaches and innovative ideas for prosperity development in Niagara.
- 10 Support initiatives to build linkages between private enterprise and the 'for social profit' sector.



2011 Rating



A lot of progress being made.
Expert Opinion Leader Rating

EMERGING ACTIVITY

The Niagara Age-Friendly Community Initiative is engaging citizens in applying World Health Organization age-friendly principles to ensure accessibility and inclusivity for Niagara citizens of all ages.

Leadership Niagara was launched in 2007 to identify, nurture and grow future leaders throughout the region. As of June 2011, 90 people had graduated from the program, and 16 community projects were completed. The Leadership Niagara teamwork experience has evolved to be closely linked to Niagara's voluntary sector, with project suggestions provided by local agencies and organizations.

Community capacity building is enhanced by the strong bonds and networks that connect its people, so that they are able to mobilize around issues and take constructive action together. Social capital is a community asset evidenced through citizens' expression of civic responsibility, generosity and trust. People who engage in political, recreational and charitable activities or give generously of their time, talents, leadership, energy and money are strengthening their community. Whether citizens participate at the local or regional level, their involvement benefits both their community and themselves as individuals. When citizens take part and are included in planning, processes and solution-building, trust and a sense of community belonging result.



What we are doing well...

Throughout Niagara, there are many community, cultural, family and friendship networks as well as opportunities to engage in societal decision-making and voting processes. Mentoring initiatives are evolving that both enrich young people seeking experience and skills, and value older adults' wisdom and expertise. Niagara's seniors contribute significant volunteer hours in a variety of areas. Several local municipalities across Niagara have engaged younger citizens by creating mayors' youth advisory councils. Secondary school graduation diploma requirements for community service hours and service learning initiatives at Niagara College and Brock University provide opportunities for young people to learn about and feel a part of Niagara. Niagara residents report a higher sense of belonging to their community than is reported for Ontario or Canada. While decreasing voter turnout across Canada is a major concern, Niagara turnout rates are slightly higher than that for other regions. Information Niagara coordinates Niagara Volunteer Connections, a web-based volunteer recruitment database supported by community groups and agencies. The Regional Association of Volunteer Administrators provides online links to volunteer opportunities on behalf of volunteer coordinators from more than 30 Niagara not-for-profit agencies.

By working together, we can improve belonging, volunteering, giving and leadership in Niagara

It is a community challenge to continuously create a culture of civic participation, charitable giving, voluntarism, engagement and leadership for all ages. This is especially true during times of economic uncertainty. Niagara residents have many competing priorities for their time, energy and financial giving. Time and transportation have been identified as barriers to volunteering. Many of the elderly population in Niagara are well and they serve as volunteers. Many of this age group also require increased services, friendly visits, meals and home care themselves. Our elected representation at all levels of government is predominantly male. While many throughout Niagara are making efforts to facilitate civic engagement, the citizenry may not be fully aware of those efforts and not know how to be engaged.

Indicators

affecting life in Niagara that are described and quantified in Living in Niagara 2011 (a total of 8 indicators for this sector):

- 1) Volunteering in Niagara.
- 2) Charitable giving in Niagara.
- 3) Voting in Niagara.
- 4) Sense of community belonging in Niagara.
- 5) Trust in others in Niagara.
- 6) Participation in social networks and social activities in Niagara.
- 7) Having a religious affiliation in Niagara.
- 8) Leadership diversity in Niagara.

Visit the Niagara Research and Planning Council website: www.nrapc.com for the full Living in Niagara - 2011 report. It includes the accompanying data, descriptions, trends, comparisons, tables, figures, sources and discussion of implications for all report sectors.

SUGGESTED ACTION STEPS that emerged from the data, and discussions with community expert opinion leaders:

- 1 Continue to develop a Niagara-wide culture of involving citizens in civic engagement, and encouraging people to take action on the suggestions for each of the sectors outlined in Living in Niagara - 2011, as well as those identified by the Sustainable Niagara plan.
- 2 Acknowledge and measure non-paid, not-for profit work and its impact on Niagara's individuals, organizations and the economy.



GETTING STARTED IN NIAGARA



2011 Rating



A lot of progress being made.
Expert Opinion Leader Rating

GETTING STARTED IN NIAGARA

Sector No.11

Niagara is strengthened when a new child, a new graduate or a new immigrant becomes part of our community. Our region's vitality, inclusiveness and future sustainability depends on how we welcome these citizens, help them to get established and include them and their contributions. The presence of child care and supports for children and their parents or caregivers is a measure of the success of a region in giving children a healthy start in life.



What we are doing well...

Newborns in Niagara and their families benefit from supports provided by Niagara Region Public Health, Niagara Early Years programs, and public and private day care facilities. Refugees and immigrants coming across the border into Canada at the Fort Erie Peace Bridge point of entry are met by the Peace Bridge Newcomers' Center and Canada Border Services. While most of these people travel on to larger urban centers in Ontario and Canada, others establish temporary or permanent residency in Niagara. New graduates from secondary schools, colleges, trades and apprenticeship programs and universities can access employment search supports and service learning opportunities as they seek rewarding work to establish an adult life in Niagara.

By working together, we can improve the experiences of those getting started in Niagara as a child, a young adult, or an immigrant

Continuing to build a community that is friendly and accessible for all ages and backgrounds will increase everyone's sense of belonging, boost productivity levels, and utilize citizens' diverse assets. Niagara could actively involve parents in understanding their critical role in actualizing the areas identified by the Early Years Niagara Planning Council, to help ensure that children are learning, healthy and safe; and families are strong, stable and connected. Immigrants and their families could best make a rich contribution to our communities, schools and places of work, if we develop a more proactive approach to welcoming and valuing their talents and skills. Ongoing attention should be paid to coordination, effectiveness and timeliness of efforts to recognize immigrants' prior credentials, to offer language training, settlement services and education. A stronger future for Niagara would result from attracting and retaining youth and young adults through innovative opportunities for education and employment. Identifying optimal ways to integrate and utilize the assets and potential of youth, young adults and seniors would increase quality of life for all of Niagara.

EMERGING ACTIVITY

The Children's Charter Enacted report shows evidence that the Charter has guided positive changes in the way children's services are delivered. This shows that as a community we consider our children and youth to be one of the most important assets to invest in for everyone's future.

There is a growing sense that creating a culture and climate that supports starting up in Niagara will attract new people, engage youth and young graduates to feel they are part of Niagara's future. It will also encourage new businesses and enterprises to innovate in Niagara.



Sector No.11 GETTING STARTED IN NIAGARA



Indicators

affecting life in Niagara that are described and quantified in
Living in Niagara - 2011 (a total of 4 indicators for this sector):

- 1) Starting out as a child in Niagara - early years and child care.
- 2) Starting out as a youth and graduate in Niagara.
- 3) Starting out as a refugee or immigrant in Niagara.
- 4) Net migration for Niagara.

Visit the Niagara Research and Planning Council website: www.nrapc.com for the full Living in Niagara - 2011 report. It includes the accompanying data, descriptions, trends, comparisons, tables, figures, sources and discussion of implications for all report sectors.

SUGGESTED ACTION STEPS that emerged from the data, and discussions with community expert opinion leaders:

- 1 Continue to describe the impact of the Niagara Children's Charter on the lives of children, families, agencies and the community.
- 2 Create a forum that includes researchers, community members and academics, along with public policy experts to identify opportunities to leverage our Niagara-specific data on immigration, specifically as it relates to the social and economic health of the Niagara Region.
- 3 Actively involve and inform parents about their critical role in actualizing the areas identified by the Early Years Niagara Planning Council to ensure that: children are learning, healthy and safe; and families are strong, stable and connected.
- 4 Create an intersectoral strategy for, and dedicate resources to attracting and retaining youth through innovative employment and leadership opportunities.



2011 Rating

Recreation
and Sports
in Niagara

3a • • • • 3b

Between a little progress is being made and
a lot of progress is being made.
Expert Opinion Leader Rating

EMERGING ACTIVITY

Some shared awareness and coordination is occurring through the establishment of the Niagara Sport Commission and the development of some community projects.

Use of the League Toolkit in many organizations helps volunteer groups in planning and administration.

ProKid, Jump Start and other subsidies help reduce barriers to access for those who are disadvantaged.

Toronto's successful bid to host the 2015 PAN AM Games will see the rowing competition hosted in St. Catharines, and the canoeing, kayaking, and long-distance swimming in Welland.

This is the first time recreation and sports are included as a sector in the Living in Niagara Report.

For many, recreation and sports activities provide friendships, purpose, and meaning. They also provide significant economic, social and health benefits to our region. Recreation and sports are essential contributors to the economy and they add to the prosperity of Niagara by attracting visitors through sport tourism and hosted regional, provincial, national and international events. Participation in sports builds leadership skills, facilitates social inclusion and develops a sense of belonging, teamwork, and community spirit. The Charter for Recreation and Parks in Ontario states that “Everyone has the right to quality, accessible and inclusive recreation and parks services in their communities – services that are essential for the health of Ontarians, the quality of life in our communities and the sustainability of our environment” (Charter, 2009). Engagement in formal and informal indoor and outdoor sports and recreation makes Niagara a healthier, more active place to live.



What we are doing well...

Over 250 community sports organizations (CSOs), and thousands of volunteer citizens deliver sports and recreation programs to an estimated 100,000 children, youth, adults and seniors in Niagara. Local CSOs host over 150 small to medium size sporting events annually for tournaments, competitions and multi-sport events.

The economic impact of hosted events in Niagara was estimated at over \$17 million in 2009, and the estimate has risen substantially since then.

The Niagara Parks Commission and private clubs provide beautiful golf courses. Local associations, municipal recreation departments, and the YMCA of Niagara facilitate and develop a variety of indoor and outdoor programs for participants of all ages. These are offered in facilities and community venues across Niagara, utilizing local and professional leadership contributions. Niagara's school boards, Brock University, Niagara College and private clubs offer fitness programs, activities and sports, recreation and leisure facilities.

By working together, we can improve recreation and sports in Niagara

Historically, many of Niagara's sports and recreation clubs and organizations have developed separately. Strategic efforts for coordination, shared funding, access and joint hiring and training could strengthen delivery and further development. Increased understanding of the powerful potential of sport as an economic engine could lead to even greater planning, and positive benefits for Niagara's economy. Supportive links for event hosting between local sports and recreation organizations and the tourism sector could benefit both groups. Increased efforts to enable citizen access and inclusion in sport and recreation would assist everyone, regardless of age, finances, gender or circumstances to be able to participate fully in what their community has to offer. Organizations' increased use of planning/sharing tools such as the League Toolkit and an event inventory would help them to be more effective in administrative planning as well as raising public awareness and access.



Sector No.12 RECREATION AND SPORTS IN NIAGARA

Indicators

affecting life in Niagara that are described and quantified in Living in Niagara - 2011 (a total of 7 indicators for this sector):

- 1) Evidence of recreation and sports programs for all ages and citizen involvement.
- 2) Evidence of recreation and sports facilities.
- 3) The link of recreation and sports to the economy.
- 4) Involvement in recreation and sports and the community.
- 5) Time involved in recreation and sports and leisure activities.
- 6) Evidence of planning and coordination in recreation and sports.
- 7) Example of a cross-Niagara recreational trail system - the Greater Niagara Circle Route.

Visit the Niagara Research and Planning Council website: www.nrapc.com for the full Living in Niagara - 2011 report. It includes the accompanying data, descriptions, trends, comparisons, tables, figures, sources and discussion of implications for all report sectors.

SUGGESTED ACTION STEPS that emerged from the data, and discussions with community expert opinion leaders:

- 1 Measure, acknowledge and nurture the economic impact of this sector on Niagara, including the volunteer leadership and contributions.
- 2 Encourage more formal partnerships between this sector and leaders in tourism to capture opportunities for economic impact in Niagara.
- 3 Develop intersectoral cooperation to plan together for big projects to benefit Niagara.
- 4 Increase access to recreation and sports for all ages, including for family-shared types of recreation.
- 5 Create a planning framework to bring all principals in the sector together to answer key questions, such as: What are we doing? How are we doing? Are there enough opportunities, for whom and where? What are we doing to increase access and opportunities, and is it working?
- 6 Increase civic engagement by developing and facilitating leadership skills and capacity for all ages, through recreation and sports.





Next Steps

Visit the Niagara Research and Planning Council website: www.nrapc.com for the full Living in Niagara - 2011 report. It includes the accompanying data, descriptions, trends, comparisons, tables, figures, sources and discussion of implications for all report sectors.

The twelve sectors of Living in Niagara - 2011 form the basis for the Niagara Knowledge Exchange (NKE), an online knowledge-sharing tool designed to fast-track your search for relevant, reliable Niagara-focused data. A team of over 40 community volunteers are working together to create the NKE, with facilitation provided by the Niagara Research and Planning Council (NRAPC). NRAPC's mission is: "Generating knowledge that drives community action".



Living in Niagara - 2011- Next Steps

Niagara Knowledge Exchange (NKE) Knowledge Brokers will link interested Niagara community members to work together on the following action steps:

- ✓ **Involve** Niagara community members in analysis of the data and in the development of action goals.
- ✓ **Prepare** a communication strategy designed to engage the public in collaborative action.
- ✓ **Identify** what data is missing, resources required to gather the data, how it will be gathered, and by whom.
- ✓ **Facilitate** an inclusive process to involve partners to establish clear, measurable and specific goals for Niagara related to each sector of this report.
- ✓ **Partner** with other existing collaborative efforts in Niagara.
- ✓ **Develop** meaningful benchmark comparisons to other regions.
- ✓ **Track** indicators over time to determine trends and the impact of collective actions taken.
- ✓ **Establish** the Niagara Knowledge Exchange (NKE) as an evolving online tool to track indicators and to monitor emerging activity.

Living in Niagara 2011 - présenté par Niagara Research and Planning Council

Niagara Research and Planning Council est composé de bénévoles communautaires et est soutenu par des partenaires communautaires de la grande région de Niagara. La mission, la vision et les lignes directrices ont été créées par la communauté de Niagara.

Notre mission : générer la connaissance pour renforcer l'action communautaire

Le but du rapport " Living in Niagara " :

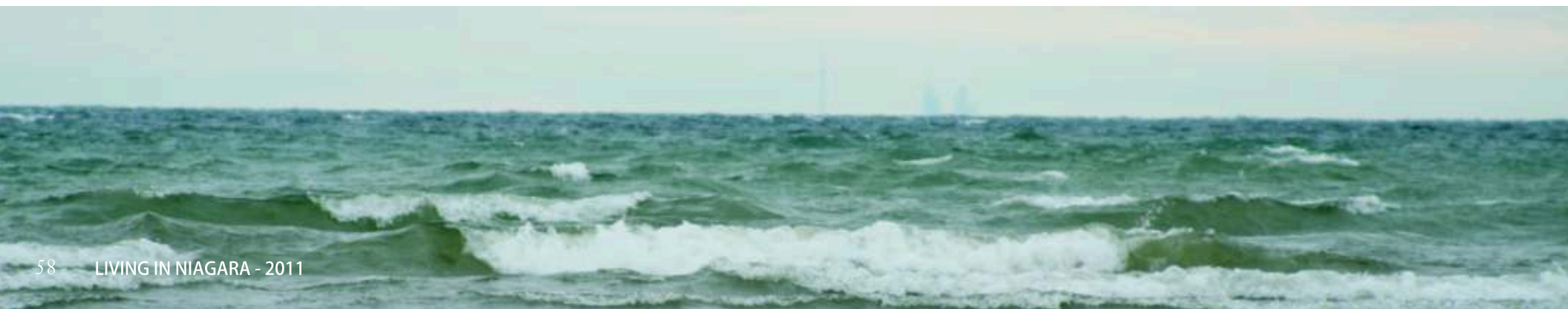
Ce rapport définit la vitalité de la communauté de Niagara à travers des indicateurs sociaux de santé. Il identifie des tendances importantes, fournissant des données, qui font la différence dans la vie des résidents du Niagara.

Il peut être utilisé comme :

- Un outil efficace pour encourager la discussion au sujet des principaux secteurs d'activités, et ce, pour améliorer la qualité de vie de résidents de Niagara;
- Un catalyseur de l'action communautaire;
- Une base pour la planification informative et la prise de décision, ce qui renforcera notre région.

La recherche appliquée servira de guide pour des solutions, de l'innovation et de l'action communautaire.

Visitez le site Web Niagara Research and Planning council www.nrapc.com pour le rapport complet de " Living in Niagara 2011 ". Il inclut des données, des descriptions, des tendances, des confrontations, des tables, des figures, des sources et des discussions pour chacun des 12 secteurs du rapport



POSSIBILITÉS SUGGÉRÉES POUR LE PLAN D'ACTION

Vous y trouverez ci-dessous 13 secteurs d'action identifiés dans le rapport Living in Niagara - 2011 et suggérés dans des entrevues avec des leaders d'opinion. Ce résumé se rapporte à plus de 60 suggestions par secteur pour des actions déjà identifiées dans les 12 secteurs du rapport.

1. Augmenter la planification et la coordination des différents secteurs - la coordination, la planification et les partenariats sont émergents et évidents dans plusieurs des 12 secteurs. Des efforts de planification sont bien établis et ont mené à des initiatives mesurables et pouvant être mises en pratique. Certaines initiatives sont le fruit d'une concertation régionale et de partenariats.

2. Augmenter le développement intersectoriel et les partenariats - il doit y avoir plus de développement intersectoriel, de planification et de partenariats pour le bénéfice mutuel du Niagara.

3. Augmenter le renforcement des capacités et l'échange du savoir - les perspectives d'avenir et le soutien communautaire pour l'échange du savoir et l'information courante sont essentiels au développement positif, et ce, dans tous les secteurs et pour tous les indicateurs figurant dans ce rapport.

4. Réduire la pauvreté - la pauvreté persiste dans le Niagara et est évidente dans tous les secteurs. Se concentrer sur le renforcement des investissements de la région en réduisant la pauvreté sera bénéfique dans le Niagara. Tous les secteurs contribuent à l'économie à différents niveaux et augmentent la prospérité de la région.

5. Renforcer les approches et les services en santé mentale - renforcer le continuum des soins de santé mentale pour élargir le réseau afin d'inclure la promotion de la santé, la protection contre les risques, le traitement et les soins, et ce, à travers la région et pendant toute la durée de vie.

6. Faire du Niagara un endroit où il fait bon vivre, quelque soit votre âge. Continuer à soutenir le travail qui se fait dans la région en bâtissant une société juste, inclusive et accessible à tous pour bien vivre et vivre ensemble.

7. Renforcer et reconnaître les organisations à but non lucratif - Ce secteur contribue beaucoup à l'économie et à la qualité de vie en créant de l'activité économique et en donnant du temps, des talents et du leadership. Cette contribution devrait être quantifiée et considérée dans n'importe quelle planification de développement économique.

8. Créer des possibilités d'emploi de qualité et une stratégie économique coordonnée pour la région de Niagara - les possibilités d'emploi de qualité, l'innovation et une stratégie de développement économique sont essentielles pour la qualité de vie et la croissance de la région de Niagara.

9. Mettre l'accent sur les enfants et les jeunes - L'investissement dans le développement des jeunes enfants et des adolescents avec la santé, l'éducation, le bien-être et le ressort psychologique est primordial et essentiel pour le futur de la région de Niagara.

10. Se concentrer sur les aînés et le vieillissement de la population - Le nombre d'aînés dans la région de Niagara est en pleine croissance. Leur bien-être et le développement de leur plein potentiel, comme leaders et comme citoyens, ont besoin d'être mieux décrits.

11. Inventorier, évaluer et protéger les atouts naturels de la région de Niagara - Nous possédons des atouts naturels très riches et nous devons décrire, évaluer et contrôler le statut particulier de la région afin de prévoir le développement économique et la durabilité.

12. Créer un espace social - Créer des espaces réels, virtuels et relationnels où le dialogue communautaire et les stratégies et actions innovatrices peuvent servir de modèle.

13. Renforcer et accroître les nombreux atouts de la région de Niagara - Niagara a de nombreux atouts (humains et naturels) et de nouvelles stratégies pour apporter des changements positifs. Il est maintenant temps de se connecter et de faire des liens avec les nombreux atouts positifs de la région de Niagara afin d'y faire un bond en avant.

Living in Niagara - Sector Ratings 2008 & 2011

Visit the Niagara Research and Planning Council website: www.nrapc.com for the full *Living in Niagara - 2011* report, and the baseline *Living in Niagara - 2008* report. There you will find the accompanying data, descriptions, trends, comparisons, tables, figures, sources and discussion of implications for all report sectors.

See page 11 of this document to learn how Community Expert Opinion Leader (2008 and 2011) ratings were established.

Sector Number	2008 Sector Name	Community Expert Opinion Leader Rating	2011 Sector Name	Community Expert Opinion Leader Rating	Rating Change from 2008 to 2011
1	Arts, Culture and Heritage in Niagara	Level #3: Progress is being made.	Arts, Culture and Heritage in Niagara	Level #4: We're doing well and headed in the right direction.	Positive Change
2	Getting Around Niagara: Transportation in Niagara	Level #2: Of concern, needs attention	Transportation and Mobility in Niagara	Level #3b: A lot of progress being made.	Positive Change
3	Environment in Niagara	Level #2: Of concern, needs attention	The Environment in Niagara	Between Level #3a: A little progress being made & #3b: A lot of progress being made.	Positive Change
4	Learning and Education in Niagara	Level #2: Of concern, needs attention	Learning and Education in Niagara	Level #3b: A lot of progress being made.	Positive Change
5	Housing and Shelter in Niagara	Level #3: Progress is being made.	Housing and Shelter in Niagara	Level #3b: A lot of progress being made.	Some Positive Change
6	Crime, Safety and Security in Niagara	Level #3: Progress is being made.	Crime, Safety and Security in Niagara	Level #4: We're doing well and headed in the right direction.	Positive Change

Living in Niagara - Sector Ratings 2008 & 2011

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Sector Number	2008 Sector Name	Community Expert Opinion Leader Rating	2011 Sector Name	Community Expert Opinion Leader Rating	Rating Change from 2008 to 2011
7	Health and Wellness in Niagara	Level #2: Of concern, needs attention	Health and Wellness in Niagara	Level #3a: A little progress being made.	Positive Change
8	Work and Employment in Niagara	Level #2: Of concern, needs attention	Work and Employment in Niagara	Level #2: Of concern needs attention.	No Change
9	Income, Prosperity and Poverty in Niagara	Level #1: In dire need of corrective action.	Economic Development, Poverty and Prosperity in Niagara	Between Level #1: In dire need of corrective action & #2: Of concern needs attention.	Some Positive Change
10	Belonging and Leadership in Niagara	Level #3: Progress is being made.	Belonging, Volunteering, Giving and Leadership in Niagara	Level #3b: A lot of progress being made.	Some Positive Change
11	Getting Started in Niagara	Level #2: Of concern, needs attention	Getting Started in Niagara	Level #3b: A lot of progress being made.	Positive Change
12	n/a	n/a	Recreation and Sports in Niagara	Between level #3a: A little progress being made & #3b: A lot of progress being made.	n/a



See the Full Report at:

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