



# West Lincoln Economic Development Plan

March 7, 2016



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## Executive Summary

The West Lincoln Economic Development Plan makes the case for a focused economic development effort. The community is facing more competition for investment and talent than likely any time in the recent past. Provincial, national and international influences are impinging on the community like never before. Even though the community is relatively small compared to Ontario's larger urban areas, local government and its partners still have a role to play to ensure the conditions are in place for the economy to prosper in the years ahead. The consultations undertaken for the development of this plan along with the review of economic and demographic trends confirm this role.

This Economic Development Plan is the culmination of a seven-month study by the Township of West Lincoln that included a review of existing policies and reports, planning policies and procedures, comprehensive economic and demographic analysis and broad community and stakeholder consultation. The detailed analysis is included in the West Lincoln Economic Development Issues and Findings Report completed in January, 2016. The Economic Development Plan builds on the foundation of this analysis and provides the road map for West Lincoln to achieve its desired economic development vision.

The economic and demographic review finds that West Lincoln's economy has been performing relatively well compared to its peers but its low unemployment rate is making it increasingly difficult for certain industries to attract and retain staff. West Lincoln is also increasingly becoming a bedroom community for the Hamilton economy. The median time it took for a typical employee to get to work in 2011 was just over 30 minutes – well above the Niagara Region median commute time of 15.8 minutes and the Ontario median of 20.8 minutes. More than 4,000 people leave West Lincoln each day to go to work.

The West Lincoln business profile review confirms the strength of the agriculture sector. There are more than 80 registered businesses involved in poultry farming and production alone. Overall, there are more than 300 agriculture establishments (farms, processing and support businesses) in the community. There is also a cluster of manufacturing firms in West Lincoln bolstering the export-focused economy. When it comes to local services, West Lincoln remains underserved across a number of industries. There are 60 percent fewer accommodation and food services firms compared to the national economy; far fewer professional services and considerably less doctors' offices, dentists' offices and chiropractors' offices compared to national economy – adjusted for population size.



The community consultations undertaken during the development of the West Lincoln Economic Development Plan confirmed the perception of the community as a friendly community with a strong agricultural heritage and small town lifestyle. West Lincoln's location with its proximity to Hamilton and the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) is considered a key asset. Participants shared their desire for a thriving, balanced economy where employment and business investment catch up with the Township's robust residential growth. They expressed a desire for more retail and services in the community, a more vibrant downtown, and strong leadership to develop business friendly policies and procedures, invest in infrastructure and community amenities. The Findings and Issues Report provides more detail on these consultations.

The Strength, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats (SWOT) analysis reveals a region with some interesting competitive strengths including a strong and relatively stable agriculture sector, a comparatively young population, proximity to urban centres and an overall perception as a good place to raise a family and have a good quality of life. At the same time, stakeholder consultations confirmed some weaknesses including infrastructure gaps, insularity (not well connected to the broader Niagara Region), limited real estate options and no real economic development capacity.

Looking to the future, technological and demographic trends, provincial and federal government priorities and infrastructure investments will create new opportunities for the community. The GO Train will make the community more accessible. Broadband telecommunications and the growth of distributed work sets up the potential for more home-based workers and businesses in the area. The regional and provincial focus on expanding agri-business will benefit the community and Greenbelt regulations are opening up new opportunities for places such as West Lincoln. But there are threats, too. Ontario's economy has not been growing as it did in the past. This malaise could have ripple effects in rural areas across the province. Technological changes, the lowering cost of transportation and growing exposure to other countries and cultures mean that young people are more mobile than at any time in the past. A number of important industries in the community are starting to face workforce shortages that could potentially choke investment and hinder economic growth.

Based on the results of the community consultations, economic and demographic review and the SWOT analysis, a vision for the community's future economic development was prepared. The vision is based on the concepts of a growing economy, a strong labour market, a Township focus on economic development and broader engagement of residents and businesses.



## West Lincoln’s Economic Development Vision

**West Lincoln enjoys a thriving, diversified economy with a balanced supply of workers and jobs. The Township proactively supports business and attracts investment in cooperation with the business community and its economic development partners. Residents and businesses are engaged and connected to their community.**

The economic mission for the Township focuses on building a collaborative economic development program that is addressing key challenges and opportunities:

## West Lincoln’s Economic Development Mission

**To develop a diversified economy through strategic action, collaboration and community engagement.**

There are six strategic priorities that provide the focus to achieve the mission and work toward the economic development vision for West Lincoln. These are:

<b>Strategic Priority:</b>	<b>Rationale:</b>
1. Economic Development Capacity	Ensuring West Lincoln has the human and financial resources to address its economic development vision
2. Diversified Economy	Creating a balanced and resilient economic base
3. Infrastructure	Strategic investments to support business needs
4. Community Development	Encouraging community engagement and growth
5. Building Relationships	Establishing supportive networks and partnerships; Leveraging areas of mutual interest
6. Marketing	Developing a shared economic development vision; Sharing the West Lincoln story

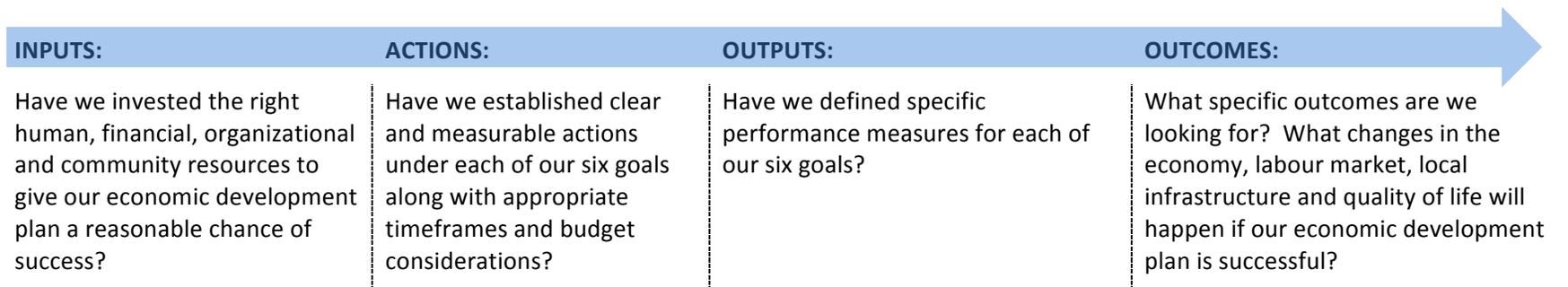
These six strategic priorities were translated into six goals and a strategic objective associated with each. For each goal a series of actions has been identified that will help achieve the goals and work towards accomplishing the overall mission. For each action there are key partners identified, the proposed timeframe for implementation, the budget (where applicable) and the priority. The Action Plan forms the basis for annual work plans assigned to individual staff involved in economic development. The goals and strategic objectives follow.



Goal:	Strategic Objective:
A Proactive Economic Development Program	Allocate the human and financial resources to implement the economic development plan.
A Balanced and Resilient Economic Base	Establish programs and activities to encourage business retention, expansion and attraction in a range of industry sectors and business sizes.
Sufficient Infrastructure to Support Business Needs	Develop and manage the infrastructure required to attract and retain a broad range of investment.
A Growing and Engaged Community	Lead community development initiatives that create a supportive environment for resident and business attraction and retention efforts.
A Shared Vision of West Lincoln	Increase the awareness and positive perception of West Lincoln as a quality place to live and work.
Collaboration with Economic Development Partners and Stakeholders	Leverage community resources and regional programs to enhance economic development efforts.

It is very important that West Lincoln move beyond actions to determine appropriate outcomes associated with the investment in economic development made by the Township. This report concludes with the performance measurements associated with each of the six goals.

Performance measurements, as defined in this economic development plan, are both output-based and outcome-based. Outputs are the direct result of specific actions taken to achieve each of the six goals. For example, there are a series of actions meant to bolster community marketing efforts such as the development of an economic development website, marketing collateral and a social media strategy. The successful output of those actions will be a stronger community marketing capacity but that is not an end in and of itself. Why do we want a stronger community market capacity? To make sure the community can continue to attract business investment, foster new job creation, enhance the community's quality of life and ensure the Township continues to have a solid tax base so that it can provide good quality public services and public infrastructure.





Because West Lincoln is starting to build its economic development capacity, the recommended performance measures are primarily focused on actions and outputs. There is a lot of work to be done over the next three years to build up the community's economic development capacity, its relationships and the ecosystem needed to truly influence its economic and demographic trajectory.

Specific outcome measures should be developed in Years two and three after the results of the Township's efforts to build its economic development capacity start to have positive impacts.



# Introduction

The Township of West Lincoln, a community of approximately 14,000 people in the Region of Niagara commissioned the development of its first Economic Development Plan. The Economic Development Plan considers how West Lincoln can encourage, support and maintain economic growth in collaboration with the Region of Niagara’s Planning and Development and Economic Development Divisions.

## The Strategic Planning Process

The strategic planning process includes four phases:

1. Situation analysis,
2. Stakeholder consultation,
3. Strategy development,
4. Action and implementation plans.





The full details of the situation analysis and stakeholder consultation are included in the West Lincoln Economic Development Findings and Issues Report. This document will provide a summary of the findings and outline the resulting strategy with the details actions and implementation plan.

## Document Review

The Township of West Lincoln and its Economic Development partners have completed several foundational documents that provide direction to this plan.

Most relevant is the West Lincoln Community Strategic Plan (2012). The Community Strategic Plan established a series of strategic objectives under three pillars:

- Quality of Life
- Economic Prosperity and Tourism
- Managed Growth and Protection of Natural Assets

The strategy identifies the agriculture industry as the primary economic driver for the Township. It emphasizes the management of residential growth, preserving rural areas and reconfiguring the urban centre of Smithville. It places a priority on supporting business and creating opportunities for employment and business investment to allow more West Lincoln residents to work in the Township. It also identifies communication as a key element to the plan's success.

The Greater Niagara Region Chamber of Commerce provides a high level outline for transforming the province's economy through fostering innovation and risk-taking, building a 21<sup>st</sup> century workforce, improving the way government works, taking advantage of global opportunities and strategically investing in the Region's competitive advantages.

The Team Niagara Economic Development Action Plan (2015-2018) outlines three areas of focus for the Region's Economic Development Division:

- Investment Attraction/ Lead Generation and Innovation and Entrepreneurship
- Economic Research and Analysis
- Advocacy

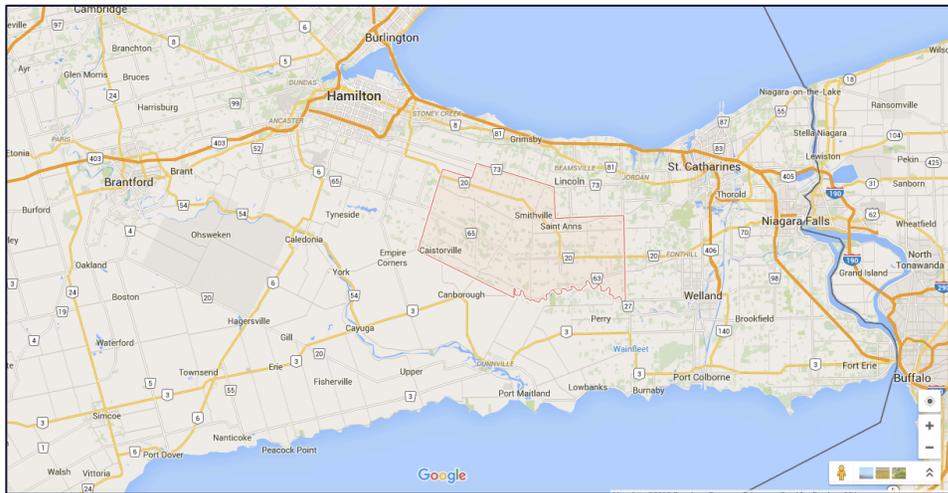
The Team Niagara Plan provides a delineation of economic development roles and responsibilities allowing West Lincoln to avoid duplication of efforts and focus on local economic development activities.



# Environmental Scan

West Lincoln is situated in the Niagara Region, just outside the City of Hamilton and in close proximity to the Greater Toronto Area. West Lincoln is at the western end of the Greater Golden Horseshoe, home to one third of Canada's population.

**Figure 1 West Lincoln. Google Maps Nov 2015**



The economy of the Niagara Region is known for its industrial and agricultural strength. The Region welcomes over 14 million tourists annually.

West Lincoln is a rural township and faces similar challenges as much of rural Canada at a time when federal and provincial policies appear more focused on urban growth and infrastructure needs.

West Lincoln has benefitted from the City of Hamilton's significant growth. Younger families and retirees are relocating to West Lincoln to take advantage of lower housing prices and a small town environment. West Lincoln will be challenged to maintain its own identity as the Hamilton boundaries and its residents move closer.



## Economic Analysis

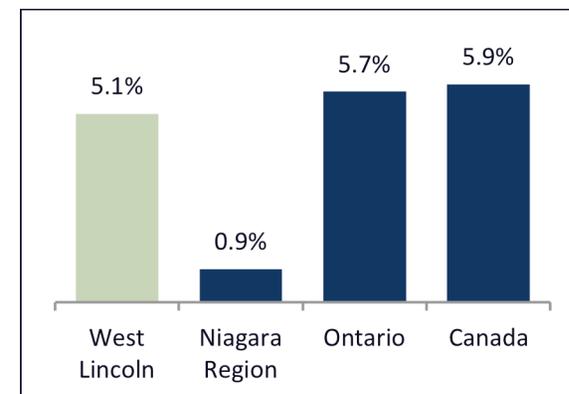
West Lincoln has a population of approximately 14,000 people.<sup>1</sup> The Township is growing at a significant rate. Twenty percent of the population in 2011 lived elsewhere in 2006. West Lincoln has a younger population than the Region, Province and nation with 29% of the population under age 20. The population is fairly homogenous. Only 7.9% of the West Lincoln population arrived in Canada between 2001 and 2011; compared to 16% at the Region and 28% and 32% at the provincial and nation respectively.<sup>2</sup>



West Lincoln's workforce has higher levels of trades or college educated individuals and lower levels of university educated individuals compared to the province and nation. The unemployment rate in West Lincoln is particularly low. At a 4.4% unemployment rate, Township residents enjoy close to full employment<sup>3</sup>.

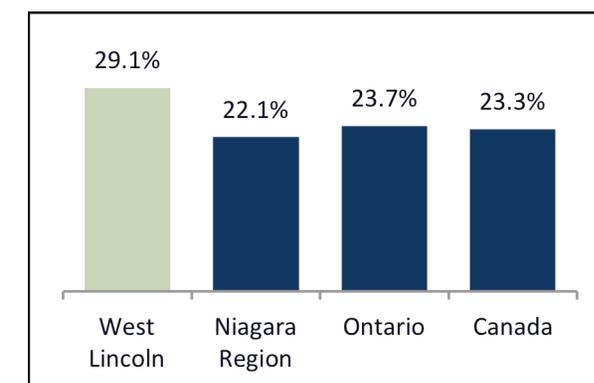
The West Lincoln workforce has a higher share of persons in trades, management, natural resources and manufacturing occupations compared to the Region, Province and Nation. The agriculture industry is the largest industry employer for the West Lincoln workforce. West Lincoln has four times as many workers in agriculture, forestry fishing and hunting, 70% more in construction and 70% more in manufacturing compared to the national average. The Township also enjoys a higher percentage of workers in transportation and warehousing than the Region, Province or Country.

Figure 2: Population Growth Rate (2006-2011)



Source: Statistics Canada 2011 Census.

Figure 3: Share of the Population under the Age of 20



Source: Statistics Canada 2011 Census.

<sup>1</sup> Statistics Canada 2011 Census.

<sup>2</sup> Statistics Canada, 2011 National Household Survey.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.



**Figure 4: Education Attainment Level of the Population**

	Aged 15+				Aged 25-64			
	West Lincoln	Niagara Region	Ontario	Canada	West Lincoln	Niagara Region	Ontario	Canada
<b>At least high school</b>	<b>80%</b>	80%	81%	80%	<b>86%</b>	89%	89%	87%
<b>Trades or college</b>	<b>37%</b>	32%	27%	29%	<b>42%</b>	38%	31%	33%
<b>University degree</b>	<b>10%</b>	15%	23%	21%	<b>13%</b>	18%	29%	26%

Source: Statistics Canada 2011 National Household Survey

**Figure 5: Employment by Occupation (% share)**

	West Lincoln	Niagara Region	Ontario	Canada
<b>0 Management occupations</b>	<b>14%</b>	10%	12%	11%
<b>1 Business; finance and administration occupations</b>	<b>15%</b>	14%	17%	17%
<b>2 Natural and applied sciences and related occupations</b>	<b>5%</b>	5%	7%	7%
<b>3 Health occupations</b>	<b>5%</b>	6%	6%	6%
<b>4 Occupations in education; law and social; community and government services</b>	<b>9%</b>	10%	12%	12%
<b>5 Occupations in art; culture; recreation and sport</b>	<b>1%</b>	3%	3%	3%
<b>6 Sales and service occupations</b>	<b>17%</b>	30%	23%	23%
<b>7 Trades; transport and equipment operators and related occupations</b>	<b>23%</b>	15%	13%	14%
<b>8 Natural resources; agriculture and related production occupations</b>	<b>4%</b>	2%	2%	2%
<b>9 Occupations in manufacturing and utilities</b>	<b>7%</b>	5%	5%	5%

Source: Statistics Canada 2011 National Household Survey.



**Figure 6: West Lincoln Location Quotient (Canadian labour market = 1.0)**

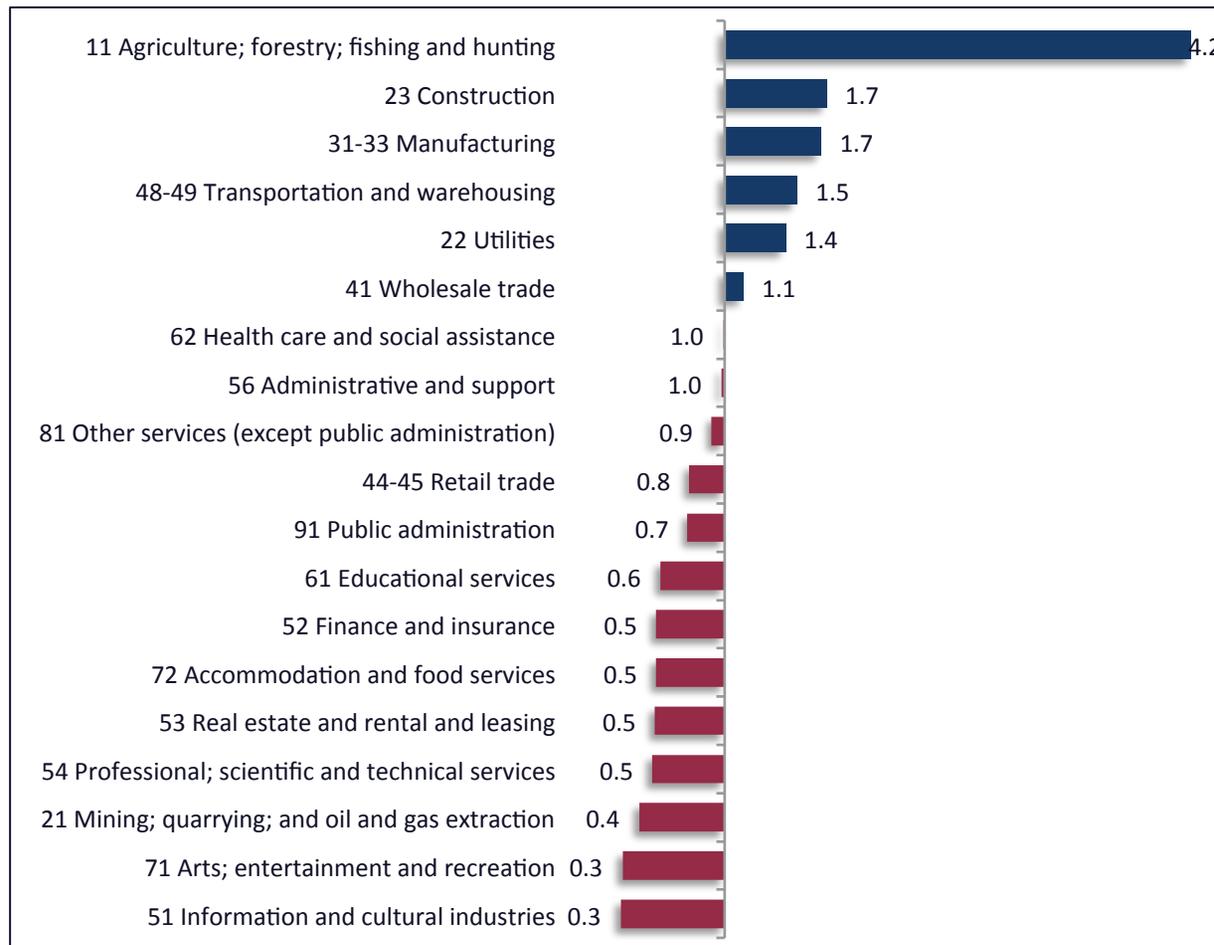


Figure 6 shows the location quotient of the West Lincoln labour market compared to Canada as a whole. In the figure, a score of above 1.0 means the community has a higher relative share of workers in that industry and below 1.0 means a lower share. West Lincoln has four times as many workers in *NAICS 11 Agriculture; forestry; fishing and hunting*; 70 % more in *NAICS 23 Construction* and also 70 % more in *NAICS 31-33 Manufacturing* compared to the national average. There are also a higher percentage of workers in *NAICS 48-49 Transportation and warehousing*

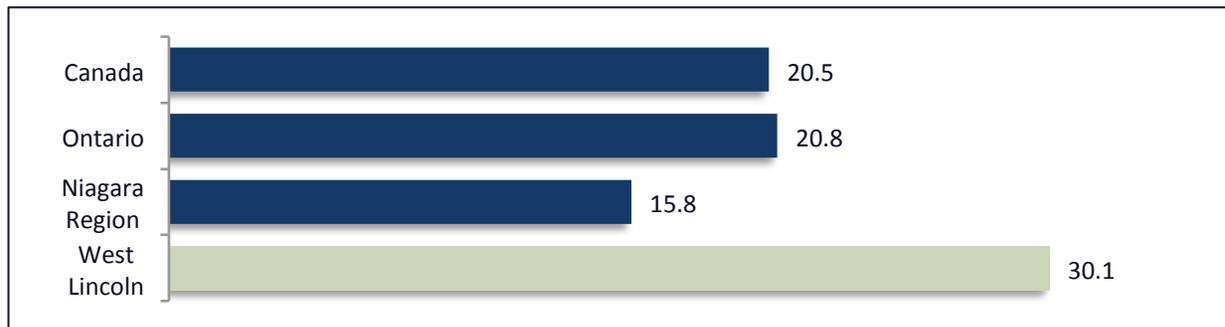
Source: Statistics Canada 2011 National Household Survey.



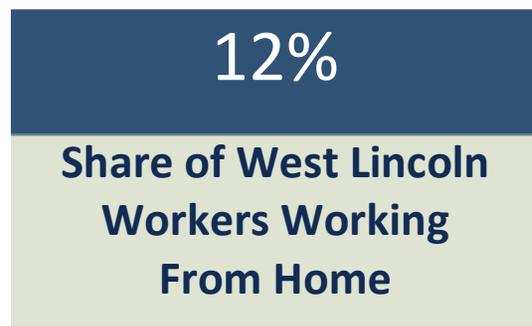
Twelve percent of the West Lincoln working population works from home; nearly double the provincial average. An additional 14% work at no fixed workplace address, greater than the other benchmark communities.

The West Lincoln workers has a considerably longer commute compared to others across Canada at 30 minutes for the median one-way commuting duration compared to 20.8 minutes for Ontario and 20.5 minutes for Canada.<sup>4</sup> Less than one quarter of the West Lincoln working population actually work in West Lincoln (1,170). Most of the working population travels to Hamilton each day (1,740 in total). In total well over 4,000 people leave West Lincoln each day to go to work.

**Figure 7: Median Commuting Duration (2011)**



Source: Statistics Canada 2011 National Household Survey.



Source: Statistics Canada 2011 Census.

The community also attracts individuals from other areas to work in West Lincoln businesses. Of the 2,710 workers in West Lincoln 1,170 come from the Township followed by 330 from Hamilton, 260 from Grimsby and 255 from Lincoln.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid



Figure 8: Worker Flow Into and Out of West Lincoln (2011)

Where West Lincoln residents work*		Where West Lincoln employers get workers**	
Hamilton, C	1,740	West Lincoln, TP	1,170
West Lincoln, TP	1,170	Hamilton, C	330
Niagara Region (except West Lincoln)	1,300	Niagara Region (except West Lincoln)	1030
Burlington, CY	415	Haldimand County, CY	180
Haldimand County, CY	175		
Toronto, C	115		
Oakville, T	105		
Mississauga, CY	80		
Milton, T	35		
Guelph, CY	30		
Cambridge, CY	30		

\*Those employees with a usual place of work - excluding working from home.

Source: Statistics Canada 2011 National Household Survey adapted by Mellor Murray Consulting

With a median income of \$31,002, West Lincoln is unlike many rural areas, with a higher median income compared to the Niagara Region, Ontario and Canada.



# Business Profile

1,401

**Business  
Establishments in  
West Lincoln**

Source: Statistics Canada, Canadian Business Patterns, June 2015

As of June 2015 there were 1,401 business establishments in West Lincoln registered and providing payroll information to the Canada Revenue Agency. Most business establishments in West Lincoln are small. Sixty-six percent do not have any formal employees. Ninety-four percent of West Lincoln Business establishments have fewer than five employees. There is only one establishment in West Lincoln with more than 100 employees.

94%

**West Lincoln  
Businesses with Fewer  
Than Five Employees**

Source: Statistics Canada, Canadian Business Patterns, June 2015

323

**Agricultural  
Establishments in  
West Lincoln**

Source: Statistics Canada, Canadian Business Patterns, June 2015

Agriculture dominates the West Lincoln economy. There are 323 agriculture establishments of which nearly 80% do not have formal employees. West Lincoln has nearly 18 times as many agricultural establishments (adjusted by population size) compared to the province. Within the agriculture sector, poultry related farming has a very high concentration compared to both provincial and national economies.

87

**Poultry Farming  
and Production Establishments  
in West Lincoln**

Source: Statistics Canada, Canadian Business Patterns, June 2015



193

**Construction Firms in West Lincoln**

Source: Statistics Canada, Canadian Business Patterns, June 2015

There are slightly more establishments in construction compared to the provincial and national economies. There are 193 firms of which 43% do not have employees. There are 40 building equipment contractors, almost double the national average, adjusted for population size.

There are 51 manufacturing establishments in West Lincoln of which 21 have formal employment. West Lincoln's share of employment in manufacturing is higher than provincial and national averages adjusted for population size.

51

**Manufacturing Operations in West Lincoln**

Source: Statistics Canada, Canadian Business Patterns, June 2015

There are 42 businesses in West Lincoln involved in wholesale trade and 70 involved in the retail side. Adjusted for population size, West Lincoln has fewer firms in retail than provincial and national averages.

There are relatively more people working in transportation and warehousing compared to Ontario and Canada as a whole.

Like most rural communities West Lincoln has far fewer firms involved in information, finance and real estate compared to urban centres. Similarly, West Lincoln has fewer professional services including 70% fewer legal services, 50% fewer architectural, engineering and related services firms and 30% fewer accounting/bookkeeping firms.<sup>5</sup>

80%

**Fewer Clothing Stores Compared to the National Economy**

Source: Statistics Canada, Canadian Business Patterns, June 2015

There are 60% fewer firms in West Lincoln in the accommodation and food services sector relative to both the Ontario and national concentration of firms in this sector.

While West Lincoln's labour market has a similar share of workers in health care and social assistance compared to Ontario and national levels, there are far fewer doctors' offices, dentists' offices and chiropractors' offices compared to national levels.<sup>6</sup>

60%

**Fewer Accommodation and Food Services Firms Compared to the National Economy**

Source: Statistics Canada, Canadian Business Patterns, June 2015

<sup>5</sup> Statistics Canada Canadian Business Patterns (June 2015)

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.



## Planning Review

West Lincoln has undertaken extensive planning work over the last decade due to its high population growth without comparable growth in jobs and business investment. West Lincoln has recently completed the following studies and reports:

- 2015 Co-ordinated Provincial Plans Review
- Region of Niagara Policy Plan
- Niagara Municipal Comprehensive Review/ Niagara 2041
- West Lincoln Official Plan
- Marketing Study: Industrial Employment Land: Impact of Converting Employment Lands to Residential and Residential/Mixed Use (April/ May 2014)
- Smithville Commercial Land Analysis February 2014
- Asset Management for the Township of West Lincoln 2013 Public Sector Digest
- Smithville Urban Boundary Analysis, November 2013
- Land Analysis Report, October 2012
- Peer Review: Township of West Lincoln Growth Management Strategy Sept. 2011
- Employment Land Strategy Report: Smithville Intensification Study Feb 2011
- West Lincoln Brownfield Community Improvement Plan, 2011
- Sustainable Downtown Smithville Community Improvement Plan, 2009

**Figure 9: West Lincoln Official Plan Forecasts**

YEAR	Population	Households	Employment
2011	15,100	4,750	3,780
2021	16,600	5,370	4,410
2031	16,990	5,610	4,930

Source: West Lincoln Official Plan



While the plans address a range of planning issues, they agree on several recommendations:

- Aligning the Township and Region economic development strategies and refining the Official Plan to support home-based businesses, service uses, and health and tourism related businesses
- Developing Smithville as a community where neighbourhoods, commercial areas and employment areas are well connected
- Providing a strong sense of place with key focal points or public spaces.

Figure 10: Niagara 2041 – Fostering an Environment for Economic Prosperity



Source: Niagara 2041



## Community Consultation

The strategic planning process included a broad community consultation effort consisting of focus group sessions, an online community survey and interviews with key stakeholders.

Participants described West Lincoln as a friendly community with a strong agricultural heritage and small town lifestyle. The community's geographic location, on the western edge of the Niagara Region and just outside GTHA is a major influence in their perception of the community and its future economic prospects.

The residents of West Lincoln were identified as an important part of the community's fabric. The increasing number of young families and retirees seeking affordable homes in a safe, small town setting were common themes.



Stakeholder Focus Group December 2, 2015

Participants shared their desire for a thriving, balanced economy where employment and business investment catch up with the Township's robust residential growth. They would welcome more diversity and numbers of jobs in the Township. They expressed a desire for more retail and services in the community. They called for strong leadership to develop business friendly policies and procedures, invest in infrastructure and community amenities. They recognized the importance of collaborating with regional economic development partners and champions. They called for the Township to hire an economic development officer to consult with business, market the community address red tape, and support small businesses.

The participants identified West Lincoln's location with its proximity to Hamilton and the GTA as a key asset. They also identified the strong agriculture sector, available land, the young workforce and strong work ethic. The residential growth and small town lifestyle were also identified as key assets.

West Lincoln also has a number of identified barriers to economic growth. The participants referenced the imbalance of residential to commercial and industrial development, the need for further amenities, a lack of infrastructure investment, a lack of transportation links and cumbersome government policies and procedures.

Their vision for West Lincoln is a thriving community with balanced development and a clear vision of its future. The economy is anchored by a strong agricultural sector. The Downtown is bustling. The brownfield redevelopment plan is successfully utilized and residents can find a variety of goods and services locally. The transportation linkages support residential and business investment. Businesses have choices in locations to start and supports needed to thrive and grow.



## SWOT Analysis

A SWOT (Strength, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) analysis is a planning method used to identify the internal and external factors that are favourable and unfavourable to achieve the community's objectives and evaluate its economic potential.

**Strengths:** Characteristics of the community that give it a potential advantage over others.

**Weaknesses:** Characteristics that place the community at a potential disadvantage relative to others.

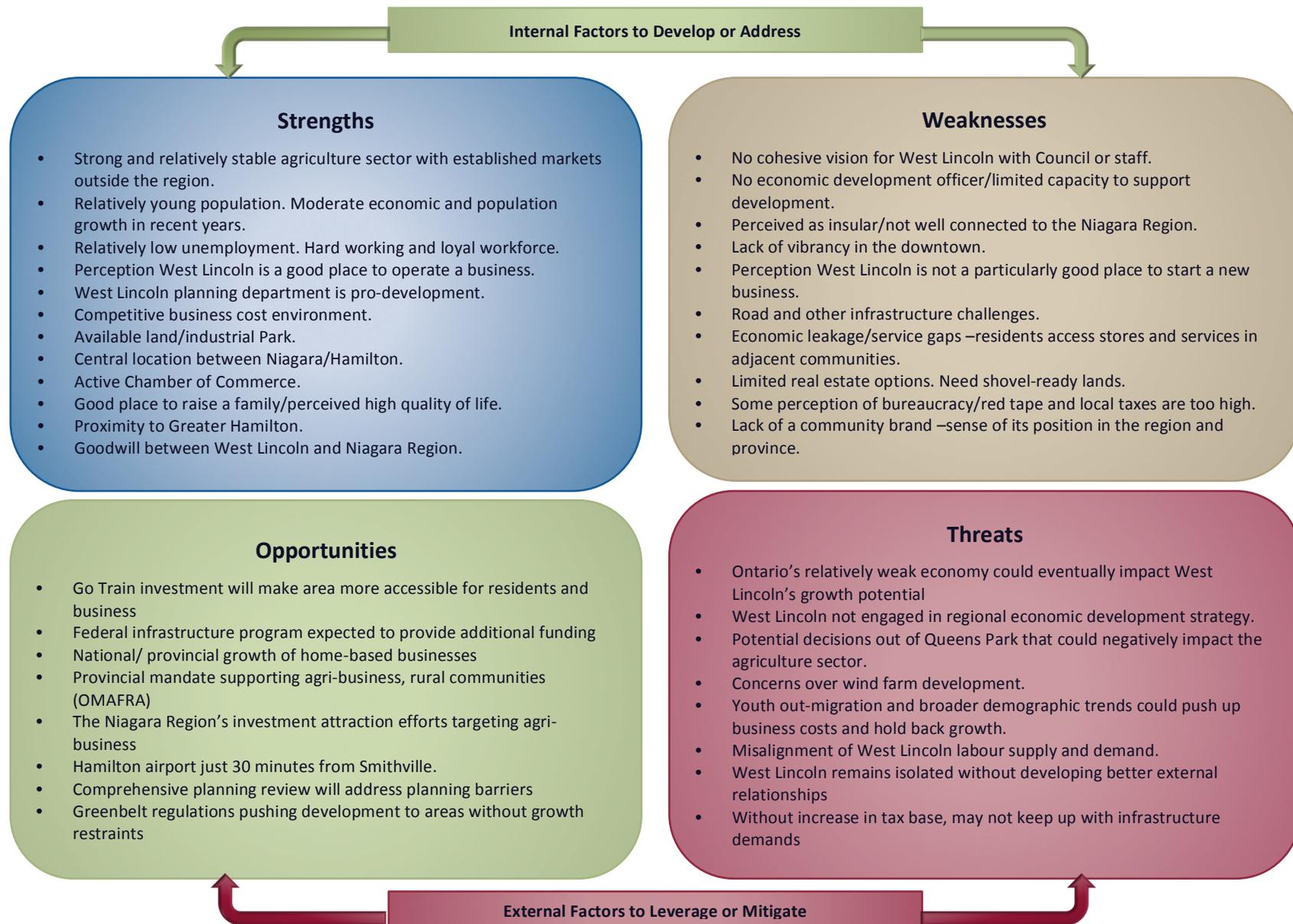
**Opportunities:** External factor that the community could exploit to its advantage

**Threats:** External factors that could cause trouble for West Lincoln's long-term economic development potential.

This SWOT analysis looks at West Lincoln's Economic Development Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats based on the previous work of the document review, planning review, environmental scan, stakeholder consultation, economic analysis and business profile. The SWOT analysis begins the process of narrowing the focus for West Lincoln's Economic Development Plan by identifying those areas of particular importance for action. West Lincoln's SWOT analysis is detailed in Figure 11.



Figure 11: West Lincoln Economic Development SWOT





# Strategic Priorities

Strategic priorities are those elements that, when addressed, have the potential to make a significant contribution to moving West Lincoln towards its goals of economic growth and prosperity. These strategic priorities provide the basis for the establishment of the vision, mission, goals, objectives and ultimately the actions that will be incorporated into the Economic Development Action Plan.

**Figure 12: West Lincoln Economic Development Strategic Priorities**





# A Vision for Economic Development

West Lincoln has invested in a series of planning and infrastructure studies and reports. It is now poised for action.

This is West Lincoln's first economic development plan. While it is tempting to establish an aggressive workplan, it is critical to ensure that this first plan is achievable and sets a course for long-term success. This initial plan recognizes the challenge of creating momentum and focuses on establishing the fundamentals for an effective economic development program with modest human and financial resources investments. It includes actions that will leverage existing programs and staff wherever possible.

In an environment of competing priorities and activities, the economic development vision and mission provide the framework for determining and coordinating the community's economic development efforts. Together, they are a distillation of the community's aspirations. The vision statement describes the desired future for West Lincoln. The mission is the broad call to action to achieve the vision.

## West Lincoln's Economic Development Vision

**West Lincoln enjoys a thriving, diversified economy with a balanced supply of workers and jobs. The Township proactively supports business and attracts investment in cooperation with the business community and its economic development partners. Residents and businesses are engaged and connected to their community.**

## West Lincoln's Economic Mission

**To develop a diversified economy through strategic action, collaboration and community engagement.**



# Goals and Objectives

The strategic priorities identified earlier are translated into the following complementary goals and strategic objectives.

#	Goal	Strategic Objective
1	<b>A Proactive Economic Development Program</b>	Allocate the human and financial resources to implement the economic development plan.
2	<b>A Balanced and Resilient Economic Base.</b>	Establish programs and activities to encourage business retention, expansion and attraction in a range of industry sectors and business sizes.
3	<b>Sufficient Infrastructure to Support Business Needs</b>	Develop and manage the infrastructure required to attract and retain a broad range of investment.
4	<b>An Engaged and Growing Community</b>	Community development initiatives that create a supportive environment for resident and business attraction and retention efforts.
5	<b>A Shared Vision of West Lincoln</b>	Increase awareness and positive perception of West Lincoln as a quality place to live and work.
6	<b>Collaboration with Economic Development Partners and Stakeholders.</b>	Leverage community resources and regional programs to enhance economic development efforts.



## Goal 1: A Proactive Economic Development Program

**Strategic Objective: Allocate the Human and Financial Resources to Implement the Economic Development Plan**

Economic development has become a core function of municipal governments across Canada. Because the competition for business investment, entrepreneurs and talent has never been more pronounced than it is today, even smaller communities such as West Lincoln need to have a concentrated focus on economic development. They need to understand their strengths and weaknesses and proactively develop opportunities that lead to more investment and the attraction of talent.

Economic development efforts are undertaken by local, regional, provincial and the national government. It is important to ensure local investments into economic development are aligned with regional and provincial efforts where possible.

There are four action items that support the goal of a proactive economic development program.

How much should West Lincoln invest in economic development? Most similarly-sized municipalities in Ontario do not publish a separate economic development budget (in many cases it is included with planning). For those that do public the information, per capita spending on economic development can range from as low as \$3.00 per capita to \$20 per capita or more. For benchmarking purposes, Figure 12 shows six municipalities in Ontario and their economic development budgets. On average these communities spend \$7.42 per person on local economic development efforts (in a formal economic development budget). If West Lincoln were to invest the average per capita amount in its economic development efforts it would equate to just over \$100,000 per year.



**Figure 13: Per Capita Economic Development Budgets:  
Example Ontario Municipalities**

<b>Municipality</b>	<b>Budget per capita</b>
Centre Wellington	\$8.19
Woolwich	\$3.24
Port Colborne	\$14.30
Loyalist	\$9.56
Clearview	\$3.66
North Glengarry*	\$5.56
<b>Average</b>	<b>\$7.42</b>
<b>West Lincoln Target</b>	<b>\$102,633</b>

\*includes staff costs only.  
Sources: 2015 approved municipal budgets.

The funding for the economic development budget can come from different sources leveraging programs such as the provincial Rural Economic Development (RED) funding. It could be possible for the Township to partner with an adjacent community to fund an economic development staff person or to fund specific initiatives. Investment in economic development needs to be positioned as just that – an investment that should be tied to boosting the Township’s tax base.

An economic development manager would be responsible for implementing the economic development strategy, assist businesses to navigate the development process and act as a catalyst in creating partnerships for economic development efforts. The stakeholders consulted through the strategic planning process strongly supported hiring staff to implement the economic development strategy.

It is also important to ensure that senior Township staff and Council are trained on local economic development subjects and plan a proactive role in the developing a strong economy for the community. There are a number of specific initiatives referenced in this strategic economic development plan that will require strong local leadership.



## **Actions**

1. Commit to building the Township's investment in economic development to a level comparable to other successful similarly-sized communities. Put an economic development manager in place.
2. Expand the economic development role of municipal government leaders. Ensure senior staff and the Council have economic development training and define its role in support of fostering a stronger economy.
3. Leverage other sources of economic development funding such as Rural Economic Development (RED) funding.
4. Explore opportunities to share economic development resources with an adjacent community such as Grimsby, Lincoln or Wainfleet.

## **Key Partners**

- Team Niagara
- Ontario Ministry of Agriculture Food and Rural Affairs,
- Town of Grimsby, Town of Lincoln or Township of Wainfleet
- Municipal Council



## Goal 2: A Balanced and Resilient Economic Base

**Strategic Objective: Establish Programs and Activities to Encourage Business Retention, Expansion and Attraction in a Range of Industry Sectors and Business Sizes.**

The West Lincoln economy is highly connected to the broader regional economy as well as the provincial, national and even international economies. The West Lincoln workforce is highly mobile with a majority of people who live in the Township actually working outside it. At the same time many people who live outside West Lincoln commute into it for work. Business also flows outward as people access services in adjacent, larger communities.

The Township needs to foster a balanced and resilient economic base. This will ensure there are jobs for local residents, economic opportunities for entrepreneurs and a solid tax base for the municipality to generate revenue without pushing tax rates too high.

There are eight action items that support the goal of fostering a balanced and resilient economic base. Many of these action items can be achieved with a modest investment of time and effort in conjunction with building stronger relationships with regional and provincial partners.

The first two actions are focused on supporting local entrepreneurs and businesses in West Lincoln. It is important to ensure that new entrepreneurs have access to the services they require to set up a new business in the community. The Township should be able to point entrepreneurs in the right direction to access business planning, financing and other support services. It should have good information on real estate options. It should also offer incubation facilities for targeted industries.

West Lincoln needs a formal business retention and expansion program that connects with key business leaders and ensures they have the support needed to foster strong and growing businesses. This foundational program will support businesses across all sectors. It will facilitate the Township in developing relationships with existing businesses. It will provide the Township with important information on the business environment and community attributes that impact the business community. It also allows the Township to determine and provide the specific assistance local businesses need.



An important focus will need to be on the workforce as many firms are starting to struggle to find employees and this issue will only be amplified in the coming years as older workers retire. It will be important to ensure the Regional Workforce Planning Board has a good understanding of the emerging workforce needs in West Lincoln.

The stakeholder consultations undertaken for the development of this strategy focused on the importance of downtown and the need to attract services and expand residential housing in the downtown.

There is also potential to develop more home-based business opportunities. In recent years more and more people are moving to West Lincoln even as one or more of the family members works in an adjacent community. Home-based opportunities could be an attractive opportunity for those that want to live in West Lincoln but don't like a relatively long commute to work.

Given the importance of the agriculture sector, it will be important for West Lincoln to work with industry partners to develop a 10 year agri-business development plan. An agri-business development program, created in cooperation with the agri-business community would identify and address the specific challenges and opportunities facing West Lincoln businesses including human resources, market development, environmental considerations and investment attraction.

As noted in the economic analysis, West Lincoln is generating very little from the significant tourism industry in the Niagara Region. The Township should engage the regional tourism association and look to develop new opportunities for tourism product development including special events, cycling routes and B&B development.

Finally, West Lincoln needs to be investment ready. The *Team Niagara Economic Development Action Plan - 2015-2018* was recently published and even though the Township is relatively small it still needs to work on ensuring it has compiled the information that firms need to properly evaluate the potential for investment (real estate, land, demographics, etc.) West Lincoln can begin by completing a community profile, industrial and commercial land inventory and business directory.



## Actions

1. Ensure West Lincoln is a good place for entrepreneurs to start a business. Compile the information required and create awareness so West Lincoln entrepreneurs can access the business planning, financing and other services required to support new business start-ups and entrepreneurs.
2. Establish a business retention and expansion program with proactive visits to West Lincoln businesses.
3. Assemble a downtown development team of staff and community volunteers to focus on expanding the economic role of the downtown including the attraction of services and the expansion of residential housing in the downtown.
4. Promote more home-based business opportunities through small business resources and a home based business network.
5. Support the Workforce Planning Board events and initiatives and ensure West Lincoln's needs are reflected in its efforts.
6. Develop a 10-year agri-business development plan in cooperation with the agri-business communities and regional programs.
7. Participate in the regional tourism association programs, identifying opportunities to develop the West Lincoln tourism product.
8. Ensure West Lincoln is 'investment ready' and has compiled the data and identified potential investment opportunities for Team Niagara to promote to national and international firms.

## Key Partners

- Grand Erie Business Centre, Community Futures Development Corporation
- Tourism Partnership of Niagara Regional Tourism Organization
- Ontario Ministry of Agriculture Food and Rural Affairs
- Niagara Workforce Planning Board
- Niagara West Federation of Agriculture
- Team Niagara



	<b>Goal 3: Sufficient Infrastructure to Support Business Needs</b>
	<b>Strategic Objective: Develop and Manage the Infrastructure Required to Attract and Retain a Broad Range of Investment.</b>

The actions identified in this strategy reflect the insight of key stakeholders, previous commitments and study by West Lincoln and the ongoing implementation of initiatives that have already been endorsed by Township Council.

West Lincoln needs to develop a supply of “shovel ready” employment land so that the Township can actively market land to potential new businesses and be better positioned to respond to expansion initiatives by existing local businesses. Longer term, this initiative would benefit from establishing a building in the Smithville Industrial Park for new, small industrial businesses, and re-purposing an existing vacant or underutilized building in Downtown Smithville to accommodate new, small office and service-oriented uses.

The Township needs to engage in the Region’s Niagara 2041 initiative and ensure the Region’s plans include the transportation, water and wastewater infrastructure required to accommodate future growth in West Lincoln.

This effort should be complemented by an examination of how Township businesses can leverage key infrastructure in Hamilton, especially the John C. Munro International Airport and the new grain terminal under construction at the Port of Hamilton. West Lincoln needs to develop relationships with management of these important resources, be informed and create awareness of these resources and their services.

The Township must also continue to implement the recommendations of the 2013 Asset Management Report to address its long-term infrastructure needs and address infrastructure funding deficits.

Lastly, it is imperative that the Township address the potential to redevelop one or more existing school sites for residential and/or institutional uses that will support businesses in Downtown Smithville, generate a long-term revenue stream for the Township, and provide more housing options for Township residents.



## **Actions**

Prioritize installation of municipal services to the Smithville Industrial Park.

1. Engage in Niagara 2041 to plan for required transportation, water, and wastewater services.
2. Plan for adaptive re-use of school(s) as part of West Lincoln Municipal Comprehensive Review.
3. Prepare a business plan to promote the private sector development of a mixed-use building for small businesses in the Smithville Industrial Park.
4. Establish a steering committee to develop and guide operations of an incubator centre in an existing building in Downtown Smithville.
5. Detail and leverage the benefits of key Hamilton infrastructure for West Lincoln businesses.
6. Identify priority projects in the 2013 Asset Management Report for future government funding program submissions.

## **Key Partners**

- Team Niagara
- Niagara Region
- District School Board of Niagara
- Niagara Catholic District School Board
- Private sector developers
- Downtown businesses
- John C Munro Hamilton International Airport
- Hamilton Grain Terminal



## Goal 4: A Growing and Engaged Community

**Strategic Objective: Community Development Initiatives that Create a Supportive Environment for Resident and Business Attraction and Retention Efforts.**

The Community Development Actions identified in this Strategy acknowledge the crucial role that community organizations and individuals have in contributing to the quality of life in West Lincoln and creating an environment that supports more traditional economic development actions. Collectively these organizations can foster a greater connection between residents and their community through an informal network of ambassadors all committed to building their community.

A key in this regard is bringing together key actors such as Township Council, the Chamber of Commerce and the West Niagara Agricultural Society to identify common economic development interests encouraging collaboration to support those interests. West Lincoln can facilitate these community driven initiatives with seed funding similar to the Community Development (or Partnership) programs in Chatham-Kent and Kawartha Lakes. These communities have successfully leveraged community investments in time and money to complete projects or hold events that benefit the community.

An equal, if not more important, aspect of Community Development that can enhance economic development opportunities is encouraging “Champions” in the community who are willing to take the lead on important community-wide initiatives. St. Jacobs, Port Stanley and Vankleek Hill are examples of small, rural communities where community champions have turned ideas into actions that fundamentally improved the quality of life and provided a basis for future economic diversification and growth.

In the case of West Lincoln, three Community Development Priority Actions stand out: 1) developing a community focal point/public space in downtown Smithville; 2) using the large number of home-based businesses as the opportunity to create a home-based business network; and 3) developing a youth development and retention strategy.

Previous studies and stakeholder consultation points to the need for a tangible and symbolic centre to the community as a meeting place for special events and celebrations in West Lincoln and establish the character of the downtown. The home based business network (also referenced in goal #2) will not only support and nurture these businesses, it will also provide an emotional bond to their geographic base and encourage further collaboration, local sales, informal mentoring and mutual support.

A youth development and retention strategy, led by a young professional champion will focus on helping youth identify and develop the skills necessary to find work with existing West Lincoln businesses or create new businesses in West Lincoln.



## **Actions**

1. Establish annual community development forums to engage community groups in support of economic development initiatives.
2. Create a Community Development Fund to support and encourage community development initiatives.
3. Identify potential Champions for three key Community Development Actions.
4. Develop a Community Focal Point/Public Space in Downtown Smithville.
5. Create a home-based business network.
6. Create a youth development and retention strategy.

## **Key Partners**

- Chamber of Commerce
- Service Clubs
- Home based businesses
- Team Niagara
- Grand Erie Business Centre, Community Futures Development Corporation
- Ontario Ministry of Agriculture Food and Rural Affairs
- Niagara Workforce Planning Board



## Goal 5: A Shared Vision of West Lincoln

**Strategic Objective: Increase the Awareness and Positive Perception of West Lincoln as a Quality Place to Live and work.**

Marketing is a core element of any economic development program. In order to deliver a successful economic development strategy, West Lincoln must provide consistent, positive messages on the Township's many benefits for residents and businesses. These actions focus on sharing the message that West Lincoln is an outstanding place to live and work.

The most cost effective and primary means of communication initially should be via the West Lincoln website. An economic development focused social media campaign that drives traffic to the website provides an opportunity to engage West Lincoln residents and businesses even when they are outside the community. The website needs to provide information for businesses and prospective investors on the development process, business resources, community data, business success stories and the Townships economic development efforts.

West Lincoln needs to address a perception of lack of available developable land and buildings by hosting a database of available properties on the website in cooperation with the local real estate community. There are recent examples of local businesses that would have expanded within the Township with the right land/building options.

West Lincoln will also need to develop meaningful partnerships with the Community, Business and other levels of Government to assist in telling the West Lincoln story.



## Actions

1. Develop and promote a land and building inventory.
2. Create an Economic Development Web site presence within the Township Site.
3. Identify key government and industry influencers that can further West Lincoln's economic development goals as brand and investment ambassadors.
4. Develop collateral pieces (fact sheets/web –site placement) for land/building inventory.

## Key Partners

- Team Niagara
- Chamber of Commerce
- Grand Erie Business Centre, Community Futures Development Corporation
- Tourism Partnership of Niagara Regional Tourism Organization
- Real Estate Agents
- Business Champions
- Business Influencers (Lawyers, Accountants)
- Ontario Ministry of Economic Development Employment and Infrastructure
- Ontario Ministry of Agriculture Food and Rural Affairs
- Niagara Workforce Planning Board
- Niagara West Federation of Agriculture



	<b>Goal 6: Collaboration with Economic Development Partners and Stakeholders</b>
	<b>Strategic Objective: Leverage Community Resources and Regional Programs to Enhance Economic Development Efforts.</b>

The Township needs to establish a first point of contact for business investment in West Lincoln. The Economic Development Officer (EDO) will act as the champion for economic development initiatives within the Township. This individual will work closely with the Planning Department to facilitate the development process.

The Economic Development Officer needs to create momentum within the Township and the Region around economic development issues. These efforts should include the creation of business issue ambassadors and sector champions. The EDO should represent the Township in establishing and supporting the committees and taskforces required to move the strategic plan forward.

The EDO will also identify local, regional, provincial and federal economic development agencies and business associations. By engaging with these various organizations that could further West Lincoln’s economic development efforts. By participating with these organizations, West Lincoln will be in a position to take advantage of their respective programs and events to support local economic development efforts.

A Business Advisory Council consisting of key industry representatives, economic development partners, Council representatives, rural and urban business leaders and community stakeholders will be invaluable in assisting with the implementation of the economic development strategy.



## Actions

1. Appoint an Economic Development Officer as the first point of contact for business.
2. Identify key contacts with regional, provincial and federal governments and organizations and schedule regular meetings to discuss the Township's Economic Development Plans.
3. Collaborate on regional, provincial and federal government and agency economic development committees and events.
4. Establish a Business Advisory Committee consisting of business leaders, economic development partners and sector champions reflecting the Township's rural and urban mix.
5. Establish a Memorandum of Understanding that identifies areas of collaboration and the distinct roles and responsibilities of West Lincoln and Niagara Region Economic Development Department.

## Key Partners

- MPP, MP
- Team Niagara
- Chamber of Commerce
- Grand Erie Business Centre, Community Futures Development Corporation
- Tourism Partnership of Niagara Regional Tourism Organization
- Business Champions
- Ontario Ministry of Economic Development Employment and Infrastructure
- Ontario Ministry of Agriculture Food and Rural Affairs
- FedDev Ontario
- Niagara Workforce Planning Board
- Niagara West Federation of Agriculture



# Action Plan

The Action Plan below lists the strategic objective and key actions that are aligned with each of the six goals. For each recommended action there are key partners identified, the proposed timeframe for implementation, the budget (where applicable) and the priority. The Action Plan forms the basis for annual work plans assigned to individual staff involved in economic development. They are also the basis for measuring performance. A good performance measurement framework links individual *actions* in the Action Plan to specific *outputs* that lead to desired *outcomes*. The four elements of the performance measurement framework are:

- **Inputs:** Human, financial, organizational and community resources the economic development plan needs to work.
- **Actions:** Specific activities undertaken using the inputs to further the economic development plan. For example, the development of a website, social media strategy and marketing collateral.
- **Outputs:** Measures the results of actions. For example, a solid community marketing capacity is in place.
- **Outcomes:** Broader, longer term impacts on the economy and local population arising from the successful implementation of the economic development plan. For example, more investment, expanded tax base.

Inputs	Actions	Outputs	Outcomes 
Have we invested the right human, financial, organizational and community resources to give our economic development plan a reasonable chance of success?	Have we established clear and measurable actions under each of our six goals along with appropriate timeframes and budget considerations?	Have we defined specific performance measures for each of our six goals?	What specific outcomes are we looking for? What changes in the economy, labour market, local infrastructure and quality of life will happen if our economic development plan is successful?
Examples: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hire economic development officer.</li> <li>• Allocate budget.</li> <li>• Develop economic development plan.</li> </ul>	Examples: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a website.</li> <li>• Put a BR&amp;E plan in place.</li> <li>• Develop an agri-business development plan.</li> <li>• Identify potential investment opportunities.</li> <li>• Focus on strategic infrastructure investments.</li> </ul>	Examples: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More available land and real estate options.</li> <li>• Business directory updated on an annual basis.</li> <li>• A solid community marketing capacity in place.</li> <li>• Key infrastructure investments made.</li> <li>• Stronger relationships with partners.</li> </ul>	Examples: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased business investment.</li> <li>• Expanded tax base.</li> <li>• More startup businesses in targeted sectors.</li> <li>• More people working from home.</li> <li>• A stronger labour market &amp; more jobs.</li> <li>• A higher quality of life for residents.</li> </ul>



Goal 1	A Proactive Economic Development Program			
Strategic Objective:	Allocate the Human and Financial Resources to Implement the Economic Development Plan			
Recommended Action	Partners	Time Frame	Budget \$ *	Priority
1. Build the Township's Investment in economic development to comparable levels with other similarly sized communities. Put an economic development manager in place.	West Lincoln Council	Immediate and over the next 2 years	Yr 1 \$50 to \$75,000 Yr 2 \$75 to \$105,000	Critical
2. Expand the economic development role of municipal government leaders. Ensure senior staff and Council have economic development training. Define its role in support of fostering a stronger economy.	West Lincoln SMT, EDO	Year 1 and ongoing	\$7,000	High
3. Leverage other sources of economic development funding such as Rural Economic Development funding	West Lincoln SMT, EDO	Year 1 and Ongoing	N/A	Medium
4. Explore opportunities to share economic development resources with an adjacent community such as Grimsby, Lincoln or Wainfleet	West Lincoln SMT	Immediate	N/A	High

Output/ Outcome	Performance Measure
Economic Development Officer Retained	Yes/No
Economic Development Budget	\$s
Funding Received	\$s
Economic Development Training for Council and staff	#s trained



Goal 2	A Balanced and Resilient Economic Base				
Strategic Objective:	Establish Programs and Activities to Encourage Business Retention, Expansion and Attraction in a Range of Industry Sectors and Business Sizes				
Recommended Action	Partners	Time Frame	Budget \$ *	Priority	
1. Ensure West Lincoln is a good place for entrepreneurs to start a business. Compile the information required and create awareness so West Lincoln entrepreneurs can access the business planning, financing and other services required to support new business start-ups and entrepreneurs.	West Lincoln EDO, Chamber, CFDC	Year 1 & ongoing	\$5,000	High	
2. Establish a business retention and expansion program with proactive visits to West Lincoln businesses.	West Lincoln EDO, Chamber	Develop in Year 1	N/A	High	
3. Assemble a downtown development team of staff and community volunteers to focus on expanding the economic role of the downtown including the attraction of services and the expansion of residential housing in the downtown.	Community Champion, West Lincoln Planning Dept., EDO	Develop in Year 1 Implement in Year 2	N/A	High	
4. Promote more home-based business opportunities through small business resources and a home-based business network.	Community Champion West Lincoln EDO & Chamber	Develop in Year 1 Implement in Year 2	\$5,000	High	
5. Support the Workforce Planning Board events and initiatives and ensure West Lincoln's needs are reflected in its efforts.	Niagara Workforce Planning Board, West Lincoln EDO	Ongoing	N/A	Medium	
6. Develop a 10-year agri-business development plan in cooperation with the agri-business communities and regional programs.	West Lincoln EDO, OMAFRA, Niagara West Federation of Agriculture, Team Niagara	Year 3	\$50,000	High	
7. Participate in the regional tourism association programs, identifying opportunities to develop the West Lincoln tourism product.	West Lincoln EDO, Tourism Partnership of Niagara Region	Ongoing	N/A	Medium	
8. Ensure West Lincoln is 'investment ready' and has compiled the data and identified potential investment opportunities for Team Niagara to promote to national and international firms.	West Lincoln EDO, Team Niagara,	Year 1 and ongoing	\$1,000	Critical	



Output/Outcome	Performance Measure
Community Profile, Business Directory Compiled	Yes/No
Inquiries	# received
Business Engagement	# of participating businesses
Partnerships	# of partnerships, size of partnerships, types of partnerships
Business Retention & Expansion	# of businesses surveyed, # of business issues addressed
Downtown development	Longer term: # of vacancies in downtown, # of residences in downtown

Goal 3	Sufficient Infrastructure to Support Business Needs			
Strategic Objective:	Develop and Manage the Infrastructure Required to Attract and Retain a Broad Range of Investment			
Recommended Action	Partners	Time Frame	Budget \$ *	Priority
1. Prioritize installation of municipal services to the Smithville Industrial Park.	West Lincoln Council & SMT	3-5	TBD	High
2. Engage in Niagara 2041 to plan for required transportation, water, and wastewater services.	West Lincoln	Immediate & Ongoing	Previously budgeted	High
3. Plan for potential adaptive re-use of school(s) as part of West Lincoln Municipal Comprehensive Review.	West Lincoln Planning Dept.	>1 year	Previously budgeted	Medium
4. Prepare a business plan to promote the private sector development of a mixed-use building for small businesses in the Smithville Industrial Park.	Community Champion, Business community West Lincoln EDO	3 to 5 years	\$20,000	Medium
5. Establish a steering committee to develop and guide operations of an incubator centre in an existing building in Downtown Smithville.	Community Champion, business community, West Lincoln EDO, CFDC	3 years	TBD	High
6. Detail and leverage the benefits of key Hamilton infrastructure for West Lincoln businesses.	West Lincoln EDO,	Ongoing	N/A	High
7. Identify priority projects in the 2013 Asset Management Report for future government funding program submissions	West Lincoln	>1 year	N/A	Medium



Output/ Outcome	Measure
Serviced land in business park	# of acres serviced
Developed land in business park	# of acres developed
Business park sales	# of acres sold
Building permits	Value of residential, commercial and industrial permits
Mixed use building in industrial park task force established	Yes/no Longer term: Business plan developed yes/no
Incubator centre task force established	Yes/no Longer term: Incubator plan developed yes/no
Hamilton infrastructure info compiled	Yes/no Longer term: Partnerships established
Asset management priority projects identified, Funding submissions prepared	Yes/ no Yes/ no

Goal 4	A Growing and Engaged Community			
Strategic Objective:	Lead Community Development Initiatives that Create a Supportive Environment for Resident and Business Attraction and Retention Efforts.			
Recommended Action	Lead	Time Frame	Budget \$ *	Priority
1. Establish annual community development forums to engage community groups in support of economic development initiatives.	West Lincoln EDO	Annually	Negligible	High
2. Create a Community Development Fund to support and encourage community development initiatives.	West Lincoln, Champions	>3 Year	\$25,000	Medium
3. Identify potential Champions for three key Community Development Actions.	West Lincoln EDO	>1 Year	N/A	High
4. Develop a Community Focal Point/Public Space in Downtown Smithville.	West Lincoln	>3 Year	TBD	High
5. Create a home-based business network.	West Lincoln EDO, Chamber	>1 Year	N/A	High
6. Create a youth development and retention strategy	West Lincoln EDO	>3 Year	\$10,000	High
7. Develop a social media program informing and engaging West Lincoln businesses and residents	West Lincoln	Immediately	\$1,000	High



Output/ Outcome	Measure
Community development forum	# of participants
Community development fund	# of applicants \$s leveraged # of community projects
Home based business network	# of members # of events and programs Long term: # of small businesses, employment in small businesses
Youth development and retention strategy developed	Yes/ no Long term: # of youth participating, # of youth programs
Social media	# of likes, followers, engagement

Goal 5	A Shared Vision of West Lincoln			
Strategic Objective	Increases the Awareness and Positive Perception of West Lincoln as a Quality Place to Live and Work			
Recommended Action	Lead	Time Frame	Budget \$ *	Priority
1. Develop and promote a land and building inventory.	West Lincoln EDO	Immediate and ongoing	N/A	Critical
2. Create an Economic Development Web site presence within the Township Site.	West Lincoln EDO	Immediate and ongoing	\$5,000	Critical
3. Develop collateral pieces (fact sheets/web –site placement) for land/building inventory	West Lincoln EDO	>1 Year and ongoing	\$5,000	High

Output/ Outcome	Measure
Land and building inventory assembled	Yes/no
Land and building inventory online	Yes/ no # of inquiries
Web site	# of unique visits
Social media	# of likes/ followers, engagement
Collateral pieces produced	Yes/ no Distribution
Annual economic development initiatives report	Yes/ no



Goal 6	Collaboration with Economic Development Partners and Stakeholders			
Strategic Objective	Leverage Community Resources and Regional Programs to Enhance Economic Development Efforts			
Recommended Action	Lead	Time Frame	Budget \$ *	Priority
1. Appoint an Economic Development Officer as the first point of contact for business	Council & EMT	Immediate	See Goal 1, Action 1	Critical
2. Identify key contacts with regional, provincials and federal governments and organizations and schedule regular meetings to support the Township's Economic Development Plan.	West Lincoln EDO	Immediate and ongoing	N/A	High
3. Collaborate on regional, provincial and federal governments and agency economic development committees and events	West Lincoln	Immediate and ongoing	N/A	High
4. Establish a Business Advisory Committee consisting of business leaders, economic development partners and sector champions reflecting the Township's rural and urban mix.	West Lincoln EDO	>1 Year and ongoing	\$2,500	High
5. Establish a Memorandum of Understanding that identifies areas of collaboration and the distinct roles and responsibilities of West Lincoln and Niagara Region Economic Development Department	West Lincoln Team Niagara	>1 year	N/A	Critical

Output/ Outcome	Measure
<b>Prospects</b>	# of inquiries Long term: # of leads, # of successful files
<b>Partnerships</b>	# partnerships # of collaborative events
<b>Business Advisory Committee</b>	Yes/no # and nature of projects
<b>MOU with Region</b>	Yes/no # of shared projects
<b>Influencers</b>	# of contacts identified # of meetings and events



# Implementation Priorities and Schedule

1 A Proactive Economic Development Program		Priority	Ongoing	Immediate	<1 year	< 3 years	3 to 5 years
<b>Allocate the Human and Financial Resources to Implement the Economic Development Plan</b>							
1.	Build the Township's Investment in economic development to comparable levels with other similarly sized communities. Put an economic development manager in place.	Critical					
2.	Expand the economic development role of municipal government leaders. Ensure senior staff and Council have economic development training. Define its role in support of fostering a stronger economy.	High					
3.	Leverage other sources of economic development funding such as Rural Economic Development funding	Medium					
4.	Explore opportunities to share economic development resources with an adjacent community such as Grimsby, Lincoln or Wainfleet	High					

2 A Balanced and Resilient Economic Base		Priority	Ongoing	Immediate	<1 year	< 3 years
<b>Establish Programs and Activities to Encourage Business Retention, Expansion and Attraction in a Range of Industry Sectors and Business Sizes</b>						
1.	Ensure West Lincoln is a good place for entrepreneurs to start a business. Compile the information required and create awareness so West Lincoln entrepreneurs can access the business planning, financing and other services required to support new business start-ups and entrepreneurs.	High				
2.	Establish a business retention and expansion program with proactive visits to West Lincoln businesses.	High				
3.	Assemble a downtown development team of staff and community volunteers to focus on expanding the economic role of the downtown including the attraction of services and the expansion of residential housing in the downtown.	High				
4.	Promote more home-based business opportunities through small business resources and a home-based business network.	High				
5.	Support the Workforce Planning Board events and initiatives and ensure West Lincoln's needs are reflected in its efforts.	Medium				
6.	Develop a 10-year agri-business development plan in cooperation with the agri-business communities and regional programs.	High				
7.	Participate in the regional tourism association programs, identifying opportunities to develop the West Lincoln tourism product.	Medium				
8.	Ensure West Lincoln is 'investment ready' and has compiled the data and identified potential investment opportunities for Team Niagara to promote to national and international firms.	Critical				



<b>3 Sufficient Infrastructure to Support Business Needs</b>		Priority	Ongoing	Immediate	<1 year	< 3 years	3 to 5 years
<b>Develop and Manage the Infrastructure Required to Attract and Retain a Broad Range of Investment</b>							
1. Prioritize installation of municipal services to the Smithville Industrial Park.	High						
2. Engage in Niagara 2041 to plan for required transportation, water, and wastewater services.	High						
3. Plan for potential adaptive re-use of school(s) as part of West Lincoln Municipal Comprehensive Review.	Medium						
4. Prepare a business plan to promote the private sector development of a mixed-use building for small businesses in the Smithville Industrial Park.	Medium						
5. Establish a steering committee to develop and guide operations of an incubator centre in an existing building in Downtown Smithville.	High						
6. Detail and leverage the benefits of key Hamilton infrastructure for West Lincoln businesses.	High						
7. Identify priority projects in the 2013 Asset Management Report for future government funding program submissions	Medium						

<b>4 A Growing and Engaged Community</b>		Priority	Ongoing	Immediate	<1 year	< 3 years
<b>Lead Community Development Initiatives that Create a Supportive Environment for Resident and Business Attraction and Retention Efforts.</b>						
1. Establish annual community development forums to engage community groups in support of economic development initiatives.	High					
2. Create a Community Development Fund to support and encourage community development initiatives.	Medium					
3. Identify potential Champions for three key Community Development Actions.	High					
4. Develop a Community Focal Point/Public Space in Downtown Smithville.	High					
5. Create a home-based business network.	High					
6. Create a youth development and retention strategy	High					
7. Develop an active social media program to inform and engage West Lincoln businesses and residents	High					

<b>5 A Shared Vision of West Lincoln</b>		Priority	Ongoing	Immediate	<1 year	< 3 years
<b>Increase the Awareness and Positive Perception of West Lincoln as a Quality Place to Live and work</b>						
1. Develop and promote a land and building inventory.	Critical					
2. Create an economic development web site presence within the Township site.	Critical					
3. Develop collateral pieces (fact sheets/web –site placement) for land/building inventory	High					



6 Strategic Objectives and Actions		Priority	Ongoing	Immediate	<1 year	< 3 years	3 to 5 years
<b>Leverage Community Resources and Regional Programs to Enhance Economic Development Efforts.</b>							
1.	Appoint an Economic Development Officer as the first point of contact for business	Critical					
2.	Identify key contacts with regional, provincials and federal governments and organizations and schedule regular meetings to support the Township's Economic Development Plan.	High					
3.	Collaborate on regional, provincial and federal governments and agency economic development committees and events	High					
4.	Establish a Business Advisory Committee consisting of business leaders, economic development partners and sector champions reflecting the Township's rural and urban mix.	High					
5.	Establish a Memorandum of Understanding that identifies areas of collaboration and the distinct roles and responsibilities of West Lincoln and Niagara Region Economic Development Department.	Critical					