



TRENDS, OPPORTUNITIES & REPORT 2004 Report Card on Actions

Acknowledgement

Niagara Training & Adjustment Board would like to thank our community partners and stakeholders who have shared their knowledge, expertise and resources to contribute to the development and implementation of initiatives that address local workforce development issues.

About NTAB

NTAB is one of 21 local training boards in the province of Ontario mandated by both the federal and provincial governments through their respective agencies, Human Resources & Skills Development Canada and the Ministry of Training Colleges and Universities, to conduct and disseminate local labour market research and engage communities and community partners in a strategic planning process that leads to local solutions to local issues.

Our Vision

NTAB will serve as the organization in Niagara promoting workforce development through stakeholder collaboration and partnership development.

Our Mission

Our mission is to champion labour force development for the Niagara Region by facilitating community action on identified trends, opportunities and priorities.

Our Mandate

Advocating for constituents by:

- *Promoting local labour force development*
- *Forging community partnerships*
- *Addressing employment, training, trends, opportunities and priorities*

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Report Focus:

In October 2004, Niagara Training & Adjustment Board released the Trends, Opportunities and Priorities Report. This report was the result of an empirical research initiative that focused on the issues, trends and opportunities relating to Niagara's labour force. Driven by NTAB, this community-based report provided a detailed analysis of the labour force issues impacting the Niagara Region and stated 16 actions/initiatives to address those issues. The TOP Report was presented as a living document that would be updated semi-annually in an effort to demonstrate progress.

This report captures the TOP activities and initiatives targeting labour force development which have been implemented over the past 12 months in the Niagara Region. Awareness of what is happening only serves to encourage and promote increased collaboration and partnership and to reduce duplication. Recognizing that human and financial resources are precious commodities only reaffirms the necessity and value in partnerships.

Stakeholders in Niagara have been successful in generating action on eleven (11) of the sixteen (16) proposed actions. The impact of these initiatives can be seen in the participation of target groups, employers, and agencies as well as any resulting products which were produced.

The following pages will provide you with a report card on actions identified in the TOP Report and the resulting initiatives which have been implemented since its release. The NTAB recognizes that these issues are ongoing and new and emerging issues may be evolved over the past year. An Update to the 2004 Trends, Opportunities and Priorities Report is scheduled for Fall 2005 and will focus on capturing any changes in the landscape as well as identifying a series of new actions to lead us into 2006.



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ISSUE 1: LABOUR FORCE UTILIZATION

There is a need to create a process to maximize the utilization of available skills within such labour force groups as youth, women, persons with disabilities, foreign trained professionals, resulting in the increase of an available skilled labour pool.

Priority: **High Priority** - Short-term but on-going

Proposed Action 1 of 4

Increase opportunities for exposure, transfer and/or development of skills & knowledge to current, new and future workforce participants through such opportunities as job shadowing, co-op placements, professional development, career awareness, coaching and in-house training.

Lead Partner: **Niagara Training & Adjustment Board**

Community Partners: School Boards; Niagara College; Brock University; Business Education Council of Niagara; Community Employment Support Agencies; Sector Councils; Employers

Timelines: Fall, 2004/Winter 2005

Expected Outcomes:

- Increased awareness of client needs by stakeholders and employers
- Greater collaboration and cooperation among key stakeholders
- Increased awareness of regional employment opportunities
- Skills development and knowledge transfer for clients and employees

Action Status:

1. Francophone Career Fair – Completed. Four French schools (300 students) from the Niagara and Hamilton catchment area collectively took part in a Career Fair focusing on Apprenticeship Awareness. 23 exhibits and 52 representatives from these organizations were available for questions and hands on demonstrations promoting skilled trades, employability skills and apprenticeship.

2. OYAP Niagara Catholic District School Board: 44 applications, signed 27 contracts
District School Board of Niagara: 310 applicants, signed 300 contracts

3. Co-op placements
NCDSB –430; DSBN – 2200

4. Business Education Council of Niagara

Apprenticesearch.com – this site offers Niagara specific apprenticeship opportunities, news articles, and information on skilled trades.

Partnership Program – Established in 1987 with BEC, Niagara Parks Commission and Niagara Falls Collegiate. The approach of the Partnership Program is to match resources of an individual school with those of a specific business and enhance the educational experience of students by giving them exposure to the world of work. To date; 63 partnerships have been formalized and another 32 are in the various stages of development.

Passport to Prosperity – a Ministry of Education Campaign to increase employer involvement in experimental learning programs for secondary and post secondary students in the Niagara Region.

Pursuits – an annual publication aimed at giving Niagara's secondary students a head start at finding fulfilling summer employment or volunteer positions.

5. Student Success Camps – Explore the Possibilities

Two separate one week camps delivered to Niagara youth to provide opportunities to explore workplace pathways. The focus of these camps will be in the Hospitality & Tourism sector and the Skilled Trades Sector.

6. Mission Possible ~ Growing Up is Hard to Do Young Men and Young Women's Conference

These 2 full day student conferences provided a current and accurate snapshot of today's labour market. There were a total of 57 local employers who shared their school and work experiences, 13 displays booths were available for the students to visit and gather information, 58 educators and 392 grade 10 students who participated in these events. With a specific emphasis on careers that are not gender based and may not be deemed "traditional" in the skilled trades including: construction, manufacturing, health care and tourism sectors, entrepreneurship and technology-related industries.

7. Mission Possible ~ Growing Up is Hard to Do Parents Conference

An evening symposium designed to raise awareness and improve practices and attitudes towards all student career choices. Information pertaining to opportunities for college, university, apprenticeships and direct school to work was the focus of the workshops. There were approximately 150 participants (parents and educators) who were able to identify: what options are available to children today, how parents can help their children with studying and test writing skills, helping youth make good career/life decisions and there were handouts on internet safety for children.



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Proposed Action 2 of 4

A research of “like” areas to Niagara to identify best practices and potential models to support the creation of a process to maximize utilization of targeted labour force groups including youth, women, foreign trained professionals, francophone, visible minorities, persons with disabilities, underemployed and unemployed.

Lead Partner: Niagara Training & Adjustment Board

Community Partners: NEDCorp; Niagara College; Brock University; Business Education Council of Niagara; Niagara Business Leadership Council; Municipalities; Regional Niagara;

Timelines: Fall, 2004 to Fall 2005

Expected Outcomes:

- Greater awareness of potential barriers, challenges and opportunities to support client base
- A report that provides best practices and a model for implementation in Niagara
- A tool box/knowledge bank of potential initiatives to maximize labour force development and opportunities

Action Status:

Funding received through the Local Partnership Fund (HRSDC & MTCU)

To be completed October 2005

Deliverables:

- A concise report that includes findings of the research, an outline of exemplary interventions (best practices and/or models), and recommendations for regional action.
- A networking model (processes and structures) designed to facilitate community learning networks
- A regional labour force development model (processes and structure) designed to build the region’s capacity to assess, adopt/adapt, and undertake recommended actions.



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Proposed Action 3 of 4

A micro-credit lending circle for individuals who have minimum financial barriers to achieve their employment goals

Partners: Not identified

Timeline: Not identified

Expected Outcomes:

- Path of least resistance for clients/citizens to access their goals

Action Status:

No action at this time



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Proposed Action 4 of 4

Design, research, and prepare a Human Resource Development initiative that involves the evaluation and implementation of strategies and models for Niagara to assist with newcomer employment strategies.

Lead Partner: Region of Niagara

Community Partners: School Boards; Niagara College; Brock University; Business Education Council of Niagara; Community Employment Support Agencies; Multicultural Centres; NTAB; Niagara Business Leadership Council

Timelines: Spring, 2004/Winter 2005

Expected Outcomes:

- Increased awareness of client needs by stakeholders and employers
- Identification of best practices and features that support client group
- Greater collaboration and cooperation among key stakeholders
- Increased awareness of regional employment opportunities
- Skills development and knowledge transfer for clients and employees

Action Status:

Formation of a Niagara Newcomer Employment Advisory Group

Forum held: Creating a Vision for Newcomers Success

On May 11, 2005 a facilitated session with employment agencies, newcomers, Niagara Employment Alliance group was held. The focus, "Creating a Vision for Newcomers Success in Niagara" was the first step in the development of an integrated system that supports newcomers.

A mind map of aspects which impact on Niagara's newcomer integration strategy with particular focus around employment transition was created:

- a mind map that identifies key pillars impacting integration
- an identified link by pillar to current funding structure
- a clearer vision for the Employment Transition committee.



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ISSUE 2/3: LABOUR FORCE/MARKET ADJUSTMENT

The largest employer in Niagara in 2001 was "Manufacturing" even though it had already experienced a decline to 17% of Niagara's labour force in 2001 from 22% in 1991. Manufacturing continues to extend its downward trend in job losses into 2004 with an additional 9200 jobs being lost over the past year. This raises concerns about the region's ability to deal with major changes caused by change in industry downsizing. Such closures also increase the need for transitional programs for the older worker population impacted by such changes.

Priority: High Priority - Short term

Proposed Action 1 of 2

Develop a community-based strategy for workforce and community development resulting in a template that can be then utilized as a model for other communities facing significant increases in displacement of the workforce.

Lead Partner(s): NEDCorp

Community Partners: HRSDC; NTAB; Niagara College; Employment Support Agencies; Multicultural Centres; Brock University; City of Welland; Region of Niagara

Timelines: Spring/Fall, 2005

Expected Outcomes:

- Strategic development plan for community and workforce development
- Template for utilization in other areas of the region
- Greater understanding of the community/regional labour force profile

Action Status:

A report titled: "Building a Community Strategy for the Way Forward" was produced by Niagara Economic Development Corporation in partnership with the City of Welland and the Government of Canada. This community economic development strategy was aimed at strengthening the city's socio-economic well being and quality of life. This strategy will serve as a guide for community initiatives aimed at building a more stable and diverse economic base in Welland. Creating such a model is valuable as it serves as a template for other communities to utilize.



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Proposed Action 2 of 2

Create a regional economic development plan that identifies existing and future economic clusters that can contribute to an increase in versatility of the region's economic base and create employment opportunities which offer attractive wages and benefits.

Lead Partner(s): Municipalities; Region of Niagara;

Community Partners: NTAB; Community stakeholders; Business Enterprise Centers, Brock University; Niagara College; Sector representatives; Union representatives

Timelines: 2004-05

Expected Outcomes:

- Increased regional collaboration
- Regional Economic Development Plan
- Retention of youth and skilled labour pool
- Identification of "sector clusters" for further or new economic growth

Action Status:

Niagara Economic Growth Strategy establishes a framework for sustainable and future growth for the Niagara Region. Building Niagara's Talent Pool was one of 6 key strategy areas identified.



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ISSUE 4: SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER

Employer recognition of their role in the transfer of experiential skills and knowledge between experienced workers and new entrants to the occupation will result in an increase in efficiency and effectiveness of the workplace and create a best practices model for recruitment.

Priority: **Medium priority** – Long Term

Proposed Action 1 of 4

Survey hiring practices of employers in Niagara region – JCP, one-to-one interviews; Analyze findings, create report and present to employers

Lead Partner: **Niagara Training & Adjustment Board**

Community Partners: Brock University; Employment Agencies; Chambers of Commerce; Labour Unions; BEC; Niagara College

Timelines: 2005-06

Expected Outcomes:

- Identify current hiring practices in business and industry in Niagara
- Create a list of Ambassadors/Champions and promote successes
- Create a “Best Practices” handbook for employers
- Identify possible need to develop employer supports

Action Status:

“Tourism – Best Practices in Retention”

This initiative will result in a research document that highlights “best practices” relating to retention and recruitment strategies for the Niagara region. It will also include National and Provincial Standards to be used as a comparison for organizations in the Hospitality & Tourism sector in Niagara. Two surveys (one from employers and the second from employees/potential employees from Brock University and Niagara College) will be analyzed and the information compiled into an easy to use reference for organizations in Niagara. An employer self-evaluation checklist will be made available to employers.



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Proposed Action 2 of 4

Develop programs and/or services to support adult literacy and Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition

Lead Partner: Niagara Training & Adjustment Board

Community Partners: Employers; School Boards; MTCU; Brock University; Niagara College; Unions; Business Consultants; Literacy Link Niagara; Ministry of Education;

Timelines: 2004-2008

Expected Outcomes:

- Increased awareness of adult literacy and PLAR among employers
- Identification of what services and supports currently exist
- Promotion of PLAR as a business practice among employers
- Model employers

Action Status:

Ontario PLAR Strategy Meeting was held Nov. 26, 2005 to discuss the Rae Review findings in relation to PLAR and to identify future actions for the committee.

No new actions identified at this time.



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Proposed Action 3 of 4

Employer Recognition campaign including the sharing of success stories to promote best practices for recruitment, knowledge transfer; and retention

Lead Partner: Niagara Training & Adjustment Board

Community Partners: Employers (targeted); Education/Training; related Ministries; Unions; Labour Force/Market Development Agencies/Groups

Timelines: 2004-05 and continuing

Expected Outcomes:

- Identification of employer “best practices”
- Promotion of recruitment and retention strategies

Action Status:

1. Employer Training Recognition Awards of Niagara

NTAB in partnership with Business Education Council of Niagara presented awards to employers for the support on employee training and professional development. These awards are presented at the BEC Partnership Breakfast – a venue that sees over 700 business and community stakeholders

2. Employer Appreciation Reception

In recognition of outstanding commitment and support of experiential learning programs for Niagara students an evening reception was held on May 25, 2005 for employers in the Niagara region by Business Education Council of Niagara, Niagara Catholic District School Board, District School Board of Niagara, Apprenticesearch.com, and NTAB. Programs included: Cooperative Education, Take Our Kids to Work Day, OYAP, Passport to Prosperity Conferences, Apprenticesearch.com, Teacher Internship, and Guest Spot Speakers Service.



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Proposed Action 4 of 4

Regional Apprenticeship Strategic Planning Session for Southwestern Ontario with a focus on information sharing and best practices of local strategies for employer involvement in apprenticeship.

Lead Partner: Niagara Training & Adjustment Board

Community Partners: Southwestern Ontario Local Training Boards; Training/Post-secondary institutions; related Ministries; Job Connect; Employment Support Agencies; School Boards;

Timelines: Fall 2004

Expected Outcomes:

- An established network for information sharing among key stakeholders and service providers for apprenticeship related services/supports
- Identification of community “best practices”
- Identification of strategies for employer involvement in apprenticeship

Action Status:

An Apprenticeship Strategy Session was held in October 2004 in London in partnership with the Job Connect Regional Conference. The day provided an opportunity for dialogue, discussion and planning on apprenticeship promotion. A summary report was produced and distributed to local stakeholders.



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ISSUE 5: HEALTH CARE SKILLS SHORTAGE

Over the past decade, Health Care and Social Services (including Nursing and Residential Care Facilities) has emerged as one of the top three services sectors (9% of all employment in Niagara). However, professional occupations in health experienced a 9.4% increased share of workers in the 45 years and older cohort, threatening a continued shortage of skilled professionals in all aspects of health care.

Priority: **Medium – Long Term**

Proposed Action 1 of 3

Support foreign trained nurse participation in refresher training, making it easier to obtain their license in this province.

Lead Partner: **Health System**

Community Partners: Education Institutions

Timelines: **2004 – and ongoing**

Expected Outcomes:

- Increase in nurses to work in the health system
- Utilization of skilled labour force in their field of study

Action Status:

Our health sector stakeholders have been very proactive in addressing their skills shortages and they continue to be innovative and creative in their outreach to unemployed and underemployed.

- Availability of assistance for this type of trained professional will be researched especially as it relates to:
- Anticipated vacancies and the need to recruit
- Best practices in other areas of Ontario e.g. Hamilton Health's CARE for Nurses
- Numbers of foreign trained health care professionals that settle in Niagara
- Available financial assistance that will be required to provide the required training.

Once the above has been determined there is a need to develop a plan to support the educational needs of these foreign trained professionals.



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Proposed Action 2 of 3

Support RPN's to upgrade to RN's and remain in the health care system.

Lead Partner: Health System

Community Partners: Education Institutions

Timelines: 2003-2004

Expected Outcomes:

- Create opportunity for advancement of participants from RPN to RN
- Increase in skilled labour pool to fill vacancies for RN's in Niagara

Action Status:

This action is no longer possible since the training is not available.



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Proposed Action 3 of 3

Create a network with local employers and training/post-secondary institutions offering health-related training programs to establish opportunities for rotations, training access, co-op placements, etc.

Lead Partner: NTAB

Community Partners: MTCU; MED; Niagara College, Brock University, Health Sector; Niagara District Health Council;

Timelines: 2004-2006

Expected Outcomes:

- Increased exposure of Niagara to a potential labour pool
- Increased exposure of Niagara health sector to skilled labour pool
- Increased access to training opportunities and professional development

Action Status:

Niagara Health Training Network Feasibility Study

In 2004 funding through HRSDC & MTCU Local Partnership Fund NTAB conducted a feasibility study on the creation of an interactive on-line database that would serve to link training providers with those seeking training. The report confirmed that there was significant interest among our local health service agencies for such a model. We are moving forward with an application for the development of this model for Niagara.

http://www.ntab.org/pdf/nhtn_report.pdf

http://www.ntab.org/pdf/nhtn_summary.pdf



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ISSUE 6 & 8: DEMAND FOR HIGHER SKILLS/EDUCATION

Industries in the goods-producing sector and the more dynamic segments of the services sector have experienced the greatest technological change and reaped the greatest increase in their productivity. Productivity improvements can explain, in part, the declining demand for labour within the goods-producing sector, ex. manufacturing. As a result of the increase in technological change across occupational clusters, there is an increasing demand for higher skills by employers.

Dynamic industries tend to locate in areas that have an available labour force that meets their educational and skill level requirements. Niagara falls below the provincial level resulting in a potential barrier to attracting new and emerging industries.

Priority: Low Priority

Proposed Action: No specific action identified at this time

Lead Partner: Regional Niagara

Community Partners: Niagara Training & Adjustment Board, the Business Education Council of Niagara and Leadership Expo

Timelines: April 11, 2005

Expected Outcomes:

Action Status:

Youth Leadership Symposium

45 youth from the Niagara region participated in workshops, keynote speakers and round table discussions with 23 elected officials. Workshops on leadership skills as well as round table discussion on competencies and abilities required for today's leaders were the focus of the day. This symposium also allowed this group of youths to meet and greet with representatives from local Municipal governments during lunch to discuss community needs and priorities, to share ideas and offer suggestions for their communities.



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ISSUE 7: TRAINING AND LABOUR MARKET NEEDS OF WOMEN

There is a need to address the specific training & labour market needs of women including promoting education and training in non-traditional employment which could work to address differences in income between males and females as well as address skills shortages in specific areas in the labour market

Priority: **Medium** – long-term

Proposed Action 1 of 1:

Carry out workshops/training programs specific to women to increase awareness of labour market trends, career pathways, and employment readiness.

Lead Partner: **Niagara Training & Adjustment Board**

Community Partners: Community Agencies

Timelines: Fall 2004 and ongoing

Expected Outcomes:

- Increased awareness of labour market information/opportunities by participants
- A direct connection for participants to local employment support agencies
- Participants will have access to information to assist in the job search/job readiness process

Action Status:

Exploring the Possibilities: Take a Break & Learn

NTAB in partnership with employment support agencies, delivered a series of workshops directed at women. Approximately 58 women took part in up to 4 workshops held across the region on such issues as Resume Updating and Interview Skills; Assertiveness and Self Esteem; Communicating Effectively and Decision Making and Goal Setting.



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ISSUE 9/10 : SERVICE SECTOR SUPPLY AND DEMAND

Jobs opportunities in various services sector clusters (eg. Accommodations and Food Services) are not being considered as viable employment due to perception of low-pay, seasonal, low-skill jobs opportunities. This is resulting in a shortage of applicants across these clusters.

Services sector training programs are under-utilized. This is resulting in a disparity between the levels of skills required by employers and the actual skill levels of the labour pool.

Priority: High – Long Term

Proposed Action 1 of 1:

Identification & implementation of career awareness strategies/events/resource tools to promote careers in Hospitality & Tourism sectors

Lead Partner: NTAB

Community Partners: Niagara Tourism Human Resources Council, Ontario Tourism Education Corporation, Canadian Tourism Human Resources Council, Niagara College, DSBN, NCDSB, related Employers; Business Education Council of Niagara

Timelines: Winter, 2005

Expected Outcomes:

- Increased awareness of available careers in tourism/hospitality sector
- Better understanding of the education requirements and program availability for career pathways related to tourism/hospitality
- Awareness of regional employment opportunities
- Communication channel between educators and employers established

Action Status:

1. ETC ~ Exciting Tourism Careers

This one day event saw over 200 students, educators and sector role models come together for a day of networking, information sharing and interaction. ETC showcased and raised awareness for different occupations that exist in the Hospitality & Tourism Sector in the Niagara region. Career spotlights were featured with 17 role models and guest speakers which included a chef, a hotel general manager and a hotel owner. The students were able to participate in various games and quizzed relating to this field.



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2. Catalogue of Hospitality & Tourism Careers

This catalogue was produced highlighting over 150 career choices by entry level, supervisory, management and executive levels. 500 catalogues were distributed throughout the region to every elementary and high school, college and university, libraries and community employment support agencies.



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TRANSPORTATION: Overriding Issue for Niagara

As identified in the previous environmental scan released in 2002, the challenge of transportation still remains a key priority among job seekers, Niagara residents and employment support agencies, to name a few. Through the on-line survey, this issue was raised by approximately 19 individuals as a key barrier to employment success. During community consultations, the issue was raised time and time again. Candidates are available for both jobs and employment training programs but the challenge remains on how they can get from point A to point B.

Some of the discussions called for greater collaboration among community employment support agencies – call for additional funding to ensure clients can access the training available. However, the challenge goes beyond accessing the training – once trained and hired, these new employees now need to be able to get to and from the workplace. The call for an increased emphasis among each municipality and a collaborative approach which incorporates all those service and support agencies who work directly with the client base was a key message among the participants.

The groups were not just focused on the discussion of the transportation problem but also placed considered emphasis on the importance of identifying possible solutions. The following are just a few of the ideas which were presented during a short brainstorming exercise on this critical issue.

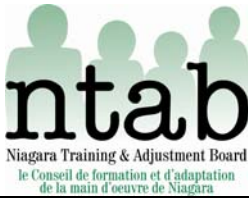
- Car pooling via the internet to match drivers and passengers
- Taxi service for matching round trips with different passengers
- Employers should be canvassed to pool resources and provide transportation around Niagara
- Formation of a community-based committee to be part of the solution development

Action Status:

1. Job Bus.....Initiatives in Action

The focus of this initiative is to promote and facilitate collaboration between tourism and hospitality employers, local employment support agencies and municipal transportation providers to create linkages resulting in local job opportunities for Niagara's unemployed. Through Port Cares, Niagara 21st Group, Niagara Tourism Human Resource Council and NTAB the Job Bus travels from Port Colborne to Niagara Falls with approximately 33 employees. Additional plans are being developed for similar initiatives from Welland and Niagara-on-the-Lake.

2. Niagara Transportation Committee



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This community based committee is led by NTAB and serves as a working committee to develop new strategies and communication channels for issues relating to transportation support for Niagara's labour force.