



COUNCIL INFORMATION PACKAGE

Friday, March 21, 2025

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Economic Development Brief

March 14, 2025

Statistics and Trends

Labour market conditions

Labour market conditions in Niagara (seasonally adjusted) improved across all indicators in February, outperforming both Ontario and Canada in positive change, except for population growth.

Month-over-month data from January to February 2025 reveal the following:

- Population: Niagara grew by 0.1% (600 people), while Ontario grew by 0.2%.
- Labour force: Niagara grew by 1.5% (3,700 people), while Ontario grew by 0.2%.
- Employment: Niagara grew by 1.5% (3,600 people), while Ontario grew by 0.4%.
- Unemployment rate: Niagara's rate decreased by 0.1%, reaching 6%, while Ontario's rate decreased by 0.1%, reaching 7.5%.
- Participation rate: Niagara's rate increased by 0.8%, reaching 60.5%, while Ontario's rate remained unchanged at 65%.

Niagara performed well across all indicators in February. The impacts of disruptions such as a slowing economy and the threat of tariffs have not yet been reflected in the labour market data.

Bank of Canada cuts benchmark interest rate by 25 basis points to 2.75%

The Bank of Canada reduced its overnight lending rate by 25 basis points to 2.75% due to the economic strain caused by the ongoing trade war with the US. Governor Tiff Macklem highlighted that tariff uncertainty has hurt business spending, hiring, and consumer confidence, with manufacturing businesses particularly affected. Despite concerns about inflation, the central bank is focused on managing the potential economic impact of tariffs, and future rate cuts may be considered if the trade war continues to dampen growth.

Economic Development Updates

City of Niagara Falls Business Development launches new website

The City of Niagara Falls Business Development has launched a new website. With an updated look, improved navigation, and enhanced features, our new site makes it easier than ever to explore their services, stay connected, and access all the information you need.

www.niagarafallsbusiness.ca

The economic development updates in this brief were compiled with input from economic development staff from Niagara's local area municipalities and public information sources.

Workforce Collective launches 2024-2025 Annual Labour Market Update

Niagara has seen shifts in population, workforce, and employment dynamics that shape the local labour market. Understanding these trends in Niagara is impactful for businesses of all sizes, where community engagement and employer collaboration remain central to fostering sustainable economic and workforce development in the region. To view the report [CLICK HERE](#).

Niagara breweries and cideries push for tax relief amid tariff concerns

The craft beverage industry in Ontario is facing increasing challenges due to high material costs and the threat of US tariffs, prompting local breweries and cideries to call for tax reform. They argue that Ontario's taxes on craft beverages are the highest in Canada, with breweries paying significantly more than those in other provinces like Alberta, which hinders their ability to compete. Industry leaders are advocating for changes to the tax structure, particularly for cideries, which face additional complications due to misclassification, and are hoping for reforms in the upcoming provincial budget to help alleviate these pressures.

Regional Council agrees to measures that protect against tariffs

Niagara's Regional Council has approved a motion to protect local businesses from potential US tariffs, with actions aimed at strengthening the region's economic resilience and diversifying export markets. The motion includes advocacy for federal and provincial support to reduce trade barriers, enhance local supply chains, and explore new markets like the UK and EU. As the US is set to impose a 25% tariff on Canadian goods, Niagara officials are working closely with municipalities to help businesses navigate these challenges and seek alternative trade opportunities.

Public consultations open for Port Colborne grain terminal

The City of Port Colborne is seeking community input on the future of its historic grain terminal, which has been vacant since the end of 2024. The terminal, located on Lake Erie, offers multi-modal transportation and is a key piece of infrastructure with potential for future uses. Residents can share their feedback through an online survey, paper copies available at local locations, or by attending in-person open houses before March 14 to discuss the terminal's future.

Welland Concerts on the Canal recognized as one of Ontario's best festivals

The City of Welland's Concerts on the Canal series has been recognized as one of Ontario's Top 100 Festivals and Events by Festivals and Events Ontario. This free summer concert series, held at the scenic Merritt Park Amphitheatre, fosters community engagement, supports local businesses, and enhances Welland's reputation as a vibrant city. The series attracts visitors, promotes arts and culture, and stimulates the local economy, with plans to expand and enrich the event in the future.

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Destiny Copper receives \$2.5 million federal investment

The Niagara region is recognized for its strengths in manufacturing, agri-business, and tourism, with the Government of Canada committed to supporting local businesses and driving sustainable growth. The Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario announced a \$2.5 million repayable investment to scale production of environmentally friendly copper powder made from mining and industrial waste. This investment aims to reduce greenhouse gas emissions while meeting the growing demand for copper in clean energy, electronics, and electric vehicles, contributing to southern Ontario's economic growth.

Government of Canada announces first measures to assist Canadian businesses under tariff threat

The Canadian federal government is launching several measures to support businesses, including a \$5 billion Trade Impact Program to help exporters navigate challenges, \$500 million in loans for impacted businesses, and \$1 billion in financing for the agriculture and food industry. The government is also updating the Investment Canada Act to protect Canadian companies from harmful foreign takeovers and expanding the EI Work Sharing Program to help employers retain workers during economic disruptions. Further measures will be introduced in the coming months, with continued collaboration between federal, provincial, and territorial governments to support businesses and workers. Team Niagara has been proactively working to provide information and resources to area businesses impacted by tariffs.

Asahi Kasei Battery Separator Canada to base administrative and business teams at NC's Welland Campus while Port Colborne facility is built

On March 10, Niagara College welcomed the Asahi Kasei Battery Separator Canada team to its new office space at the Welland Campus, as the company prepares to build a lithium-ion battery separator plant in Port Colborne. The partnership between Asahi Kasei and Niagara College will foster local workforce development through training initiatives, providing valuable career pathways for students and graduates. The office, located in the Walker Advanced Manufacturing Innovation Centre, will support Asahi Kasei's administrative and business teams, while also allowing the company to collaborate with the college's faculty and research divisions to address workforce needs for the new facility.

Port Colborne will construct 128 homes with \$4.3 million of federal funding

The Government of Canada and the City of Port Colborne have reached an agreement to accelerate the construction of 128 homes over the next three years, with the goal of building 1,175 homes over the next decade. This agreement under the second round of the Housing Accelerator Fund will provide over \$4.3 million to eliminate barriers to building housing. Port Colborne's Action Plan includes initiatives like updating zoning bylaws, reducing parking requirements, and exploring affordable housing partnerships to enhance housing supply and density.

The economic development updates in this brief were compiled with input from economic development staff from Niagara's local area municipalities and public information sources.

City of St. Catharines transfers properties to Municipal Development Corporation

The City of St. Catharines has transferred three properties to its new Municipal Development Corporation, which will focus on determining the best uses for underutilized city land, including potential housing developments. The properties, including the former Garden City Arena Complex and a surplus parking lot, mark the MDC's first projects, and the general manager, Tim Herbert, has been given authority to negotiate land deals. The move is part of the city's efforts to create more housing, with the MDC set to explore partnerships and land acquisitions for future developments.

Thorold South battery processing plant expanding

Call2Recycle Canada is supporting the expansion of battery recycling capabilities in Ontario by partnering with EVSX Corporation, which has installed a new multi-chemistry line at its Thorold facility to process additional battery types, including lithium-ion. This collaboration aims to increase battery recycling volumes, with a goal of bringing the facility to full capacity and improving recycling efficiency across the province. The expansion is part of Call2Recycle's ongoing efforts to build local recycling infrastructure and reduce waste, contributing to the circular economy and supporting the local economy through improved recycling operations.

City of St. Catharines commits \$2 million in grants for new Accessory Dwelling Units

The City of St. Catharines celebrated a successful first year for its Housing Accelerator Fund with over \$2 million in grants committed to 41 new accessory dwelling units and significant policy changes. The city secured a \$25.7 million investment in January 2024 from Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation to accelerate housing development, with a focus on diverse housing types and densities. Despite challenges like high interest rates and labor shortages, the city met key milestones and issued permits for 390 dwelling units, laying a strong foundation for continued housing growth in year two.

Summer Company Program offers mentorship and funding for young entrepreneurs

Young entrepreneurs in St. Catharines can take part in the Summer Company program, which offers mentorship, training, and financial support to help students aged 15 to 29 launch their own businesses. The program provides up to \$3,000 in funding, and participants also receive business training and guidance throughout the summer. Applications are open until April 10, 2025, and successful applicants must be ready to start their businesses by June 2025.

George Spezza, Ec.D., CEcD
Director, Economic Development

The economic development updates in this brief were compiled with input from economic development staff from Niagara's local area municipalities and public information sources.



PORT COLBORNE

Legislative Services

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Port Colborne, Ontario L3K 3C8 • www.portcolborne.ca

T 905.228.8031 F 905.834.5746

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March 14, 2025

Via email: Ann-Marie.Norio@niagararegion.ca

Ann-Marie Norio
Office of the Regional Clerk, Niagara Region
1815 Sir Isaac Brock Way,
P.O. Box 1042
Thorold, ON L2V 4T7

Dear Ms. Norio:

**Re: City of Port Colborne Support Regional Council's Motion Regarding Supporting
Niagara's Business Community and Advocating for Economic Resilience
Measures**

Please be advised that, at its meeting of March 11, 2025 the Council of The Corporation of the City of Port Colborne endorsed the resolution from the Niagara Region with respect to Supporting Niagara's Business Community and Advocating for Economic Resilience Measures.

Sincerely,

Charlotte Madden
City Clerk

EC: Local Area Municipalities
Association of Municipalities of Ontario
Federation of Canadian Municipalities
Local Members of Parliament
Local Members of Provincial Parliament
Niagara's Chambers of Commerce
Niagara's BIAs
Niagara Industrial Association

February 25, 2025

CL 3- 2025, February 20, 2025

DISTRIBUTION LIST

SENT ELECTRONICALLY

Motion Respecting Supporting Niagara's Business Community and Advocating for Economic Resilience Measures

Regional Council, at its meeting held on February 20, 2025, passed the following motion:

WHEREAS Niagara is a critical hub for trade between the United States and Canada with our economy benefitting greatly from an historically positive trade relationship with the United States;

WHEREAS Niagara's business community has repeatedly shown its strength and resiliency navigating extreme economic uncertainty;

WHEREAS the U.S. market accounts for 72 per cent of total exports from Niagara businesses, with export trade directly supporting over 30,000 jobs in Niagara;

WHEREAS in 2023, 532 Niagara businesses exported \$5.9 billion in goods to the United States; and

WHEREAS Niagara's identity as a border community places the region at particular economic risk during periods of trade uncertainty.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:

1. That Regional Council **AFFIRMS** its strong support for the local Niagara businesses that rely on positive trade relationships with the United States to contribute to our local economy;
2. That Regional Council **DIRECT** the Regional Chair to work alongside staff to undertake advocacy efforts calling on the Federal and Provincial governments to enhance the economic strength and resiliency of Niagara and other communities by:
 - a) Reducing barriers to interprovincial trade, enhancing internal trade and economic flow within Canada;
 - b) Encouraging the formation of local trade alliances to strengthen regional supply chains and ensure greater self-reliance;

- c) Supporting export market diversification by promoting the intensification of foreign market development and opportunities in places such as the United Kingdom and European Union or other favourable markets;
 - d) Increasing investment to support economic resiliency, including Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) promotion, workforce development support and expedited development of strategic growth sectors;
 - e) Reinforcing the necessity of a strong and integrated Canada-U.S. trade relationship, emphasizing mutual benefits;
 - f) Exploring the need for a border community economic alliance and trade strategy for the benefits of border communities across Canada;
 - g) Removing any impediments for municipalities to buy Canadian for capital projects; and
3. That this motion **BE CIRCULATED** to Niagara's Area Municipalities, the Association of Municipalities of Ontario, the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, local Members of Parliament, local Members of Provincial Parliament, Niagara's Chambers of Commerce and Business Improvement Areas and the Niagara Industrial Association.

Yours truly,



Ann-Marie Norio
Regional Clerk

:kl
CLK-C 2025-013

Distribution List:

Local Area Municipalities
Association of Municipalities of Ontario
Federation of Canadian Municipalities
Local Members of Parliament
Local Members of Provincial Parliament
Niagara's Chambers of Commerce
Niagara's BIAs
Niagara Industrial Association



March 19, 2025

SENT ELECTRONICALLY

To The Right Honourable Mark Carney and The Honourable Doug Ford

Re: 12.2 Tariff Response Motion – City of Thorold Council Resolution

Please be advised that the Council of the Corporation of the City of Thorold, at its meeting held on March 18, 2025, considered the aforementioned topic and the following resolution was passed:

The Corporation of the City of Thorold enacts as follows:

WHEREAS The City of Thorold recognizes the economic challenges posed by the proposed U.S. tariffs on local and domestic businesses, workers and economic stability on both sides of the border; and

WHEREAS at the Niagara borders, 9.1 million people crossed into the US from Canada, and 9.3 million people crossed from the US into Canada; and

WHEREAS a total of \$119.5 billion in goods transited the borders in Niagara: \$57.8 billion were exports to the US, and \$61.6 billion were imports to Canada; and

WHEREAS Niagara borders with the US accounted for 11.4% of total goods traded between Canada and the US; and

WHEREAS Premier Doug Ford has stated the proposed tariffs could cost Ontario 500,000 jobs; and

WHEREAS in 2023, 532 businesses in Niagara exported \$5.9 billion in goods to the US, and the US market accounts for 72% of total exports from Niagara; and

WHEREAS the implementation of a 25% tariff on Canadian goods threatens not only local businesses but also the broader supply chain that fuels economic activity across Ontario and the rest of Canada; and

WHEREAS it is imperative that all levels of government work together to address these challenges, ensuring that our procurement policies support domestic industries while maintaining competitive and sustainable growth; and

WHEREAS, given the importance of trade and infrastructure investments in shaping the future of our communities, Thorold stands ready to take decisive action in collaboration with provincial and federal stakeholders; and

WHEREAS municipalities have traditionally been restricted by Federal and Provincial trade agreements from giving preference to “Buy Canadian” initiatives; and

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the City of Thorold Council calls on provincial and federal governments to remove any impediments to municipalities preferentially procuring from Canadian companies for capital projects and supplies; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that City Council calls on the provincial and federal governments to continue to work together on a response that protects the Canadian economy through measures such as expanding export opportunities outside of the US market, removing inter-provincial trade barriers, continuing to push for exemptions and tariff reductions via diplomatic channels; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the City of Thorold Council formally acknowledges the economic challenges posed by the proposed U.S. tariffs and commits to adopting strategies that will protect our local and domestic economy; and that subject to provincial and federal changes to legislation, adjustments will be made to our procurement policies that prioritize Canadian businesses, strengthen trade advocacy efforts, and promote interprovincial collaboration to mitigate the impact of tariffs; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this motion be sent to.

- The Right Honourable Mark Carney, Prime Minister of Canada
- The Honourable Doug Ford, Premier of Ontario
- The Honourable Melanie Joly, Minister of Foreign Affairs
- The Honourable Vic Fedeli, Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade
- The Honourable Nate Erskine-Smith, Minister of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities
- The Honourable Paul Calandra, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing
- AMO (Association of Municipalities of Ontario)
- Niagara Region Municipalities
- Niagara Region MPPs
- Niagara Region MPs



Thank you,



Nicholas Debono
City Clerk, City of Thorold

- cc. The Honourable Melanie Joly, Minister of Foreign Affairs
The Honourable Vic Fedeli, Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade
The Honourable Nate Erskine-Smith, Minister of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities
The Honourable Paul Calandra, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing
AMO (Association of Municipalities of Ontario)
Niagara Region Municipalities
- Niagara Falls
 - Port Colborne
 - St Catharines
 - Welland
 - Grimsby
 - Lincoln
 - Niagara-on-the-Lake
 - Pelham
 - Wainfleet
 - West Lincoln
 - Fort Erie
- Niagara Region MPPs
- Sam Oosterhoff
 - Jennifer Stevens
 - Wayne Gates
 - Jeff Burch
- Niagara Region MPs
- Dean Allison
 - Chris Bittle
 - Tony Baldinelli
 - Vance Badawey



**TOWNSHIP OF JOLY**

P.O. Box 519 , Sundridge , Ontario , P0A 1Z0

Tel: 705-384-5428

March 11, 2025

RESOLUTION ☐**Resolution # 2025-0077****Agenda Item # 5.1 Blood Collection - No paid Plasma****Moved By :** Bill Black**Seconded By :** Tom Bryson**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT:**

Council for the Corporation of the Township of Joly hereby, supports Member Motion Item 23.1 by Toronto and the City of Hamilton Public Health Committee Report 24-005 (June 3, 2024).

WHEREAS Council for the Corporation of the Township of Joly expresses its opposition to the operation of private for-profit blood collection companies.

AND FURTHER Direct the Clerk to forward this resolution to Canadian Blood Services, federal, provincial and territorial Ministers of Health, Grifols Pharmaceuticals, and all Ontario Municipalities and request that they support only voluntary blood and plasma collection, where donors do not receive payment for their blood or plasma.

Carried

**Original Copy Signed
Mayor
Township of Joly**

MUNICIPALITY



OF ASSIGINACK

**BOX 238, MANITOWANING, ONT., P0P 1N0
(705) 859-3196 or 1-800-540-0179**

Tuesday, March 18, 2025, 7:00 pm

Agenda Item 6. J) Request for Support – US Tariffs, Buy Local

058-03-2025

R. Maguire – J. Hooper

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Township of Assiginack, in response to foreign countries recent actions on tariffs to Canada, Council supports the Provincial and Federal Governments call to action of a “Canadian Business First” policy;

AND THAT Council recognizes there may be circumstances where this may not be possible;

AND THAT in situations where Canadian goods are not available staff, our suppliers, and those held in contract with the Township will source from countries that do not have tariffs applied to Canada.

Carried

MUNICIPALITY



OF ASSIGINACK

**BOX 238, MANITOWANING, ONT., P0P 1N0
(705) 859-3196 or 1-800-540-0179**

Tuesday, March 18, 2025, 7:00 pm

- a) Agenda Item 6. G) Request for Support – Municipality of Durham to Ban the
Nazi Swastika

#055-03-2025

J. Hooper – R. Maguire

BE IT RESOLVED THAT we support the Region of Durham regarding the B’Nai Brith’s call to the Government of Canada to pass legislation banning, with certain exceptions the public display of Nazi symbols and iconology.

Carried

Certified True Copy

Stasia Carr

Clerk