



2009 Advocacy Plan

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St. Catharines – Thorold Chamber of Commerce

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Advocacy Plan 2009

Preamble

The St. Catharines – Thorold Chamber of Commerce in its commitment to further strengthen the investment and economic growth environment has undertaken an aggressive advocacy plan for 2009. This 2009 Advocacy Plan is in line with the St. Catharines – Thorold Chamber of Commerce Strategic Plan 2008 – 2011, the St. Catharines – Thorold Prosperity Council *Paths to Prosperity* Report, and the Niagara Economic Growth Strategy.

A. Primary

1. Secure support for a business friendly and focused Downtown Master-Plan Implementation Plan.

Strategy:

- Receive presentation to Government Affairs Committee on Downtown Master-Plan
- Develop Chamber brief
- Presentation to Downtown Revitalization Committee and informal lobbying of Mayor and Councillors. Leverage budget process for visibility and commitments to implementation plan.
- Presentation to St. Catharines City Council

2. Advocate for Business friendly solutions for Regional public finance.

Strategy:

- Establish strategic areas of relevance
- Review Regional Development Charges proposed adjustments
- Engage St. Catharines and Thorold Regional Councillors, City Staff and Regional Staff
- Participate in public consultations and public presentations to advance concerns
- Develop a position paper, leverage 2010 Regional budget for visibility and commitments
- Reinforce need for a reduction in layers of regulation and relief for businesses provisions

3. Develop innovative working models to incubate new emerging technologies.

Strategy:

- Review Ontario's Innovation Agenda
- Compile list of potential funding opportunities that relate to emerging clusters in Paths to Prosperity
- Engage relevant local emerging cluster partners
- Develop incubation model
- Develop lobby strategy to advance incubation, leverage 2010 Ontario budget for visibility and commitments

4. Increase the capacity for business start up and organic growth funding by examining access to capital.

Strategy:

- Receive presentation from the Niagara Growth Fund on the organization's achievements/key challenges and future prospects.
- Establish existing gaps in business start up and organic growth funding in the region
- Engage post secondary institutions to establish future needs for commercialization of research and youth retention
- Engage St. Catharines Economic Development and Tourism
- Develop Chamber brief
- Present to Niagara Growth Fund Board and Niagara Growth Fund public and private partners.

5. Significantly contribute to the establishment of Urban Intensification Strategy for St. Catharines that is business centred founded on strong growth policy principles and best practices.

Strategy:

- Receive presentation for St. Catharines Plan on achievements/key challenges in relation to Place to Grow legislation
- Develop a position on Western Hill Revitalization
- Utilize the relevant best practices outlined in the Mayor's Open for Business report as a means to frame the discussion.
- Develop Chamber sub-committee of industry experts on urban intensification and present Chamber position to sub-committee.
- Hold open forum discussion on Chamber position at Government Affairs Committee with City Planners.

6. Assist the Municipality of Thorold in developing its Strategic Plan objective in building an economic development strategy.

Strategy:

- Utilize Government Affairs Minutes (Nov. 27 2008) to build upon economic development opportunity areas as presented by the Mayor of Thorold.
- Identify which opportunities have region wide overlap and are targeted within the Strategic Plan
- Establish the servicing of Hwy 20 and 406 Commercial Corridor as a public works infrastructure priority.
- Presentations/meetings with industry officials, government officials, regional and city councillors and opinion leaders to increase wide-spread support from associated key stakeholders

B. Secondary

1. Participate in Provincial – Municipal Fiscal Framework Review to advocate for the review of the Capping Claw Back (Ontario Bill 140 - 2000)

Strategy:

- Request formal communication on the status of the Capping Claw Back in Fiscal Framework Review
- Based on response, develop or reinforce previous Chamber position
- Begin formal and informal lobbying of MPPs and relevant government Ministers

2. Explore and foster greater linkages with the Greater Toronto Area, specifically Burlington, Mississauga, Oakville

Strategy:

- GAC to develop key areas of interest in fostering greater linkages with GTA
- Based on response, develop priority list
- Develop Chamber actions based on priority list

3. Make the 406 Extension to Netherby Road a priority for transportation infrastructure.

Strategy:

- Continue to press the case for the extension of the 406 to Netherby Road in meetings with local government officials.
- Collaborate with key opinion leaders to develop common position (Other Chambers, Hotel and Retail Associations, etc)

4. Advocate for the reduction of the Business Education Tax as part of overall tax relief for businesses.

Strategy:

- Review previous Chamber position on BET reduction and examine impact of accelerated reduction
- Engage Niagara Regional Municipality Chair's Office
- Develop lobby strategy, leverage 2010 Ontario budget for visibility and commitments
- Reinforce need for increased relief for business