



2010 Advocacy Plan

Prepared by: Kithio Mwanzia
Policy Coordinator
St. Catharines – Thorold Chamber of Commerce
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Advocacy Plan 2010

Preamble

The St. Catharines – Thorold Chamber of Commerce in its commitment to further strengthen the investment and economic growth environment in our communities has undertaken an aggressive Advocacy Plan for 2010. The 2009 Advocacy Plan focused on advocating for relief for business, business friendly planning solutions and linking business with economic development.

Through the work of the Government Affairs Committee, Executive Committee and Board of Directors, the St. Catharines – Thorold Chamber of Commerce was able to achieve the following deliverables from the 2009 Advocacy Plan:

- Coordinated lobby effort in opposition to the Region and Thorold raising development charges. Successful in seeing phase in of development charges and lower increases in industrial and commercial development charges
- Significant involvement in Mayors Development Committee. Key deliverables from ‘*Open for Business*’ report achieved.
- Announcement of the establishment of the Thorold Economic Development Taskforce
- Refocusing of Capping and Claw Back discussion. Formally lobbied that the region consider different policy options on funding the Cap.

The achieved deliverables from the 2009 Advocacy Plan and the emerging concerns from the business community form the basis of the 2010 Advocacy Plan. In addition the 2010 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, the Niagara Labour Market Plan, the St. Catharines – Thorold Chamber of Commerce 2010 Niagara Report and the Niagara Economic Growth Strategy.

A. Primary

1. Addressing the rising cost of public expenditure versus the business community's ability pay.

Strategy:

- Advocate for business friendly solutions for municipal public finance by determine net cost of doing business in Niagara and the impacts of capital, operating, waste, water and waste water budgets.
- Review Regional Development Charges, capping-claw back legislation policy options and utilization of uploading
- Engage St. Catharines and Thorold Regional Councillors, City Staff and Regional Staff
- Engage Regional Chambers
- Advance concerns at relevant Regional committees
- Leverage participation in public consultations and presentations for visibility and commitments

2. Advance the recommendations of the forthcoming 2010 Niagara Report

Strategy:

- Reinforce need for a reduction in layers of regulation and relief for businesses provisions as the basis of advocacy initiatives
- Engage St. Catharines and Thorold Regional Councillors, the Office of the Regional Chair and Regional Staff
- Engage Regional Chambers and develop Memorandum of Areas of Agreement that outlines the report recommendations where there is consensus.
- Engage St. Catharines and Thorold Regional Council 2010 Election Candidates
- Leverage 2010 Municipal Election for visibility and commitments

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

Strategy:

- Advocate for the launch of the Niagara Innovation Portal
- Advocate for the creation of the Niagara Interactive Media Institute
- Engage relevant local emerging cluster partners
- Advance the development of incubation models
- Participate in lobby strategies to advance incubation in Niagara

4. Increase the capacity for organic business growth and entrepreneurship development by examining service delivery.

Strategy:

- Engage business service delivery offices in St. Catharines and Thorold.
- Establish existing gaps in delivery of services to start-ups, Small and Medium size enterprise
- Work with post-secondary institutions to incubate entrepreneurial proposals that emerge from academic and extra-curricular programs
- Develop framework for concierge service for business service delivery

5. 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
- Work with Thorold Economic Development taskforce to develop strategy document
- Leverage 2010 Municipal Election for commitments

6. Explore and foster greater bi-national linkages with the Western New York business community and governments

Strategy:

- Participate in discussions with bi-national economic development, tourism and policy stakeholders
- Engage business organizations in Western New York
- Develop common priorities

B. Secondary

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
- Leverage budget process for visibility and commitments to implementation plan.

2. Foster greater linkages with Niagara Chambers

Strategy:

- Remain committed to the Finance and Taxation Committee Regional Budget Working Group
- Expand Government Affairs Committee to include other Niagara Chambers on issues with region wide relevance

3. Raise the profile of multi-modal transportation for Niagara for transportation infrastructure investment and planning.

Strategy:

- Continue to press the case for the extension of the 406 to Netherby Road in meetings with local government officials.
- Include the servicing of Hwy 20 and 406 Commercial Corridor in the Region's Master Servicing Plan
- Advance Chamber position on inter-municipal transit
- Establish positions on seaway ports and airports
- Collaborate with key opinion leaders to develop common positions (Other Chambers, Hotel and Retail Associations, etc)

4. Advocate for the relevant recommended changes in tourism management from the province's *Discovering Ontario* report.

Strategy:

- Advocate for the creation of one Destination Marketing and Management Organization (DMMO) for Niagara.
- Advance the position that the new Niagara DMMO should be required to enter into a multi-year funding agreement with Ontario government that is based on key performance indicators.