



# Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake Official Plan Review

## Growth Analysis – Technical Background Report

In association with:



North-South Environmental Inc.  
*Specialists in Sustainable Landscape Planning*

October 16, 2015



Plaza Three  
101-2000 Argentia Rd.  
Mississauga, Ontario  
Canada L5N 1V9

Phone: (905) 272-3600

Fax: (905) 272-3602

e-mail: [info@watson-econ.ca](mailto:info@watson-econ.ca)

[www.watson-econ.ca](http://www.watson-econ.ca)

 Planning for growth

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# Executive Summary

Located in Niagara Region, within the Greater Golden Horseshoe (G.G.H.), Niagara-on-the-Lake (NOTL) is a diverse and vibrant municipality with a population, housing and employment base distributed across five settlement areas (Glendale, Queenston, Old Town, St. Davids and Virgil) and a large rural area.

Watson & Associates Economists Ltd., in association with Planscape Inc. and North-South Environmental Inc., was retained by NOTL to undertake an Official Plan (O.P.) Review for the Town. A key component of this review is a background growth analysis study which assesses long-term demographic and economic trends for the Town. More specifically, the report provides a demographic and economic profile of NOTL, identifies regional and local growth drivers, reviews anticipated future development patterns and assesses opportunities to accommodate long-term growth.

This study builds on, and is consistent with, Niagara 2031, Niagara Region's current Growth Management Study. Niagara Region is currently updating the Growth Management Strategy through a municipal comprehensive review and the results of this work may have an impact on the findings of the growth analysis contained herein.

The following provides an overview of key study findings:

## Population, Housing and Demographic Profile

- NOTL has experienced steady population and housing growth over the past two decades. The Town's population has grown from 12,945 in 1991 to 15,400 in 2011, an increase of 2,455. As of 2013, the Town's population is estimated at 16,500. Over the 1991-2011 period, NOTL's population growth rate has been higher than the Niagara Region average but lower than the provincial average. NOTL's existing population base is concentrated in the Old Town, Virgil and the rural area.
- Low-density housing (single, semi-detached) is the dominant form of housing in NOTL. NOTL's average number of persons per dwelling unit (P.P.U.) is moderately higher than the Region, but comparable to the provincial average. Over the 2001 to 2011 period, average P.P.U. levels in NOTL have, however, declined at a faster rate than the Region and the Province.
- Over the past decade, residential building permit activity (new housing units) in the Town has averaged 175 units per year. Housing development activity has evolved to include a greater share of medium-density and high-density units than in the past, reflecting changing market demands. Over the past five years,

housing growth has been concentrated in the Town's settlement areas, namely in St. Davids, the Old Town and Glendale.

- The Town's population is aging. NOTL's existing age structure is older than the provincial average and the proportion of the Town's 55+ population has increased at a faster rate than the Ontario and Regional averages, driven by strong net migration in this age group.

### Macro-Economic Trends and Regional Competitiveness

The Canadian economy is transitioning from goods to services production. The trend towards more knowledge-intensive and creative forms of economic activity is evident across many sectors within both the broader national and provincial economies and within Niagara Region's own economy. In planning for the long-term growth, these sectors are anticipated to be amongst the key growth areas of Niagara's economy, including NOTL.

In addition to growing knowledge-based sectors, manufacturing remains vitally important to the provincial economy with respect to job growth and economic output. Looking forward, there will continue to be a manufacturing focus in Ontario and Niagara Region and while economic output will gradually increase, modest employment growth is anticipated in the manufacturing sector. Instead, growth in the industrial sector is expected to be heavily oriented in the transportation and warehousing sector, a sector which has seen strong growth over the past decade.

NOTL is well positioned geographically, benefiting from access to the Q.E.W. Niagara corridor, proximity to the U.S. border, access to a growing skilled and unskilled labour force pool and proximity to a number of post-secondary institutions. These location attributes, as well as the Town's relative cost competitiveness are important determinants in the site selection process for new and existing businesses looking to locate/relocate within NOTL. Notwithstanding these positive geographic attributes, NOTL is located within proximity to a number of large suburban G.G.H. municipalities with which it competes directly for business attraction and retention.

In addition to the above "hard" factors, "soft" or "quality" factors are becoming increasingly important in the corporate site selection process. Quality of life is also an important factor influencing residential location decisions of individuals and their families. NOTL has a world class reputation as a vibrant, growing, low-crime location in which to live in Ontario, with access to a wide range of recreational opportunities, wineries and other tourism destinations within its urban areas and throughout the surrounding countryside.

## Economic Profile

- NOTL's total employment has increased from 6,900 in 1996 to an estimated 10,100 in 2014.<sup>1</sup> While the Town experienced strong employment growth between 1996 and 2006, over the 2006 to 2011 period, the Town's employment base declined modestly. This trend was also experienced across Niagara Region as a whole, as a result of a decline in the manufacturing sector driven by the 2008/2009 global economic downturn.
- Over the 2011-2014 period, employment growth in the Town has rebounded, driven by the employment growth in knowledge-based and creative class sectors, as well as retail trade and tourism.
- While the Town has a relatively high employment activity rate, the Town has a relatively low live-work ratio. A significant share of Town residents work outside the municipality, while a significant share of jobs within the Town is held by non-residents;
- NOTL is home to a broad range of employment sectors constructed in the Old Town, Glendale and the rural area. The Town's employment base is concentrated in retail, small- to medium-scale manufacturing, wholesale trade, transportation, government and education, accommodation and food services and agriculture and tourism. The employment base is also highly concentrated in the creative class economy and highly oriented towards small businesses and home-based occupations.
- The Town has experienced moderate levels of non-residential development activity over the past five years, concentrated in the commercial and agriculture sectors.

## Growth Drivers

A number of regional and local drivers have been identified which are anticipated to influence future population, housing and employment growth within NOTL through the year 2041.

- **Location with the G.G.H.** - NOTL is located within the southwest region of the G.G.H. – one of the fastest growing Cities/Regions in North America. The G.G.H. is forecast to experience strong population and employment growth through 2041 which is expected to influence and drive population, housing and employment growth within NOTL over the period.

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<sup>1</sup> Excludes no Fixed Place of Work Employment

- **Quality of Life** - The Town's urban and rural character offers a high quality of life which is expected to drive net migration from a broad range of demographic groups including the 55-74 age group (i.e. baby boomers and younger seniors) and working age population (e.g. families with children). This is expected to continue to be a key driver of housing growth.
- **Diminishing Supply of Employment Lands** - Within the west G.T.H.A., the availability of vacant designated employment lands is tightening up. This continues to place outward development pressure primarily towards the west G.G.H. along Highways 401 and 403, as well as the Q.E.W. corridors. Accordingly, designated employment areas within the "Outer Ring" of the G.G.H., including NOTL, which offer vacant, serviced, marketable land at prices which are comparatively cost competitive, are expected to experience increasing demand for development.
- **Niagara District Airport** - The Niagara District Airport, which serves the Niagara Region, is situated in NOTL. Proximity and access to a major airport is advantageous for an increasing number of employment sectors. The Niagara District Airport represents a significant asset to the Town which enhances the development potential of the lands immediately next to the airport and the surrounding area.
- **Tourism/Recreation Industry Growth** - NOTL is a significant tourist destination and relative to the provincial average has a high concentration of employment in tourism-related sectors including retail trade, accommodation and food, art, entertainment and recreation. Due to its local attractions and amenities, and proximity to major urban markets such as the G.T.H.A., the Town is well positioned to continue to expand and develop its tourism and recreational opportunities.
- **Growth Opportunities within Agriculture Sector** - NOTL's agricultural cluster has experienced growth over the past five years. Given the magnitude and diversity of agricultural activity within the Town, much of the production attributed to this sector is export-based, with a large component of production reaching markets well beyond the Region. Within this sector, future opportunities exist related to agri-business and value-added processing.

### Forecast Growth

In accordance with the Region's current Growth Management Strategy, Niagara 2031, the Town is expected to experience steady residential growth through 2031 with the Town's population and housing base expected to increase to 22,400 and 9,070,

respectively, by 2031.<sup>1</sup> With respect to employment growth, the Town's employment base (excluding No Fixed Place of Work) is expected to increase to 13,960 by 2031.<sup>2</sup>

Niagara Region is currently updating its growth projections to the year 2041 through its current municipal comprehensive review update. The existing 2031 growth forecast for NOTL is also subject to change through the Niagara Region municipal comprehensive review update. Nonetheless, it is expected that the Town will experience steady population and housing growth through 2031, comparable to what is identified in Niagara 2031. With respect to employment, the Town is expected to experience more moderate growth than what was identified in Niagara 2031.

According to the Growth Plan, post 2031, Niagara Region is expected to experience relatively strong population and employment growth through 2041. It is anticipated that the Town will have relatively strong growth potential over the 2031 to 2041 period as well, based on the growth drivers identified above.

### Opportunities to Accommodate Growth

As part of this assignment, residential and non-residential supply opportunities within NOTL were identified.<sup>3</sup>

Forecast housing growth within the Town can be accommodated through intensification and greenfield development opportunities. The Town has the potential to accommodate over 4,300 housing units with the largest share of residential supply opportunities located in St. Davids. Glendale, the Old Town and Virgil also offer some opportunities to accommodate residential development. In contrast, Queenston has relatively limited supply opportunities. While the rural area has a very limited supply of residential development potential identified, there may be some opportunities for development on existing rural lots of record.

Half of the residential supply identified consists of low-density units (singles and semi-detached units). The supply potential identified suggests a continued shift in the housing mix from low-density to an increasing share of medium- and high-density units. The majority of the high-density unit supply is located in St. Davids and the Old Town.

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<sup>1</sup> Preferred Growth Option D. Population excludes Census undercount of approximately 4%.

<sup>2</sup> The Town's employment base with No Fixed Place of Work is expected to increase to 15,100 by 2031.

<sup>3</sup> As part of the current municipal comprehensive review, Niagara Region is conducting a comprehensive assessment of residential and non-residential supply opportunities in NOTL and the data presented herein is subject to change.

Forecast population-related employment growth is to be largely accommodated on designated commercial lands. The Town's supply of commercial designated land is limited. Opportunities to accommodate commercial employment are largely located in the Old Town and Virgil through intensification and greenfield opportunities in Glendale, with limited opportunities to accommodate commercial employment growth in other settlement areas within the Town.

With respect to employment lands, the Town has 62 net ha (153 net acres) of vacant employment lands, of which the majority is located in Glendale, 8% in Virgil and 2% in St. Davids.<sup>1</sup> Further, the Niagara District Airport contains 23 ha (56 acres) of airside and non-airside developable land.

#### Anticipated Distribution of Growth to 2041

The vast majority of forecast housing growth through 2041 within NOTL is anticipated to be accommodated within its settlement areas, with limited opportunities for rural housing development. Based on recent residential development trends, market potential and the supply opportunities identified, St. Davids is expected to accommodate the largest share of urban residential growth to 2041, accounting for approximately 40% of future housing development. The Old Town, Glendale and Virgil are anticipated to accommodate approximately 15-20% of Town-wide housing growth each, while Queenston is expected to accommodate limited residential development.

With respect to non-residential growth, the majority of development and corresponding employment growth is anticipated to be concentrated in Glendale, Virgil and the Old Town. Glendale is expected to accommodate the vast majority of the Town's industrial employment growth and a large share of the commercial employment growth. Employment growth in Virgil and the Old Town is expected to be predominantly in the commercial sector and accommodated largely through intensification. The airport is also expected to accommodate a moderate share of industrial and commercial employment growth, but much of this is anticipated over the longer term. In contrast, employment growth in Queenston is anticipated to be relatively limited. The rural area will continue to accommodate some employment growth, predominantly in the agricultural sector.

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<sup>1</sup> Source: 2013 Niagara Employment Lands Strategy: Phase 2, Non-Gateway Communities, Dillon Consulting Limited and Watson & Associates Economists Ltd.



### Assessment of Employment Areas

NOTL has four primary employment areas: Glendale, the Virgil Business Park, the St. Davids industrial area and lands surrounding the Niagara District Airport (Airport Lands). A major factor in the future competitiveness of the Town's economic base is dependent, in part, on the attributes of its employment lands and their ability to accommodate future employment growth.

Based on the assessment of the Town's employment areas, Glendale is well positioned to capture a share of future employment growth on employment lands within the broader context of the west G.G.H. market area and is expected to accommodate the majority of employment lands development within the Town. The Virgil Business Park will continue to provide more local development opportunities for industrial and commercial businesses while the Airport Lands offer longer term development opportunities.

# 1. Introduction

Located in Niagara Region, within the Greater Golden Horseshoe (G.G.H.), Niagara-on-the-Lake (NOTL) is a diverse and vibrant municipality with a population, housing and employment base distributed across five settlement areas (Glendale, Queenston, Old Town, St. Davids and Virgil) and a large rural area.

Watson & Associates Economists Ltd., in association with Planscape Inc. and North-South Environmental Inc., was retained by the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake to undertake an Official Plan (O.P.) Review for the Town. A key component of this review was to prepare a background technical report which provides a demographic and economic profile of the Town, identifies regional and local growth drivers, discusses anticipated growth trends through the year 2041 and assesses opportunities to accommodate long-term growth.

This study builds on, and is consistent with, Niagara 2031, Niagara Region's current Growth Management Study. Niagara Region is currently updating the Growth Management Strategy exercise and the results of this work may have an impact on the findings of the growth analysis contained herein.

## 2. Population, Housing and Demographic Profile

The following examines recent housing, population and demographic and economic trends for the Town of NOTL within a broader regional and provincial context.<sup>1</sup> This analysis is used as a basis to explore how current and future demographic and economic trends will influence future housing, population and employment growth throughout NOTL.

### 2.1 Population

The following section explores population growth trends for NOTL over the past 20+ years. An analysis of population by major age group is also provided. The historical time period investigated varies, subject to data availability.

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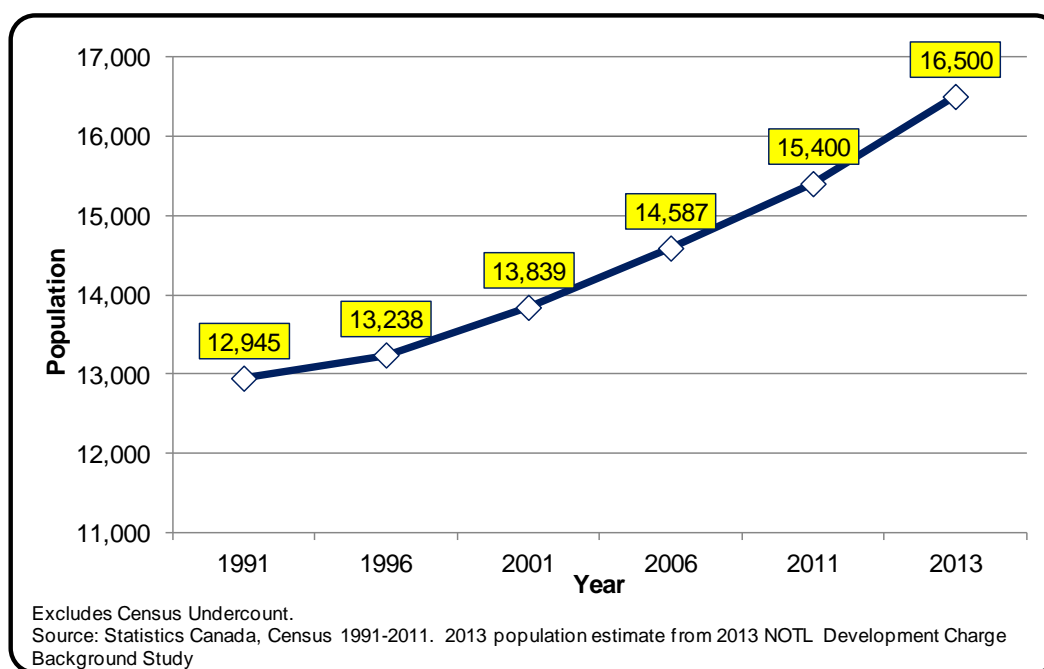
<sup>1</sup> The analysis presented herein reflects permanent housing and population and excludes seasonal housing and population and temporary residents.

### Population Growth, 1991-2013

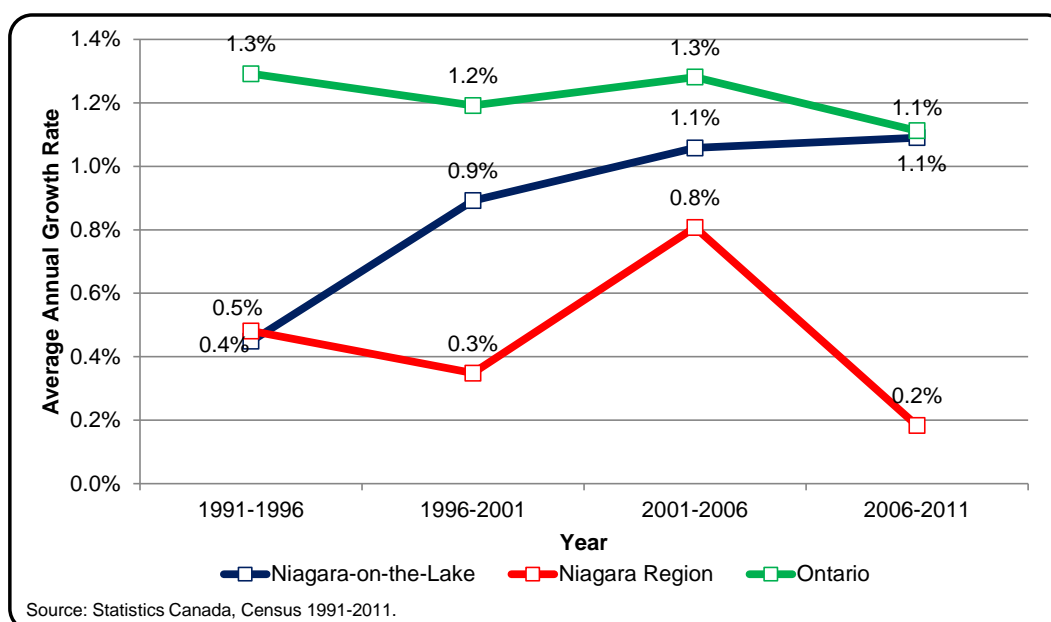
Figure 1 summarizes historical population growth trends for NOTL from 1991 to 2013. Figure 2 provides a summary of average annual population growth rates for NOTL, Niagara Region and the Province over the 1991 to 2011 period. Key observations include:

- The Town of NOTL population has grown from 12,945 in 1991 to 15,400 in 2011, an increase of 2,455. As of 2013, the Town's population is estimated at 16,500; and
- The population growth rate in NOTL has gradually increased over the 1991 to 2011 period, increasing from an average annual rate of 0.4% between 1991 and 1996, to 1.1% between 2006 and 2011. Over the period, NOTL's population growth rate has been higher than the Niagara Region average but lower than the provincial average.

**Figure 1: Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake Population Growth, 1991-2013**



**Figure 2: Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake Average Annual Population Growth Rate, 1991-2011**



### Population by Settlement Area

Figure 3 summarizes the distribution of 2011 population within the Town by settlement area. As shown, the Old Town is the largest settlement area in terms of population with 4,465 inhabitants, accounting for nearly 30% of the municipal total. This is followed by Virgil with a population of 2,910 (19% of municipal total), Glendale with 740 people (5%), St. Davids with 725 people (5%) and Queenston with 390 people (3%). A significant share (40%) of the Town's population lives within the rural area.

**Figure 3: Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake Population by Settlement Area, 2011**

Settlement Area	Population	% Share
Glendale	740	5%
Queenston	390	3%
Old Town	4,465	29%
St. Davids	725	5%
Virgil	2,910	19%
Rural	6,170	40%
<b>Total</b>	<b>15,400</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: Derived from Statistics Canada Special tabulation, based on 2011 Census of Population, by Watson & Associates Economists Ltd.

### Population by Age Cohort, 1991-2011

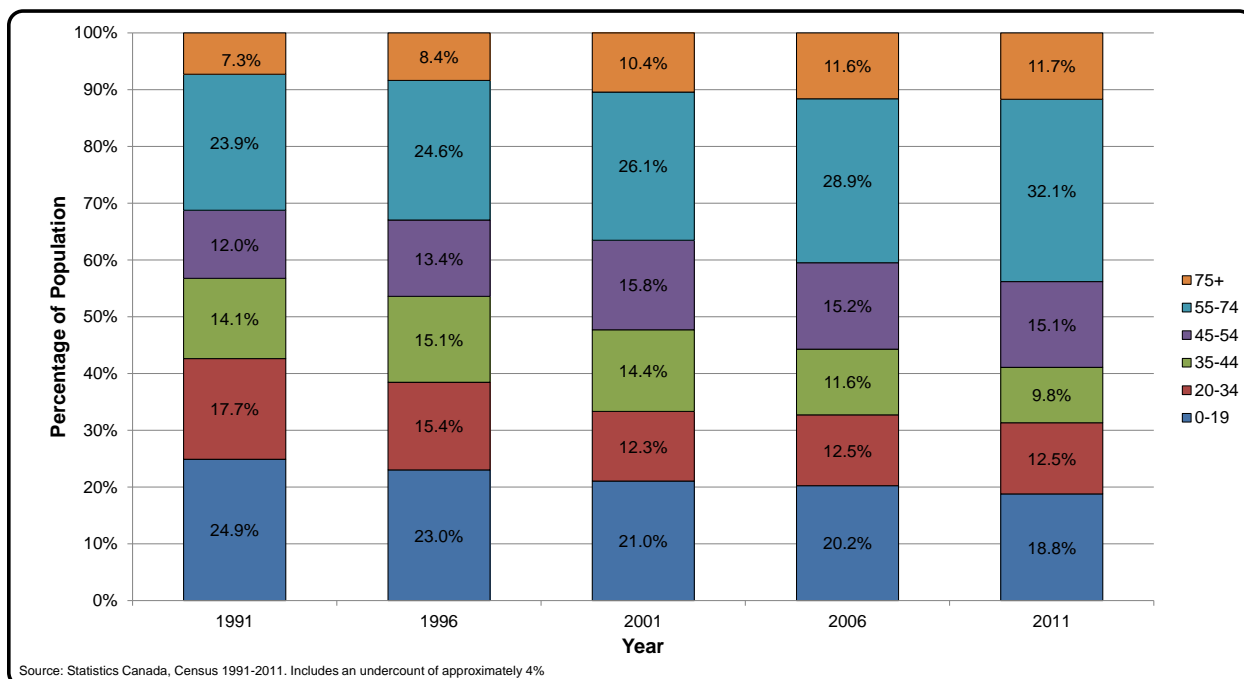
Figure 4 summarizes historical trends in population age structure between 1991 and 2011. Figure 5 summarizes the 2011 population age structure in the Town of NOTL compared to Niagara Region and the Province. For the purposes of this study, NOTL's population base has been grouped into four major age categories (i.e. cohorts):

- Youth (0-19);
- Young adult/adult (20-54);
- Empty-nesters/younger seniors (55-74); and
- Older seniors (75+).

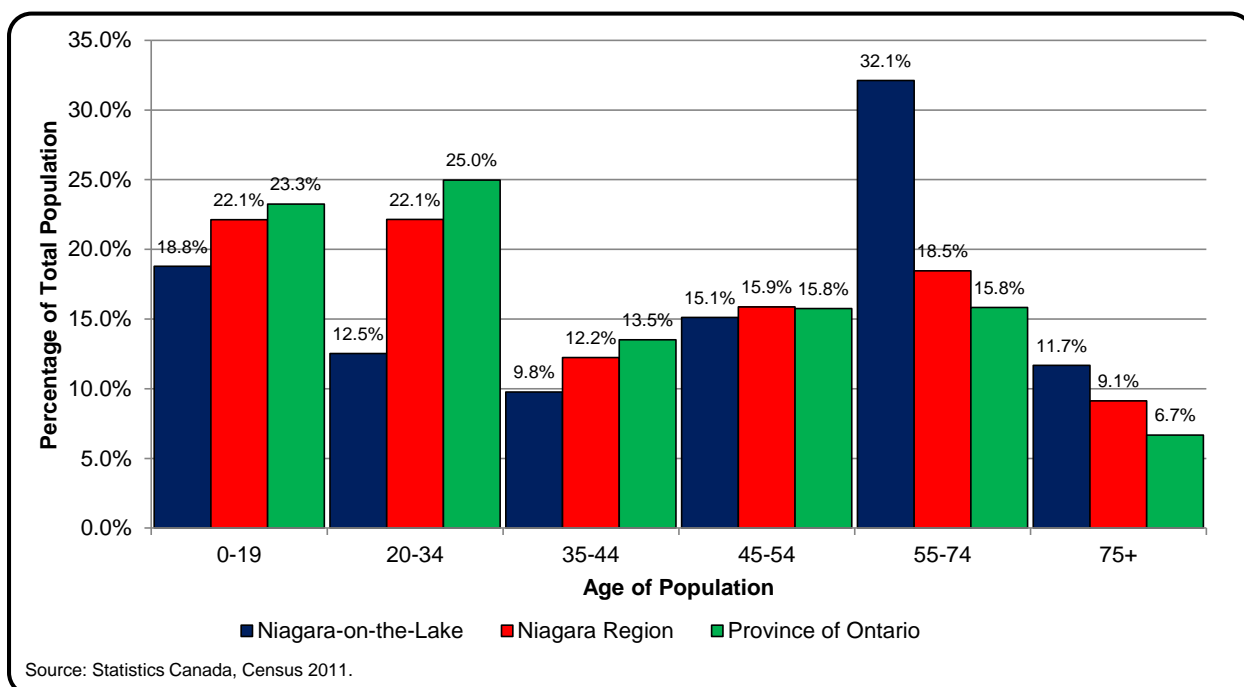
Key observations include:

- In 2011, the 0-19 age cohort (youth population) in NOTL accounted for 19% of the total population. Proportionately, the population share of this age cohort has decreased from 25% in 1991;
- NOTL's young adult/adult population (20-54) has declined moderately over the same time period, comprising 38% of the population in 2011:
  - The 20-34 age cohort (young adults), which comprised 13% of the population in 2006, has decreased from 18% in 1991;
  - The 35-44 age group has decreased from 14% in 1991 to 10% in 2011; and
  - 45-54 year olds account for 15% of the 2011 population, up from 12% in 1991;
- The 55-74 age group (empty-nesters/younger seniors) increased by 8% between 1991 and 2011, from 24% to 32%, with the majority of the increase occurring between 2006 and 2011;
- The 75+ age group (seniors) has increased from 7% in 1991 to 12% in 2011;
- A significantly higher proportion of the population in NOTL is concentrated towards the 55-74 age groups (i.e. baby boomers and younger seniors) in comparison to Niagara Region and the Province of Ontario as a whole;
- On the other hand, NOTL has a lower concentration of adults between the ages of 20 and 44 when compared to Niagara Region and the Province;
- NOTL's 2011 age structure is older than that of the provincial average, as a result of the proportionately higher number of persons in the 55-74 and 75+ age groups; and
- Comparatively, the Town of NOTL's 55+ population is larger in proportion and has increased at a faster rate than the Region and the Ontario average.

**Figure 4: Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake Population Composition by Age Cohort, 1991-2011**



**Figure 5: Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake Population Age Structure, 2011**



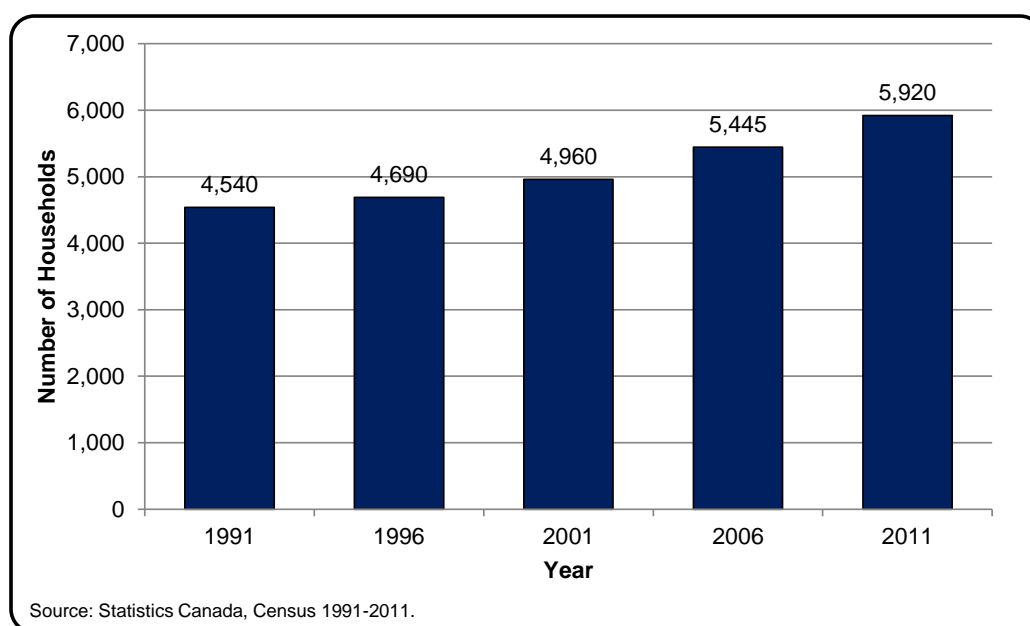
## 2.2 Housing

### 2.2.1 Permanent Housing Growth

Figure 6 summarizes permanent housing stock for the Town of NOTL over the 1991 to 2011 Census period. Key findings include:

- During the 1991 to 2011 period, NOTL's housing stock increased from 4,540 to 5,920 units; and
- During this period, the Town's housing growth rate averaged approximately 1.3% annually.

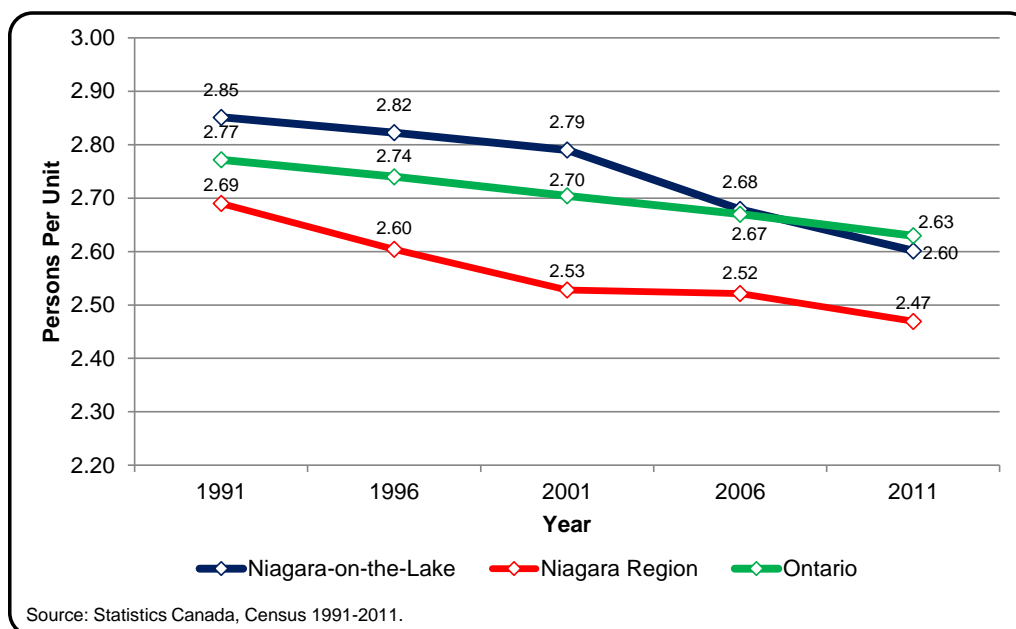
**Figure 6: Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake Permanent Housing Growth, 1991-2011**



### 2.2.2 Housing Occupancy Trends

Over the past decades, NOTL's population has grown at a slower rate than households, due to a notable decline in the average number of persons per dwelling unit (P.P.U.), as illustrated in Figure 7. As shown, the average P.P.U. in the Town of NOTL has declined from 2.85 in 1991 to 2.60 in 2011. NOTL's average P.P.U. is moderately higher than the Region, but comparable to the provincial average. Over the 2001 to 2011 period, average P.P.U. levels in NOTL have declined at a faster rate than the Region and the Province.

**Figure 7: Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake  
Historical P.P.U. Trends, 1991-2011**

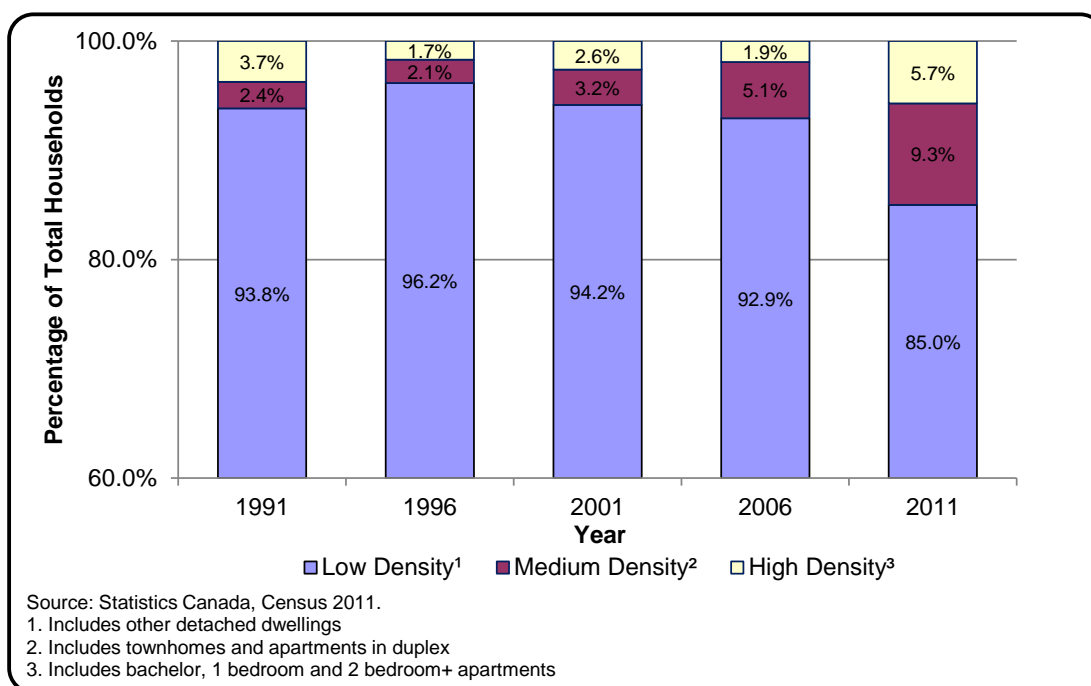
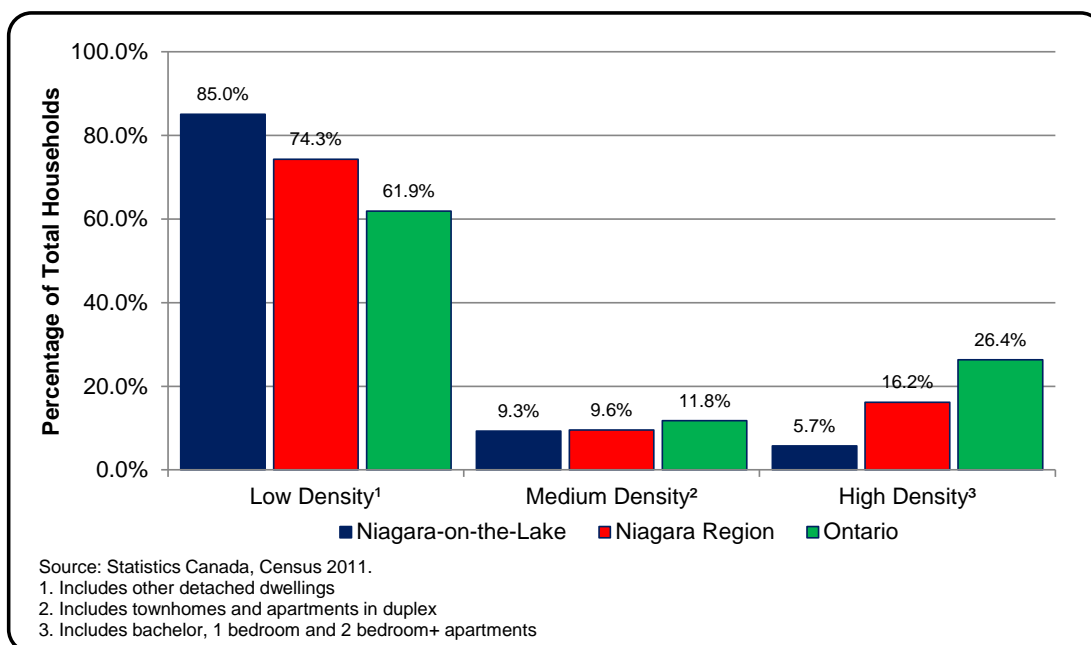


### **2.2.3 Housing Mix by Unit Type**

Figure 8 summarizes historical housing trends for NOTL by housing type (i.e. density) from 1991 to 2011. Figure 9 summarizes the comparison of housing in NOTL compared to Niagara Region and Ontario in 2011. Key observations include:

- Low-density housing (single, semi-detached) is the dominant form of housing in NOTL, representing approximately 85% of the housing stock in 2011. Medium density (townhouses, row houses) and high density (apartments) comprise 9% and 6% of housing, respectively;
- NOTL has a higher proportion of low-density housing than Niagara Region and the provincial average; and
- Over the 2001 to 2011 period, the share of medium- and high-density housing in NOTL has increased moderately with most of the shift occurring since 2006.



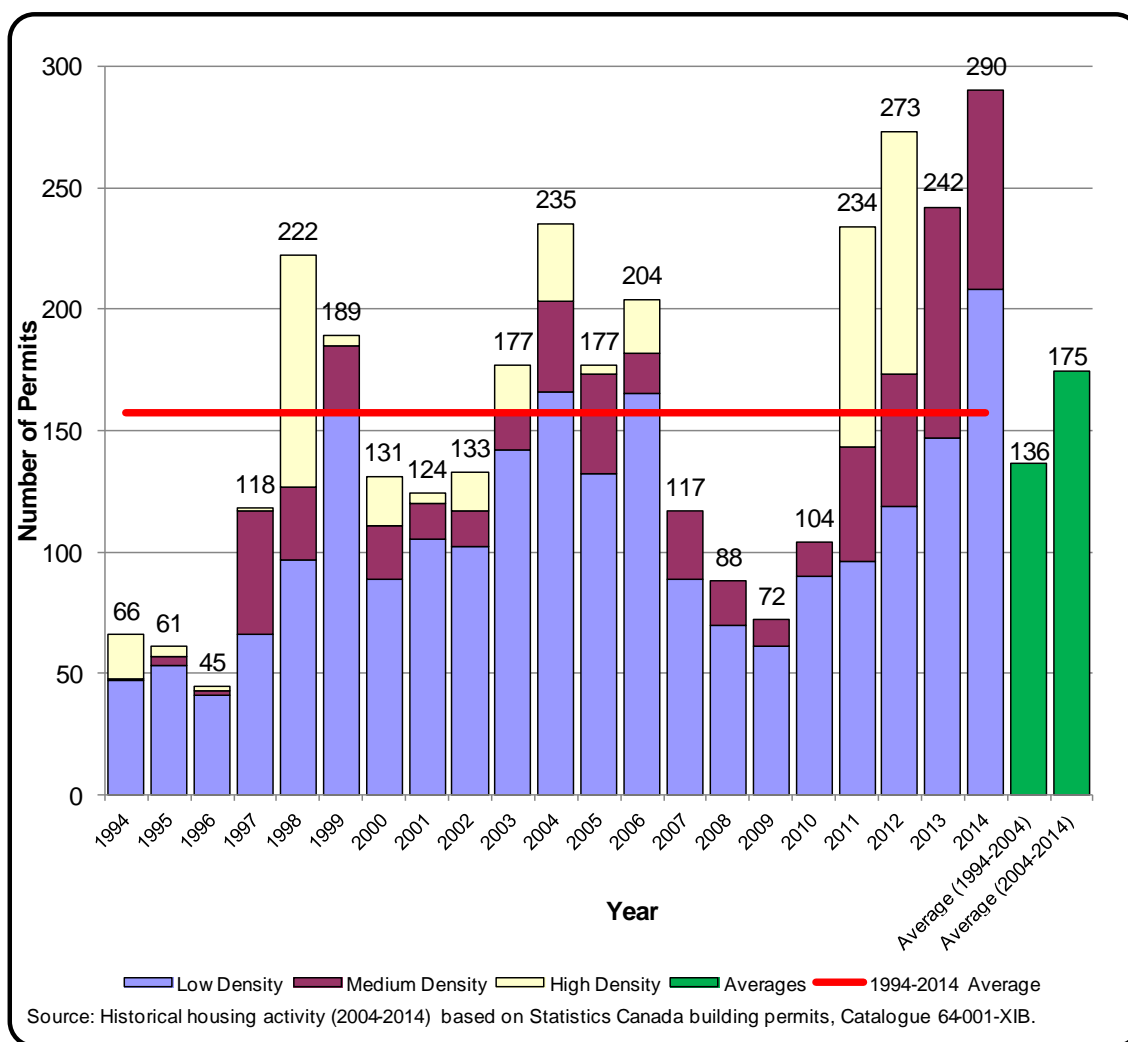
**Figure 8: Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake Household Unit Mix, 1991-2011****Figure 9: Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake 2011 Households by Density Type**

## 2.2.4 Residential Building Permit Activity, 1994-2014

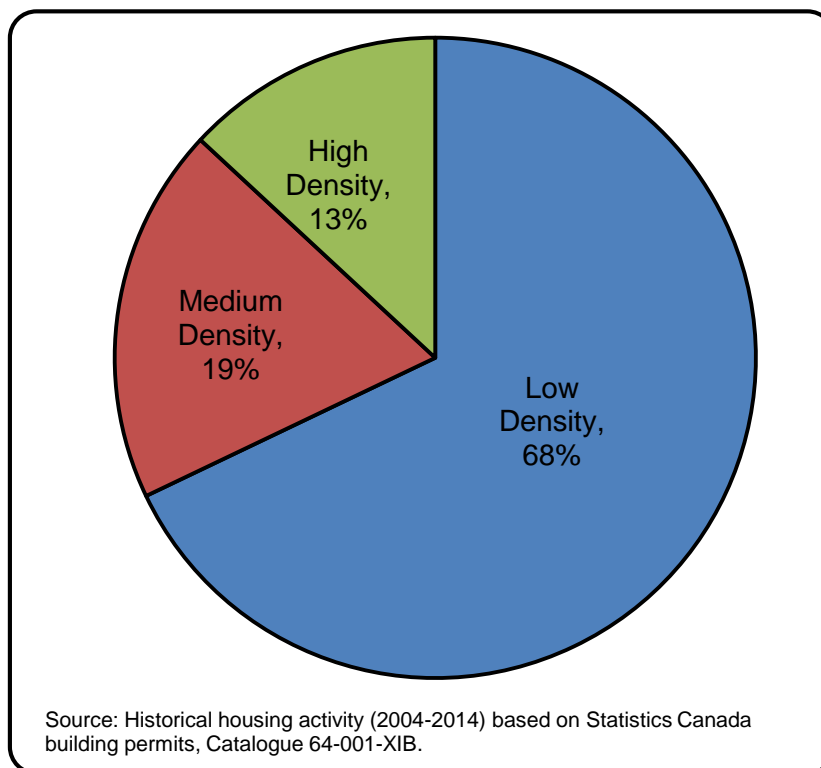
Figure 10 summarizes recent residential building permit activity (new housing units only) between 1994 and 2014. Figure 11 summarizes residential building permit activity by housing type over the past decade (2004 to 2014). Key highlights include:

- Over the 1994 to 2014 period, residential building permit activity (new housing units) averaged 157 units per year; and
- Over the past decade (2004 to 2014), residential building permit activity has averaged 175 units per year and low-density dwellings have accounted for 68% of units. This is compared to 19% and 13% for medium- and high-density dwellings, respectively.

**Figure 10: Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake  
Residential Building Permits, 1994-2014**

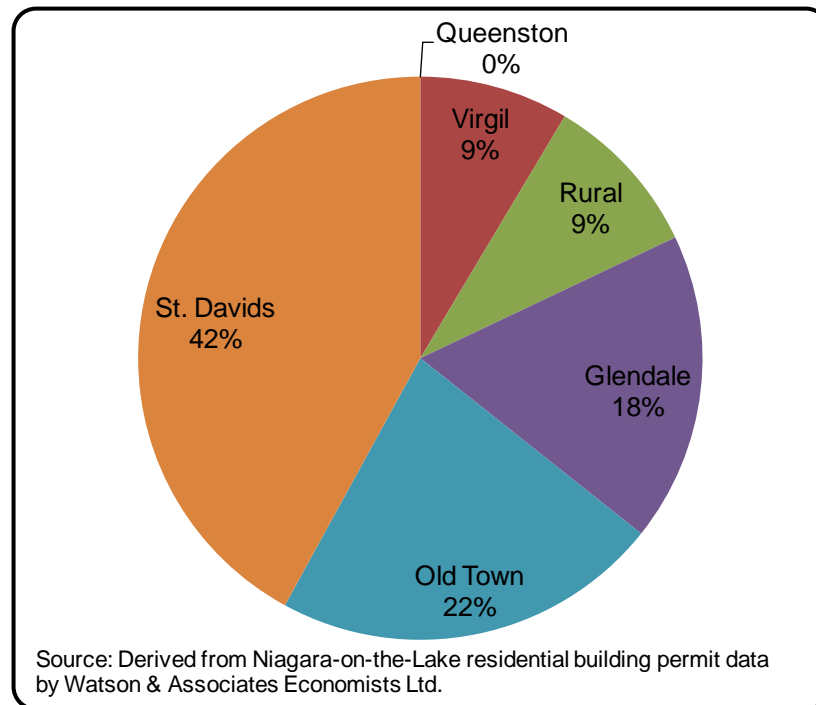


**Figure 11: Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake  
Residential Building Permits by Housing Type, 2004-2014**



Over the past five years, 42% of new residential building permit activity has been accommodated in St. Davids followed by 22% in the Old Town, 18% in Glendale and 9% in Virgil, as shown in Figure 12. Over the period, 91% of new housing development activity has been accommodated within the Town's urban areas compared to 9% within the rural areas.

**Figure 12: Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake  
Residential Building Permits by Settlement Area, 2010-2014**



## 2.3 Conclusions

- NOTL's population base is concentrated in the Old Town, Virgil and the rural area;
- The Town has experienced steady population and housing growth over the past two decades. Housing growth over the past five years has been concentrated in St. Davids, the Old Town and Glendale;
- The Town's existing housing stock is dominated by low-density built form; however, recent housing development activity indicates a growing demand for medium-density and high-density units;
- The Town's population is aging. NOTL's 2011 age structure is older than the provincial average and the proportion of the Town's 55+ population has increased at a faster rate than the Ontario and Regional averages, driven by strong net migration in this age group.

### 3. Economic Profile

This section summarizes recent macro and local economic trends for the Town of NOTL within a regional and provincial context. Specific attention is also given to recent trends within existing and emerging economic sectors which are anticipated to drive economic growth and residential development in NOTL over the short- and longer-term period.

#### 3.1 Macro-Economic Trends and Regional Competitiveness

The Canadian economy is transitioning from goods to services production, a feature that is well-documented across national, provincial and regional levels. The trend towards more knowledge-intensive and creative forms of economic activity is evident across many sectors within both the broader national and provincial economies and within Niagara Region's own economy. This includes growth in financial services, information technology, business services, health care and social services, government, advanced manufacturing, information and cultural industries, education, training and research, agri-business and tourism. In planning for the long-term growth, these sectors are anticipated to be amongst the key growth areas of Niagara's economy.

Knowledge is now recognized as the driver of productivity and economic growth, leading to a new focus on the role of information, technology and learning in economic performance. In an increasingly knowledge-based environment, the ability to cultivate, retain and attract talented workers, high-value jobs and innovative businesses is vital for the future economic prosperity of Niagara Region and its area municipalities.

In addition to growing knowledge-based sectors, manufacturing remains vitally important to the provincial economy with respect to job growth and economic output. While growth in traditional manufacturing and industrial type jobs has declined in recent years, there is still demand for these activities throughout the broader Ontario economy. Looking forward, there will continue to be a manufacturing focus in Ontario and Niagara Region; however, industrial processes have become more capital/technology intensive and automated. This means that as the regional manufacturing sector continues to recover, economic output will gradually increase; however, modest employment growth is anticipated in the manufacturing sector.

Southern Ontario has also experienced significant employment growth in the transportation and warehousing sector over the past decade. This sector is highly concentrated in Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area (G.T.H.A.) municipalities which are located within proximity to the Toronto Pearson International Airport (T.P.I.A.) and other

regional infrastructure attributes, including access to 400-series highways and intermodal facilities.

While demand from the transportation and warehousing sector is anticipated to continue across the G.T.H.A., rising industrial land prices will continue to force development pressure for large-scale land expansive industrial uses into competitively priced markets which offer ample market choice to accommodate near-term demand and future expansion requirements. Municipalities within proximity of the G.T.H.A., which offer direct access to 400-series highways, access to major employment markets and proximity to the U.S. border will increasingly compete with larger G.T.H.A. urban areas within this sector. Ultimately, this will shift the concentration of future development activity related to land expansive industrial uses to these regions of the Province, including Niagara Region.

In many respects Niagara's long-term employment potential is largely tied to the success of the G.T.H.A./G.G.H. as a whole. Niagara Region's location in the G.G.H. presents both an opportunity and a challenge. The G.T.H.A. represents the economic powerhouse of Ontario and the centre of much of the economic activity in Canada. With a robust economy and diverse mix of export-based employment clusters, the G.T.H.A. region is highly attractive on an international and national level to new businesses and investors. In turn, this continues to support strong G.G.H. population growth levels largely driven by international and inter-provincial net migration.

NOTL is well positioned geographically within Niagara Region, benefiting from access to the Q.E.W. Niagara corridor, proximity to the U.S. border, access to a growing skilled and unskilled labour force pool and proximity to a number of post-secondary institutions. These location attributes, as well as the Town's relative cost competitiveness (i.e. industrial land values, property taxes, construction costs, development charges, etc.) are important determinants in the site selection process for new and existing businesses looking to locate/relocate within NOTL. Notwithstanding these positive geographic attributes, NOTL is located within proximity to a number of large suburban G.G.H. municipalities with which it competes directly for business attraction and retention. Many of these municipalities generally offer regional attributes which commonly appeal to prospective international and local firms.

In addition to the above "hard" factors, "soft" or "quality" factors are becoming increasingly important in the corporate site selection process. Quality of life is also an important factor influencing residential location decisions of individuals and their families. NOTL has a world class reputation as a vibrant, growing, low-crime location in which to live in Ontario, with access to a wide range of recreational opportunities,

wineries and other tourism destinations within its urban areas and throughout the surrounding countryside.

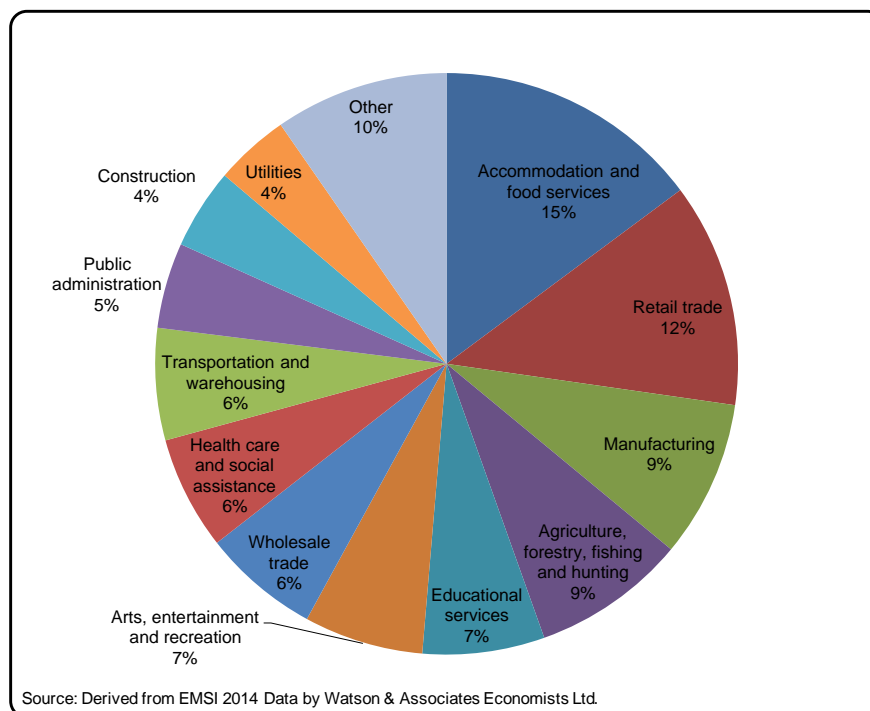
The following section explores the Town's existing employment structure and recent economic trends to better understand NOTL's longer-term economic potential and competitive position within the regional and provincial context.

## 3.2 Employment

### 3.2.1 Employment Profile

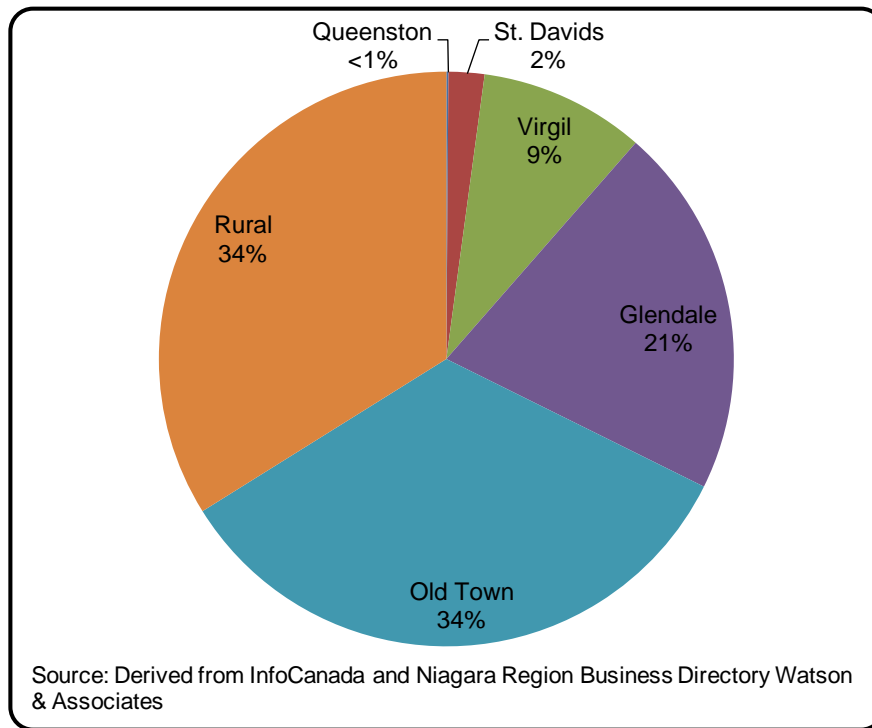
NOTL is home to a broad range of employment sectors. As shown in Figure 13, accommodation and food services is the largest sector, accounting for 15% of total employment, followed by retail trade (12%), manufacturing (9%) and agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting (9%).

**Figure 13: Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake Employment by Sector, 2014**



Of the Town's employment base, approximately one-third is located in the Old Town while Glendale accounts for 21% and Virgil, 9%, as shown in Figure 14. St. Davids and Queenston have a very limited employment base, with 2% and less than 1% of the Town-wide employment base, respectively. The rural area accommodates approximately one-third of the Town's employment base, emphasizing the significant agriculture base in the municipality.

**Figure 14: Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake Employment by Settlement Area, 2014**



### 3.2.2 Employment Growth Trends

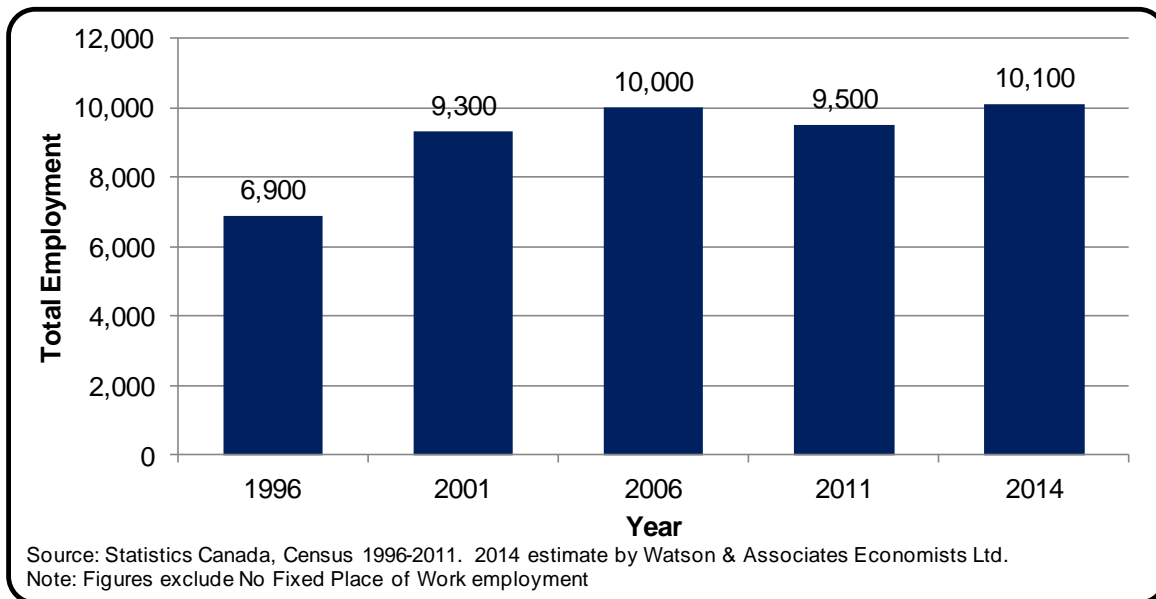
Figure 15 summarizes total employment within the Town of NOTL from 1996 to 2014. Figure 16 illustrates average annual employment growth for the Town, in comparison to the Region and the provincial average during the 1996 to 2011 period. Key observations include:

- Town of NOTL's total employment has increased from 6,900 in 1996 to an estimated 10,100 in 2014<sup>1</sup>;
- NOTL experienced strong employment growth between 1996 and 2006;
- During the 2006 to 2011 period, the Town's employment base declined modestly. This trend was also experienced across Niagara Region as a whole, as a result of a decline in the manufacturing sector driven by the 2008/2009 global economic downturn. Between 2006 and 2011, the Province as a whole experienced modest employment growth; and
- Over the 2011-2014 period, employment growth in the Town has rebounded with an increase of approximately 600 jobs.

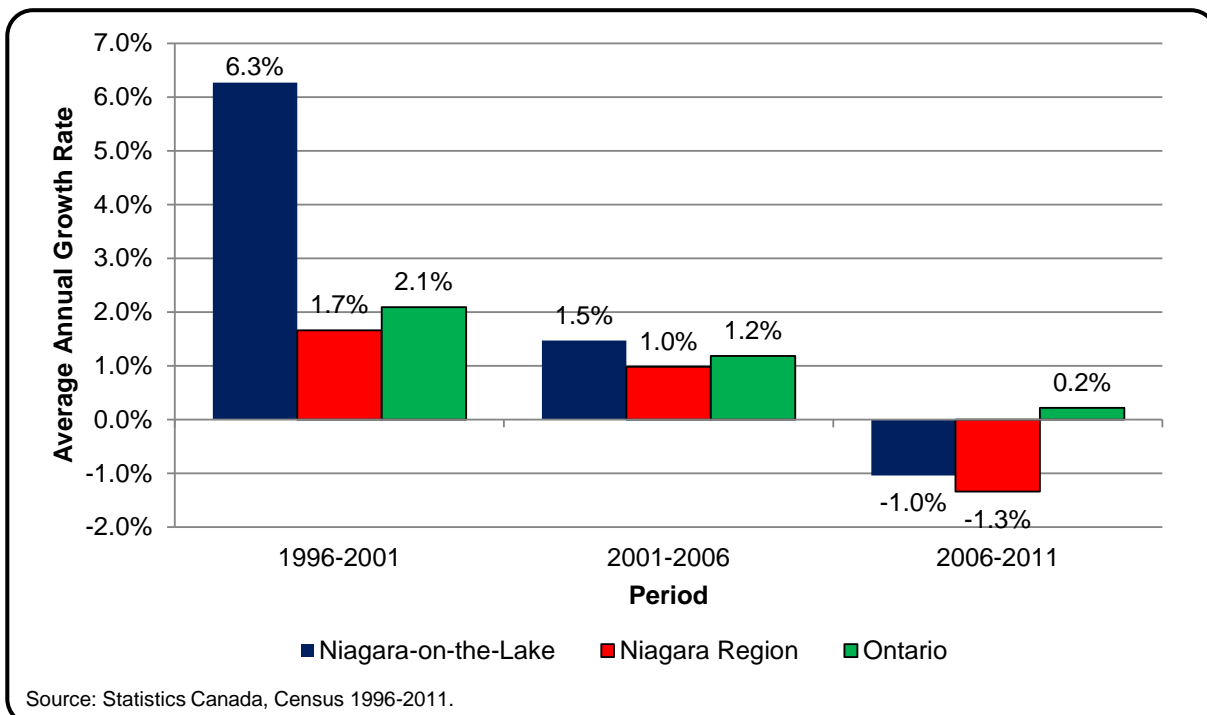
<sup>1</sup> Employment data excludes No Fixed Place of Work



**Figure 15: Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake  
Total Employment, 1996-2014**



**Figure 16: Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake  
Average Annual Employment Growth, 1996-2011**



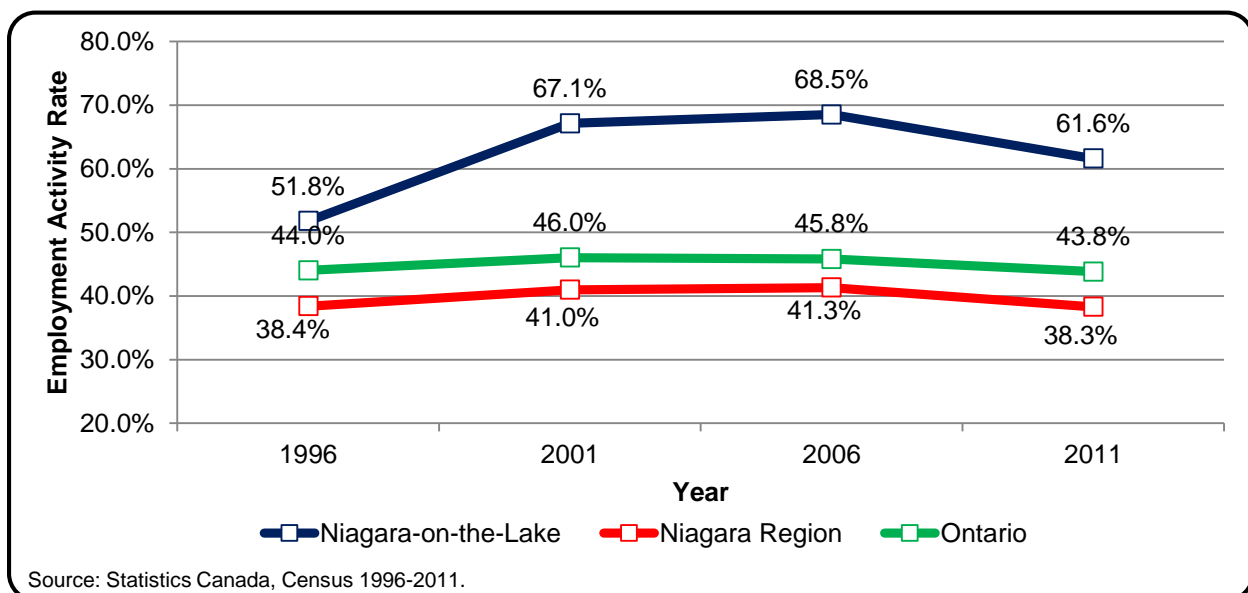
### 3.2.3 Employment Activity Rates, 1996-2011

An employment activity rate is defined as the number of local jobs in a municipality divided by the resident population. An increasing employment activity rate indicates that the local employment base is increasing at a faster rate than the local population.

On the other hand, a declining activity rate indicates the opposite trend. Figure 17 summarizes the historic employment activity rate from 1996 through 2011. For comparative purposes, the historical employment activity rates for Niagara Region and the provincial average are also provided. Key observations include:

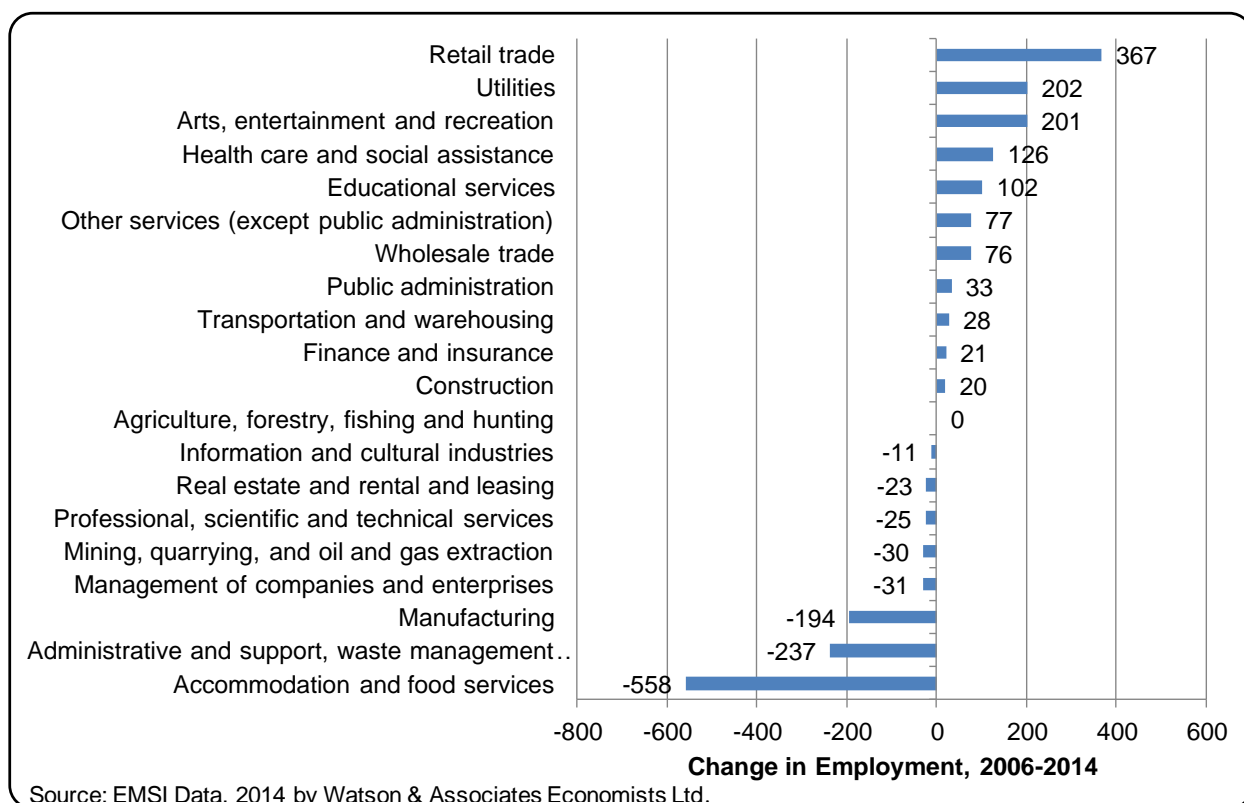
- In 2011, NOTL's activity rate was 61.6%, moderately higher than the Region and the provincial average; and
- NOTL's employment activity rate has fallen over the 2006 to 2011 period from 68.5% to 61.6%.

**Figure 17: Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake  
Employment Activity Rates, 1996-2011**



### 3.2.4 Employment Growth by Sector

The economy of NOTL is oriented towards sectors that support tourism, including retail, arts, entertainment and recreation and accommodation and food services, as well as the agriculture sector. Figure 18 illustrates the employment change by industry sector over the 2006-2013 period in NOTL. As shown, over the period the fastest growing employment sectors were in retail and arts, entertainment and recreation. Of the industrial sectors, utilities and wholesale trade experienced strong gains. In contrast, the manufacturing sector, as well as administrative support and waste management and accommodation and food sectors, experienced a decline in employment over the period.

**Figure 18: Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake Employment Growth, 2006-2014**

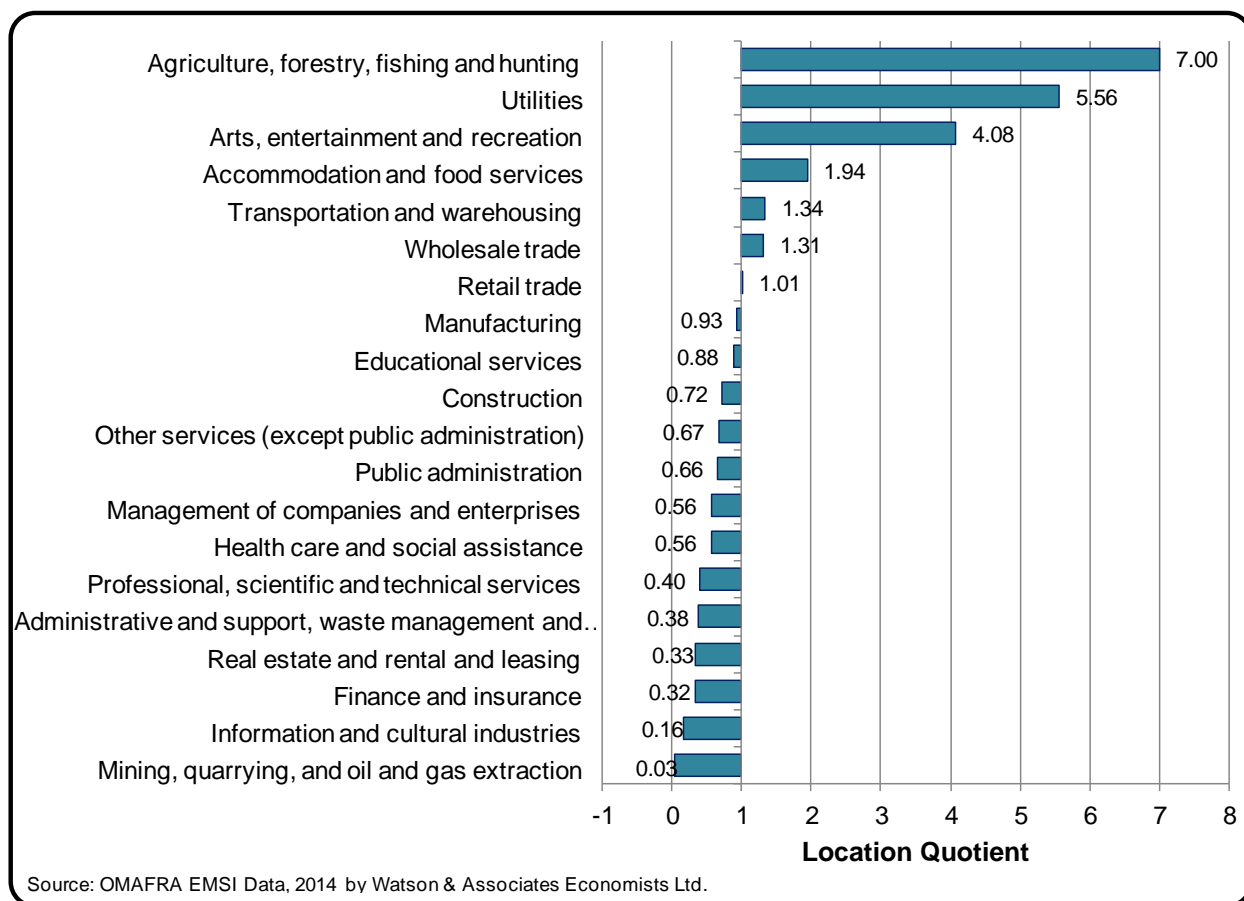
### 3.2.5 Industry Clusters in Niagara-on-the-Lake

Figure 19 illustrates the strength of employment sectors in NOTL relative to the Province using Location Quotients (L.Q.).<sup>1</sup>

- NOTL's economy is highly oriented towards agriculture, utilities, arts, entertainment and recreation and accommodation and food services;
- NOTL has a relatively low concentration of employment in the business services sectors, including professional, scientific and technical services, management of companies and enterprises and real estate and rental leasing; and
- In terms of the industrial sectors, NOTL has a high concentration of employment in the transportation and warehousing and wholesale trade sectors, with a low employment concentration in construction. Employment in the manufacturing sector is close to the province average.

<sup>1</sup> An L.Q. of 1.0 identifies that the concentration of employment by sector is consistent with the broader employment base average. An L.Q. of greater than 1.0 identifies that the concentration of employment in a given employment sector is higher than the broader base average, which suggests a relatively high concentration of a particular employment sector or "cluster."

**Figure 19: Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake Location Quotient Relative to Ontario by Employment Sector, 2014**



### 3.2.6 Trends in Work at Home Employment

In 2011, approximately 12% of NOTL's employment base was comprised of work at home employment.<sup>1</sup> Work-at-home employment in NOTL is expected to steadily increase, driven by forecast growth in the knowledge-based and creative economy. Future opportunities for work-at-home employment are anticipated to be facilitated by continued advancements in information and telecommunications technology.

## 3.3 Business Growth Trends

NOTL is home to approximately 875 businesses.<sup>2</sup> As shown in Figure 20, two-thirds of businesses operating in NOTL are small businesses with less than ten employees. In comparison, medium-sized businesses (i.e. 10-50 employees) account for 26% of businesses while larger businesses (50+ employees) account for 6% of businesses.

<sup>1</sup> Based on 2011 Statistics Canada Place of Work employment data.

<sup>2</sup> December 2014 Canadian Business Patterns data. Excludes business with an indeterminate number of employees.

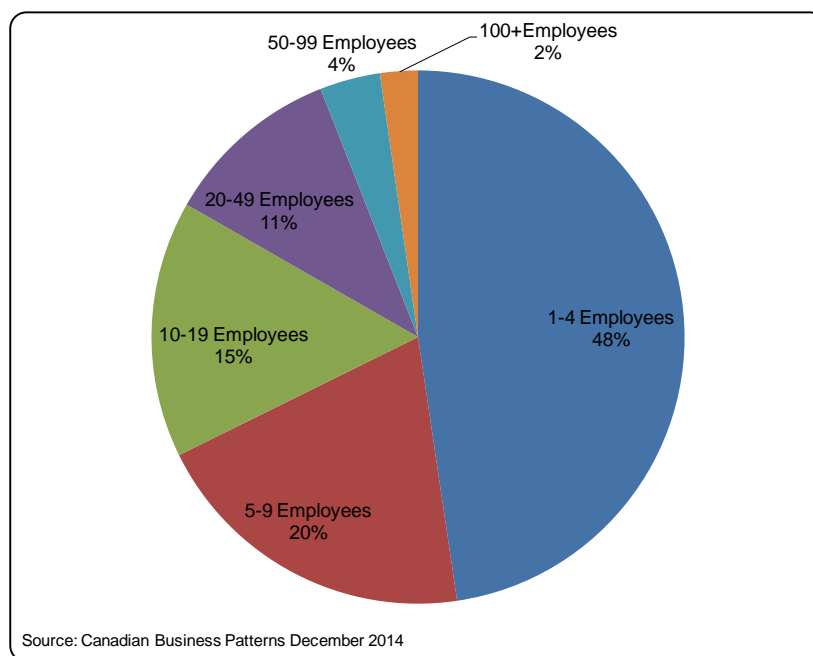
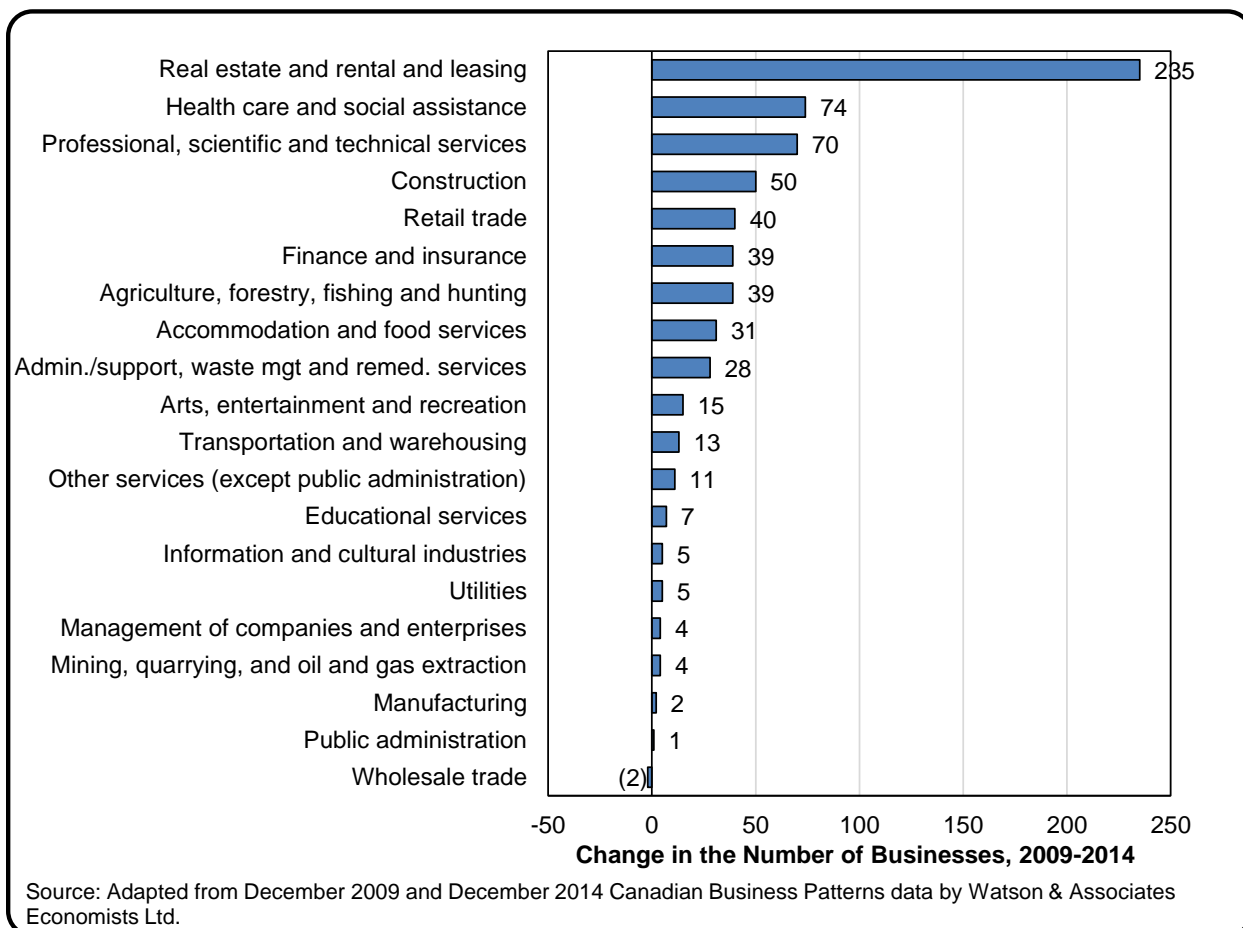
**Figure 20: Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake Businesses by Size, 2014**

Figure 21 illustrates changes in the number of businesses operating in NOTL by sector over the 2009 to 2014 period. As shown, NOTL experienced relatively strong business growth in a number of service sectors including retail trade, health care and social assistance and professional, scientific and technical services. Between 2009 and 2014, NOTL had no significant changes in the number of businesses operating within the industrial sector, with the exception of the construction sector which experienced strong growth.

**Figure 21: Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake  
Change in Number of Businesses by Sector, 2009-2014**

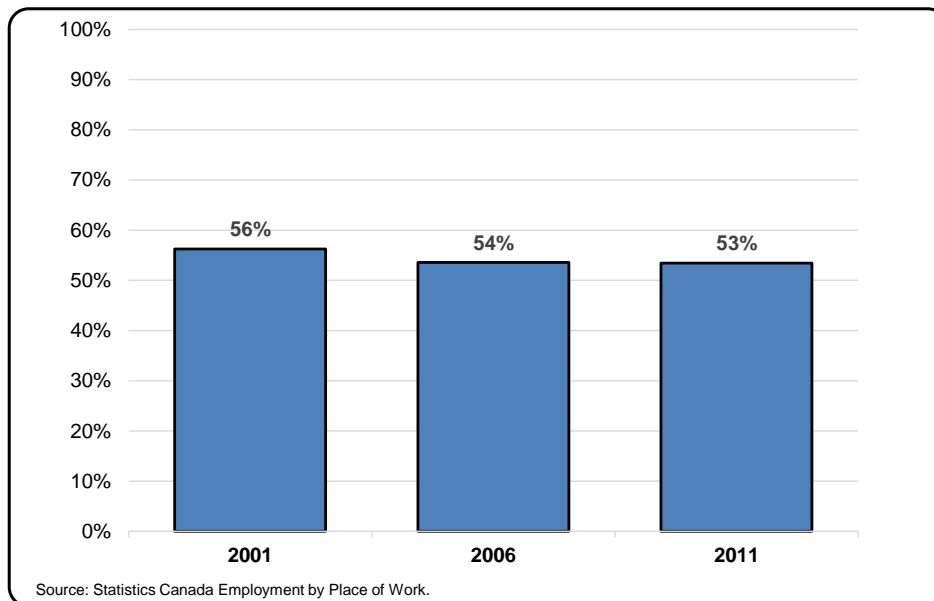


### 3.4 Live-Work Ratio

Figure 22 summarizes the strength of the employment base in the Town by summarizing the location of employment relative to location of residence. From an economic perspective, a high live-work ratio is desirable as it ensures that the local labour force (i.e. residents of NOTL) is well served by the opportunities available in the local employment market (i.e. jobs in NOTL). Key observations include:

- The Town of NOTL has a relatively low live-work ratio, as 53% of its residents work within the Town. The ratio has remained largely unchanged over the 2001 to 2011 period;
- Residents of the Town of NOTL hold just over a third (34%) of the jobs in the Town, as the majority the jobs (66%) are held by residents that reside outside the Town of NOTL; and
- A significant share of the Town's residents commute to work outside the Town on a daily basis.

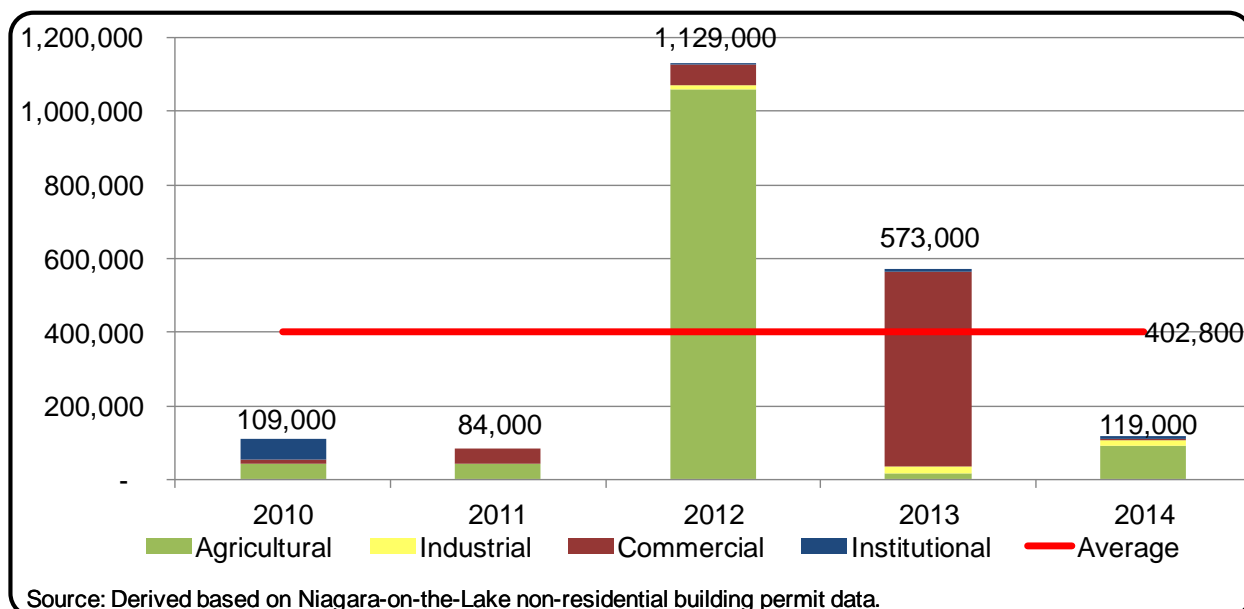
**Figure 22: Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake  
Live-Work Ratio, 2001-2011**



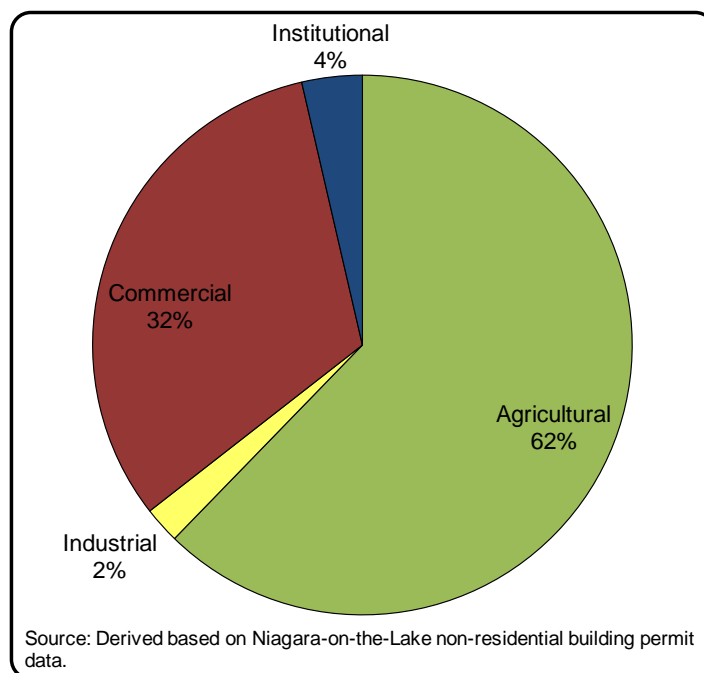
### 3.5 Non-Residential Construction Activity

Figure 23 summarizes non-residential gross floor area by sector from 2010 to 2014 within the Town of NOTL. As shown, NOTL has averaged approximately 403,000 square feet of non-residential floor space construction annually. As summarized in Figure 24, 62% of non-residential development activity has been in the agricultural sector, compared to 32% in the commercial sector, 4% in the institutional sector and 2% in the industrial sector. The significant development activity in the agriculture sector is attributed mainly to one large (i.e. 1 million sq.ft.) greenhouse development.

**Figure 23: Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake  
New Non-Residential Construction (G.F.A.), 2010-2014**



**Figure 24: Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake  
Non-Residential Square Footage Share, 2010-2014**

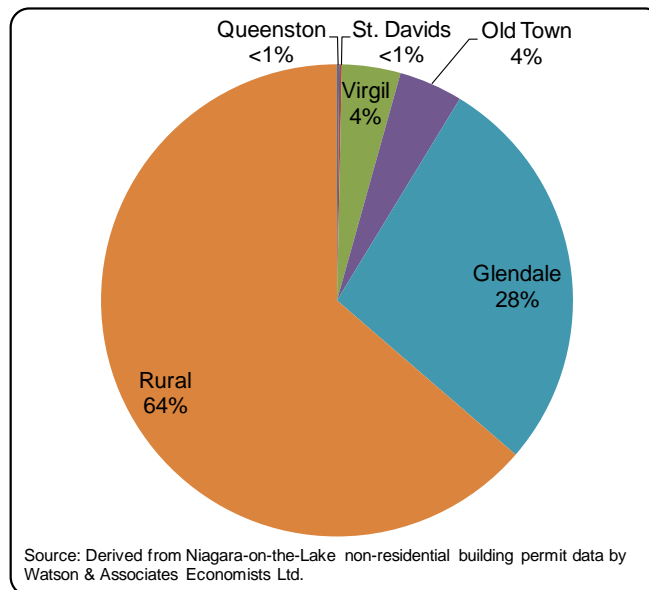


Over the past five years, 64% of new non-residential G.F.A. in the Town has been accommodated within the rural area, as summarized in Figure 25. Glendale has accommodated 28% of the Town's non-residential development over the period compared to 4% in the Old Town and 4% in Virgil. In contrast, St. Davids and



Queenston have experienced limited non-residential development activity, accounting for less than 1% of the Town's development activity since 2010.

**Figure 25: Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake  
New Non-Residential Construction (G.F.A.) by Settlement Area, 2010-2014**



### 3.6 Conclusions

- NOTL is characterized by a blend of rural lands and vibrant urban settlement areas;
- The existing employment base is concentrated in retail, small- to medium-scale manufacturing, wholesale trade, transportation, government and education, accommodation and food services, agriculture and tourism;
- The NOTL's economy is transitioning from goods to services production. Looking forward, existing and emerging knowledge-based sectors are expected to represent the fastest growing employment sectors for the Town;
- In addition to growing knowledge-based sectors, manufacturing remains important to the regional and local economies with respect to jobs and economic output;
- The employment base is also highly concentrated in the creative class economy. People engaged in arts and culture as artists, actors, performers, writers and designers are a large part of the foundation which creates the "quality of place" that attracts new residents to each of the Town's urban areas and surrounding countryside. The economic base is also highly oriented towards small businesses and home-based occupations;

- While the Town has a relatively high employment activity rate, the Town has a relatively low live-work ratio. A significant share of Town residents work outside the municipality, while a significant share of jobs within the Town is held by non-residents;
- The Town has experienced moderate levels of non-residential development activity over the past five years, concentrated in the commercial and agriculture sectors. Industrial development activity has been relatively limited; and
- The Town's employment base is concentrated in the Old Town, Glendale and the rural area.

## 4. Regional and Local Growth Drivers

A number of regional and local drivers have been identified which are anticipated to influence future population, housing and employment growth within NOTL through the year 2041. These drivers are identified below.

### 4.1 Location within the Greater Golden Horseshoe

NOTL is located within the southwest region of the G.G.H. – one of the fastest growing Cities/Regions in North America. The diverse and highly competitive economy within this region has supported an impressive level of population and employment growth over the past decade. From 2001 to 2011, the G.G.H. added 1.2 million persons and 657,000 employees to its base. In accordance with the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, Places to Grow, the G.G.H. is forecast to increase from a 2011 population of 9.0 million to 13.5 million in 2041. This represents a population increase of 4.5 million persons, or 148,000 persons per year. With respect to employment, the G.G.H. is forecast to increase from 4.5 million employees in 2011 to 6.3 million by 2041, an increase of 1.8 million employees, or 60,500 employees per year.

The strong forecast growth within the G.G.H. is expected to influence and drive population, housing and employment growth within NOTL over the period as further discussed in sections 4.2 and 4.3.

### 4.2 Quality of Life

NOTL offers opportunities for “small-town” living with access to shopping and urban amenities, arts and culture, recreation and the rural countryside. The Town's urban and rural character offers a high quality of life which is expected to drive net migration from a broad range of demographic groups including the 55-74 age group (i.e. baby boomers

and younger seniors) and working age population (e.g. families with children). This is expected to continue to be a key driver of housing growth in NOTL.

Strong net migration levels will drive housing growth within the Town with demand across a broad range of housing typologies including condominiums, adult lifestyle communities, as well as traditional single-family homes and townhouses. In turn, population growth will also continue to drive growth in population-related employment sectors including retail, personal services, business services and health and social services.

### **4.3 Diminishing Supply of Employment Lands**

Within the “Inner Ring” of the G.G.H., including the west G.T.H.A., the availability of vacant designated employment lands is tightening up. This continues to place upward demand on industrial land prices in this area, as well as outward development pressure primarily towards the west along the Highways 401, 403 and Q.E.W. corridors. Accordingly, designated employment areas within the “Outer Ring” of the G.G.H., including NOTL, which offer vacant, serviced, marketable land at prices which are comparatively cost competitive, are expected to experience increasing demand for development. This is particularly relevant for large-scale, land-extensive industrial uses in the logistics, warehousing and transportation sector. Further, proximity to the U.S. market is considered a significant advantage for NOTL.

### **4.4 Niagara District Airport**

The Niagara District Airport, which serves the Niagara Region, is situated in NOTL. Featuring a terminal and 5,000-foot runway and 24-hour customs clearance, the airport handles corporate aircraft, cargo and tourist/recreation and private aviation.

Many airports both nationally and internationally are developing employment lands to capitalize on the strategic advantages of proximity to airport-related services. This trend is partly driven by a changing economy which is increasingly global, high-tech, knowledge-based and service oriented and which demands increased connectivity, accessibility and speed. Employment lands located in the periphery of major airports tend to develop synergies with airport activities, capitalizing on the attractiveness of proximity to air transport connectivity which can enhance business efficiency and optimize business operations. The strength and nature of this relationship is largely dependent on the size and type of direct airport activities, in terms of the number of passengers and the amount and type of cargo handled.

Proximity and access to a major airport is advantageous for an increasing number of employment sectors. Sectors such as research and development, high technology, and advanced manufacturing rely increasingly on air transport in their supply chains and just-in-time delivery. This includes companies engaged in time-sensitive businesses such as computer hardware/software, electronics, telecommunications equipment, apparel, automotive components, industrial equipment and healthcare/biotechnology. Other sectors directly tied to airport activities and operations include air freight distribution/logistics and the aerospace industry. Employment lands in proximity to major airports are also increasingly attractive for national and multi-national companies whose business activities are far-reaching and proximity to commercial air service is advantageous for business air travel (for both employees and clients).

The Niagara District Airport represents a significant asset to the Town which enhances the development potential of the lands immediately next to the airport and the surrounding area.

#### **4.5 Tourism/Recreation Industry Growth**

NOTL is a significant tourist destination and relative to the provincial average has a high concentration of employment in tourism-related sectors including retail trade, accommodation and food, art, entertainment and recreation. Due to its local attractions and amenities, and proximity to major urban markets such as the G.T.H.A., the Town is well positioned to continue to expand and develop its tourism and recreational opportunities.

#### **4.6 Growth Opportunities within Agriculture Sector**

NOTL's agricultural cluster has experienced growth over the past five years. Given the magnitude and diversity of agricultural activity within the Town, much of the production attributed to this sector is export-based, with a large component of production reaching markets well beyond the Region. Within this sector, future opportunities exist related to agri-business and value-added processing and agri-tourism, particularly related to the food and beverage industry, as well as grape and wine production.

## 5. Anticipated Future Growth Patterns in Niagara-on-the-Lake

### 5.1 Forecast Growth

In accordance with the Region's current Growth Management Strategy, Niagara 2031, the Town is expected to experience steady residential growth through 2031 with the Town's population and housing base expected to increase to 22,400 and 9,070, respectively, by 2031.<sup>1</sup> With respect to employment growth, the Town's employment base (excluding No Fixed Place of Work) is expected to increase to 13,960 by 2031.<sup>2</sup>

Niagara Region is currently updating its growth projections for NOTL to the year 2041 through its current municipal comprehensive review update and the existing 2031 forecast numbers for NOTL are subject to change. Nonetheless, it is expected that the Town will experience steady population and housing growth through 2031, comparable to what is identified in Niagara 2031. With respect to employment, employment growth in the Town through 2031 is expected to be more moderate, at a marginally lower growth rate than what was identified in Niagara 2031.

According to the Growth Plan, post 2031, Niagara Region is expected to experience relatively strong population and employment growth through 2041. It is anticipated that the Town has relatively strong growth potential over the 2031 to 2041 period as well, based on the growth drivers identified in Chapter 4. However, the potential to capitalize on the forecast regional growth will depend largely on residential and non-residential supply opportunities within the Town's settlement areas.

### 5.2 Opportunities to Accommodate Growth

The following presents a summary of identified residential and non-residential supply opportunities within NOTL. As part of the current municipal comprehensive review, Niagara Region is conducting a comprehensive assessment of residential and non-residential supply opportunities in NOTL and the data presented herein is subject to change.

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<sup>1</sup> Preferred Growth Option D. Population excludes Census undercount of approximately 4%.

<sup>2</sup> The Town's employment base with No Fixed Place of Work is expected to increase to 15,100 by 2031.

## Residential

Forecast housing growth within the Town can be accommodated through intensification and greenfield development opportunities. As shown in Figure 26, the Town has the potential to accommodate over 4,300 housing units. The largest share (41%) of residential supply opportunities within the Town is located in St. Davids. Glendale, the Old Town and Virgil also offer some opportunities to accommodate residential development. In contrast, Queenston has relatively limited supply opportunities. While the rural area has a very limited supply of residential development potential identified, there may be some opportunities for development on existing rural lots of record.

Projects in the development approvals process comprise approximately 42% of the total residential supply and represent the primary short- to medium-term opportunities. NOTL also has vacant designated residential land which is not in the development approvals process, comprising 58% of the residential supply opportunities. Vacant designated greenfield lands represent longer-term opportunities to accommodate residential growth.

Half of the residential supply identified consists of low-density units (singles and semi-detached units). The supply potential identified suggests a continued shift in the housing mix from low density to an increasing share of medium- and high-density units. The majority of the high-density unit supply is located in St. Davids and the Old Town.

**Figure 26: Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake  
Residential Supply Opportunities by Settlement Area**

Settlement Area	Density Type			Total	Percentage Share
	Singles & Semi-Detached	Multiples <sup>1</sup>	Apartments <sup>2</sup>		
<i>Old Town</i>	187	323	241	751	17%
<i>Virgil</i>	690	32	22	744	17%
<i>Queenston</i>	29	0	0	29	1%
<i>St. Davids</i>	858	113	800	1,771	41%
<i>Glendale</i>	413	649	10	1,072	25%
<i>Rural</i>	2	0	0	2	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,179</b>	<b>1,117</b>	<b>1,073</b>	<b>4,369</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Percentage Breakdown</b>	<b>50%</b>	<b>26%</b>	<b>25%</b>	<b>100%</b>	

1. Includes townhomes and apartments in duplexes

2. Includes bachelor, 1 bedroom and 2 bedroom+ apartments

Note: Residential land supply includes units in plans of subdivision and unit yields from potential developable parcels.

Source: Plans of Subdivision data derived from Niagara-on-the-Lake Development Charge Study 2013 revised for recent development activity provided by Niagara-on-the-Lake Planning Department and potential developable parcel unit data provided by Niagara-on-the-Lake Planning Department

### Non-Residential

Forecast population-related employment growth is to be largely accommodated on designated commercial lands. The Town's overall supply of commercial designated land is limited. Opportunities to accommodate commercial employment are largely located in the Old Town and Virgil through intensification and greenfield opportunities in Glendale, with limited opportunities to accommodate commercial employment growth in other settlement areas within the Town.

With respect to employment lands, the Town has 62 net ha (153 net acres) of vacant employment lands, of which 90% is located in Glendale, 8% in Virgil and 2% in St. Davids.<sup>1</sup> Further, the Niagara District Airport contains 23 ha (56 acres) of airside and non-airside developable land. The attributes of the employment land supply opportunities, along with development opportunities at the Niagara District Airport, are discussed in further detail in Chapter 6.

## **5.3 Anticipated Distribution of Growth to 2041**

### Residential Growth

The vast majority of forecast housing growth through 2041 within NOTL is anticipated to be accommodated within its settlement areas, with limited opportunities for rural housing development. Based on recent residential development trends, market potential and the supply opportunities identified, St. Davids is expected to accommodate the largest share of urban residential growth to 2041, accounting for approximately 40% of future housing development. The Old Town, Glendale and Virgil are anticipated to accommodate approximately 15-20% of Town-wide housing growth each, while Queenston is expected to accommodate limited residential development.

### Non-Residential Growth

With respect to non-residential growth, the majority of development and corresponding employment growth is anticipated to be concentrated in Glendale, Virgil and the Old Town. Glendale is expected to accommodate the vast majority of the Town's industrial employment growth and a large share of the commercial employment growth. Employment growth in Virgil and the Old Town is expected to be predominantly in the commercial sector and accommodated largely through intensification. The airport is also expected to accommodate a moderate share of industrial and commercial

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<sup>1</sup> Source: 2013 Niagara Employment Lands Strategy: Phase 2, Non-Gateway Communities, Dillon Consulting Limited and Watson & Associates Economists Ltd.

employment growth, but much of this is anticipated over the longer term. In contrast, employment growth in Queenston is anticipated to be relatively limited. The rural area will continue to accommodate some employment growth, predominantly in the agricultural sector.

## 6. Assessment of Employment Areas

NOTL has four primary employment areas: Glendale, the Virgil Business Park, the St. Davids industrial area and lands surrounding the Niagara District Airport (Airport Lands). A major factor in the future competitiveness of the Town's economic base is dependent, in part, on the attributes of its employment lands. This chapter provides an assessment of the Town's four employment areas and their ability to accommodate future employment growth.

### 6.1 General Characteristics of Employment Areas

Employment Areas require good access to regional transportation networks, on-site infrastructure including roadways and utilities, a critical mass and available zoned, shovel-ready land. Employment Areas are typically located on flat to slightly rolling topography in areas with minimal environmental issues. Roadways within Employment Areas tend to be laid out in a grid system to optimize circulation and parcel configuration. Parcels are typically square or rectangular in shape to optimize site design. Many of these attributes help to optimize the end-users' speed to market, while minimizing development costs and project risk. The specific attributes that are required for an Employment Area to be successful are largely based on the intended function and designations.

Employment Areas which accommodate largely industrial uses such as advanced manufacturing, logistics, distribution and transportation sectors, typically offer the following physical requirements:

- **Access** – Proximity to controlled access highways is critical for the success of general industrial parks that have a significant degree of manufacturing, warehousing, distribution and logistics. These parks do not necessarily have to be adjacent to a controlled access highway but must be in proximity and easily accessible via major arterials that pass through limited residential or mixed-use commercial area(s);
- **Critical Mass** – Size is vital to ensure a wide selection/flexibility of land options and parks must include a sufficient supply of large parcels. As a minimum, 80 ha



(200 acres) is a suitable size for a park, in order to reach the critical mass needed to provide reasonable presence, choice and economies of scale;

- **Location** – Location must provide efficient and effective vehicular access and circulation, particularly for heavy truck traffic, with a minimum of two access points to enter/exit the industrial park;
- **Land Use Compatibility** – Buffering is important for general industrial parks in order to minimize noise and air pollution to neighbouring residential and other non-residential areas;
- **Market Choice** – Parcel size and configuration needs to be conducive for a wide range of land uses, especially for land extensive uses such as wholesale trade and transportation; and
- **Competitive Development/Operating Costs** – Land prices must be competitive, given the relatively land-extensive nature associated with many uses in general industrial parks.

Employment Areas which are more oriented for business park designation have moderately different requirements, including:

- Access and exposure/visibility to controlled access highways is critical for business parks, particularly for a corporate offices;
- Size is less important than it is for more general industrial parks but the business park must be generally large enough to foster a sense of place within a well-defined precinct and to allow for on-site amenities; and
- Business parks must present a more prestigious image, created through high quality building design, streetscapes and attractive landscaping.

## 6.2 Assessment of Competitiveness and Investment Readiness

### Glendale

Glendale is the Town's largest employment area, with a developed land base of 321 net ha (793 net acres) and a vacant land supply of 56 net ha (138 net acres) which is sufficiently large to have a critical mass. The area has a mix of prestige and general development and is home to a broad range of sectors including construction, transportation, manufacturing, wholesale trade and commercial services including restaurants, gas stations and hotels. The area is also home to the Niagara College of Applied Arts, one of the larger employers in NOTL.

The area is well located geographically to accommodate employment land development and is considered highly marketable given its proximity and access to the Q.E.W. and

Highway 405. The employment area is also well buffered from non-compatible uses. The area has seen significant industrial and commercial development activity over the past decade of which a significant share has been moderately prestige in character.

The area has the largest supply of vacant employment lands in the Town with an ample market choice in terms of parcel size and location. A large share of the vacant employment lands is shovel-ready with the remaining supply considered serviceable. The area is marketable for a broad range of uses, including wholesale trade, distribution/logistics, transportation, warehousing and manufacturing, business services and employment supportive uses including hotels and restaurants.

### Virgil Business Park

The Virgil Business Park, located in the settlement of Virgil, is a small employment area comprised of 10 net ha (25 net acres) of developed land with 5 net ha (12 net acres) available for future development. The area is home to predominately small-scale firms in the manufacturing, wholesale trade and business services sector. The business park is well defined and has a relatively attractive streetscape featuring curb and gutter roadways, underground utilities and street lighting. The park has excellent access to Niagara Stone Road but is located 10 km from the Q.E.W.

While the business park has limited further development potential, it is marketable for small-scale local businesses catering to manufacturing and business services. The park's size and distance from 400 series highways limits its potential for transportation and wholesale trade/warehousing uses. The vacant lands, located immediately south of the existing development, are currently not shovel ready and would require service extensions, including roadways.

### Airport Lands

The Airport Lands, which comprise 13 net ha (32 net acres) of developed employment land and 23 ha (56 acres) of developable vacant employment land, are located next to the Niagara District Airport. The developed lands accommodate a range of airport-related businesses including an airport terminal, aviation providers and flying clubs.

The vacant employment lands offer a unique industrial development opportunity. Though the lands have no significant market attributes on their own given their relatively small size and location, their proximity to the Niagara District Airport is an asset which enhances their development potential.

The airport's current size and operations limit the employment lands development potential. However, future expanded use of the airport would elevate the development potential of the Airport Lands over the longer term. As an expanded airport, the Niagara District Airport would offer some potential for sectors directly tied to airport activities and operations including air freight distribution/logistics and aviation services.

### St. Davids

Employment lands in St. Davids are situated on the north side of the settlement area along Four Mile Creek Road. The lands were previously occupied by the CanGro fruit processing facility and they are now being developed for a residential subdivision (The Cannery). No further employment lands development opportunities exist within St. Davids as the settlement area transitions to exclusively a residential/mixed-use community.

## **6.3 Conclusions**

The Town benefits from a cost competitive environment, access to major regional infrastructure, including several international airports (Hamilton International Airport, the Buffalo-Niagara International Airport, the Niagara Falls International Airport), two 400-series highways (Q.E.W. Niagara and Highway 405), proximity to the U.S., access to a growing skilled and unskilled labour force pool and access to a number of post-secondary education facilities within a one-hour drive.

Glendale is well positioned to capture a share of future employment growth on employment lands within the broader context of the west G.G.H. market area and is expected to accommodate the majority of employment lands development within the Town. The Virgil Business Park will continue to provide more local development opportunities for industrial and commercial businesses while the Airport Lands offer longer term development opportunities.

# **7. Conclusions**

## **7.1 Residential Growth Trends**

NOTL has experienced steady population and housing growth over the past two decades. Over the past five years, housing growth has been concentrated in the Town's settlement areas, namely in St. Davids, the Old Town and Glendale. Housing development activity has evolved to include a greater share of medium-density and high-density units than in the past, reflecting changing market demands.

The Town's population is aging. NOTL's existing age structure is older than the provincial average and the proportion of the Town's 55+ population has increased at a faster rate than the Ontario and Regional averages, driven by strong net migration in this age group.

NOTL is expected to continue to experience moderately strong population and housing growth through the year 2041, driven by its proximity to the G.T.H.A. quality of life attributes and appeal to a broad range of demographic groups. This is expected to also drive growth in population-related employment sectors including retail, personal services, business services and health and social services.

Based on recent residential development trends, market potential and the housing supply opportunities identified, future urban housing growth is anticipated to be concentrated in St. Davids, the Old Town, Glendale and Virgil. The Town has significant opportunities to accommodate residential growth through intensification and greenfield development within its settlement areas.

## **7.2 Non-Residential Growth Trends**

The Town's employment base is concentrated in retail, small- to medium-scale manufacturing, wholesale trade, transportation, government and education, accommodation and food services, agriculture and tourism. The employment base is also highly concentrated in the creative class economy (i.e. people engaged in arts and culture), comprised primarily of small businesses and home-based occupations.

The Town has experienced moderate levels of non-residential development activity over the past five years, concentrated in the commercial and agriculture sectors. Industrial development activity has been relatively limited. NOTL's economy is transitioning from goods to services production. Looking forward, existing and emerging knowledge-based sectors are expected to represent the fastest growing employment sectors for the Town. In addition to growing knowledge-based sectors, manufacturing remains important to the regional and local economies with respect to jobs and economic output.

Due to its local attractions and amenities, and its proximity to major urban markets such as the G.T.H.A., the Town is well positioned to continue to expand and develop its tourism and recreational opportunities. The agriculture sector also offers future opportunities related to agri-business and value-added processing and agri-tourism.

The majority of non-residential development and corresponding employment growth is anticipated to be concentrated in Glendale, Virgil and the Old Town. While the rural area is expected to continue to accommodate a notable amount of agricultural based

development activity, forecast employment growth in the rural area is expected to be relatively limited. The Airport Lands are also expected to accommodate a moderate share of industrial and commercial employment growth over the longer term.

Employment lands will continue to play an important role in accommodating non-residential development in NOTL. Glendale is well positioned to capture a share of future employment growth on employment lands within the broader context of the west G.G.H. market area and it is expected to accommodate the majority of employment lands development within the Town. The Virgil Business Park will continue to provide more local development opportunities for industrial and commercial businesses, while the Airport Lands offer longer term development opportunities.