



**REPORT TO:** Co-Chairs and Members of  
Public Health and Social Services Committee

**SUBJECT:** Niagara Prosperity Initiative Update

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## RECOMMENDATION

That this Committee recommends to Regional Council that:

1. the report [\*Building A New Legacy: Increasing Prosperity for Niagara Residents by Improving the Quality of Neighbourhood Life\*](#) be endorsed as the framework to guide the investments of the Niagara Prosperity Initiative (NPI);
2. the *Building a New Legacy* report be distributed to local MPs, MPPs and the twelve municipalities to assist with their policy and planning activities;
3. two members of the Public Health and Social Services Committee (PHSCC) continue to participate in the Request for Proposals review for NPI investments with contracts awarded after the 2012 operating budget is finalized; and
4. Community Services be authorized to issue non-binding requests for proposals for the Convener and Secretariat roles to support NPI in 2012 with contracts awarded after the 2012 operating budget is finalized.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- In 2007, Council set the direction for poverty reduction in Niagara based on the recommendations in the *Legacy of Poverty* report. These recommendations are:
  1. Decrease poverty through advocacy
  2. Appropriate and flexible supports which address the broader determinants of health for adults living in poverty
  3. Mitigate the negative effects of low income on children and youth through programs and services
  4. Monitor our progress
- The recommendations are supported with \$1.5 million annual investment resulting from the introduction of the Ontario Child Benefit (OCB) in 2007; the OCB provides financial assistance for low income families directly from the Province and removes children's benefits from social assistance
- In order to ensure that the NPI continues to respond to the issues it was intended to address, Community Services staff:
  - compiled more recent indicators of local poverty and worked with community stakeholders to see if the recommendations in the *Legacy of Poverty* report continue to be relevant;
  - reviewed the 2010 NPI investment results which informed the 2011 investments; the 2011 NPI funding was invested into 30 projects with 22 local agencies; and
  - reviewed the 2011 year-to-date activities of the Secretariat and Convener.

## **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

In September 2008 (COM 53-2008) Regional Council authorized staff to reinvest \$1.5 million in cost savings resulting from the implementation of the Ontario Child Benefit (OCB) toward increasing prosperity for Niagara families living in poverty. Investments in 2010 and 2011 were approved as part of Community Services Operating Budget. Community Services has included the \$1.5 million investment as part of the 2012 proposed Operating Budget.

## **PURPOSE**

This report has been prepared to:

1. provide more current information about poverty in Niagara and seek Regional Council's renewed support for the NPI framework that is used to guide investment of \$ 1.5 million;
2. provide information about the 2010 NPI projects;
3. provide information regarding the process used to allocate 2011 funding and request ongoing participation of two members of PHSSC in the review of proposals with contracts awarded after the 2012 operating budget is finalized; and
4. provide information about the 2011 year-to-date activities of the Convener and Secretariat and request authorization to issue non-binding requests for proposals for these roles for 2012 with contracts awarded after the 2012 operating budget is finalized.

## **BACKGROUND**

In February 2008 "*A Legacy of Poverty Addressing Cycles of Poverty and the Impact on Child Health in Niagara Region*" report was accepted by Council (COM 04-2008) as the framework for actions intended to reduce poverty.

In September 2008 (COM 53-2008) Regional Council authorized staff to reinvest \$1.5 million in cost savings resulting from the implementation of the Ontario Child Benefit (OCB) toward increasing prosperity for Niagara families living in poverty.

As recommended during the Council–Stakeholder Business Planning Session in 2008, Community Services established an advisory Committee to oversee the Niagara Prosperity Initiative (NPI); this committee is known as the Niagara Prosperity Initiatives Advisory Committee (NPIAC). At the planning session, it was also recommended that this initiative required ongoing support. A Secretariat was needed to provide administrative supports and oversight; a Convener was needed to bring together community partners to enhance collaboration.

Since 2009, the Business Education Council (BEC) has acted as the Secretariat and in 2011 the Niagara Community Foundation (NCF) was awarded the contract as the Convener. COM 08-2009, COM 44-2009, and COM 45-2010 provided information regarding the Secretariat/Convener roles and COM 05-2011 authorized Community Services to enter into agreements with the BEC and the NCF for these services for one year (January to December 2011).

## REPORT

### 1. Update to *Legacy of Poverty* report

In response to feedback from stakeholders, including members of Public Health and Social Services Committee, staff has examined the framework set in the *Legacy of Poverty* report which has guided the NPI. This task was completed by updating the indicators of poverty, consulting with stakeholders about NPI's implementation and gathering advice regarding next steps. This resulted in an updated report titled: [\*Building a New Legacy: Building Prosperity by Improving the Quality of Neighbourhood Life\*](#). The *New Legacy* report and highlights from the report are attached as Appendix A.

Information is critical in understanding complex issues and implementing appropriate responses. Besides informing the NPI actions and investments, the *Legacy of Poverty* report and neighbourhood profiles have been used to inform the work of many community stakeholders such as the school boards, social service agencies and local planners. The report and profiles provided information about demographics, challenges, resources and appropriate responses to poverty.

The *Legacy of Poverty* report used mainly 2001 census data to provide information about the local dynamics of poverty as that was the most recent census data available; broader social policy and welfare research was used to inform the recommendations and intended impacts. The *New Legacy* used the most recent 2006 census data as well as other key documents to update the indicators of poverty. Census data provides economic information, such as the portion of the population that is below the Low Income Cut Off (LICO). There is no local source for similar data.

The census data revealed that improvements for some low income households occurred from 2001 to 2006 (e.g. 0.7% decrease in low income families); however this data precedes the most recent economic downturn. More recent locally available data indicates that many households continue to struggle (e.g. increase in social assistance cases). A key challenge in continuing to benchmark local indicators is the federal government's decision to discontinue economic demographic data previously provided through the Census Canada Long Form survey.

The *Legacy of Poverty* report made four broad recommendations on how to increase prosperity poverty. These are:

1. Decrease poverty through advocacy.
2. Appropriate and flexible supports which address the broader determinants of health for adults living in poverty.
3. Mitigate the negative effects of low income on children and youth through programs and services.
4. Monitor our progress.

Increasing prosperity will have positive impacts on:

1. Different measures of poverty, such as LICO.
1. The social determinants of health, such as employment and education.
2. Experiences of powerlessness and social exclusion, such as discrimination.
3. Neighbourhoods and communities.

The NPI uses an asset-based community development approach, combined with small grants, to help build capacity and improve the quality of life in Niagara's neighbourhoods in need of attention. NPI helps agencies and residents see opportunities for community improvement and turn their ideas into action. It seeks to build resident leadership individually and collectively and to strengthen relationships within the community.

In order to understand if this framework continued to be meaningful, Community Services conducted interviews that focused on key informant's experiences with NPI. This information is included in the *New Legacy* report. Feedback from key informants indicates that the framework guiding the NPI remains relevant. Stakeholders stated that the initiative has been successful in explaining the issues and impacts of poverty and in providing concrete steps to increasing prosperity. However, some individuals noted that NPI could be improved by refocusing the Niagara Prosperity Initiatives Advisory Committee (NPIAC). Specifically, the role of NPIAC should shift from overseeing investments toward greater advocacy and collaboration in service delivery.

As a way to build a new legacy for Niagara families living in poverty, Community Services continues to engage stakeholders to respond to the recommendations in ways that include and do not include funding. Through this process, it is evident that poverty continues to be a pressing issue in Niagara but outcomes and feedback indicate that Niagara is heading in the right direction. There is evidence to support that short term improvements have been achieved and that changing poverty to prosperity requires a longer time horizon. Stakeholders reported that poverty is a complex issue requiring long term comprehensive and collaborative efforts and investments.

By endorsing the framework that guides NPI, Regional Council reaffirms Niagara's commitment to increasing prosperity by investing in actions that change systemic barriers, improve health and social supports for adults, provide services and programs for youth/children and track the results of these interventions.

## 2. 2010 NPI Projects

NPI investments began in 2008. Including those approved in 2011, a total of 136 NPI projects have been funded through 55 different agencies in Niagara. As outlined in the chart below, the service provided has steadily increased; the average cost per unit of service is \$75.79.

	# of Projects	Costs	Units of Service	Cost per Unit of Service
<b>2008</b>	12	\$368,591.64	4,232	\$87.10
<b>2009</b>	36	\$1,556,082.43	16,494	\$94.34
<b>2010</b>	58	\$1,445,734.07	27,306	\$52.94
<b>2011</b>	30	\$1,293,933.74	13,509 <sup>1</sup>	\$95.78
<b>Total</b>	<b>136</b>	<b>\$4,664,341.88</b>	<b>61,541</b>	<b>\$75.79</b>

<sup>1</sup> This is the projected number of service for 2011.

In 2009, through the NPI RFP process, a local researcher was selected to evaluate the 2009 investments. These results were reported in COM 05-2011. In 2010 and 2011, no financial resources were dedicated for an evaluation. In order to monitor results and as a condition of funding, agencies are required to submit regular financial and activity reports to the BEC. These agency reports were used to prepare this report.

This section of the report provides information regarding the process used for funding allocations, highlights the results of 2010 NPI projects and provides information about the allocations made for 2011.

#### What was approved?

A Request for Proposals (RFP) for 2010 NPI was issued by the BEC in November 2009 with a closing date of January 15, 2010. 74 proposals were received from 56 agencies with requests totaling over \$4.9 million. A list of the approved projects by neighbourhood was reported in COM 24-2010 and is attached as *Appendix B*.

A BEC review committee consisting of ten individuals representing the community, service agencies, social planning, and business met to review the proposals and make recommendations for funding to the BEC.

The six criteria used to review proposals measured projects on a scale of 'Strong', 'Average', and 'Weak'; this criteria is:

1. The project has measurable quantitative results;
2. The project effectively addresses recommendations from the report "*A Legacy of Poverty? Addressing Cycles of Poverty & The Impact on Child Health in Niagara Region*";
3. The project effectively addresses the themes from community conversations;
4. Does the project address poverty in a targeted neighbourhood?;
5. Will this project build a stronger community/neighbourhood?; and
6. Grant request is reasonable given project objective.

From the proposals reviewed, 41 proposals with a total request amount of over \$2 million were recommended to BEC by the review committee.

BEC used the 'Neighbourhood Mapping Tool' to align the recommended projects by the neighbourhoods they addressed. From this assessment, it was apparent that the majority of recommended proposals were focused seven neighbourhoods. The seven neighbourhoods were:

1. Three Bridges neighbourhood in Port Colborne;
2. Eastdale/Cordage neighbourhoods in Welland;
3. Fort Erie North neighbourhood in Fort Erie;
4. Drummond/Victoria neighbourhood in Niagara Falls;
5. Queenston/Haig neighbourhoods in St. Catharines;
6. Old Western Hill neighbourhood in St. Catharines; and
7. Downtown neighbourhood in Grimsby.

### What was Achieved?

- Total Number of Projects: 58
- Total Participating Agencies: 34
- Target set: 6,603
- Target Achieved: 27,306
- Average Unit Cost: \$52.94

The primary method of evaluation for 2010 projects was a document analysis of qualitative and quantitative data. Quantitative data reviewed includes the targets set and achieved, the units of service provided and average unit cost of the service/programs. Qualitative data includes the intended outcomes of the program and the actual experiences of agencies and participants. This data was collected via surveys and reports from agencies and individual participants. Further details regarding results are included as Appendix C.

Feedback from agencies and individual participants indicates that NPI has made progress in the following outcomes:

1. *Improved access to the social determinants of health* - neighbourhoods are becoming cleaner, safer, friendlier, with more and better youth and children's programs, housing, greater education, and improving job opportunities.
2. *Mitigating experiences of powerlessness and social inclusion* - neighbourhood residents are involved in public life, identifying and analyzing issues, mobilizing others to take action, designing and operating projects to deal with community issues, and group decision making, and community accountability.
3. *Strengthened neighbourhoods and communities* - co-operation and co-ordination are improving not only among neighbourhood residents, but also between residents and institutions and among institutions and organizations themselves that are active in the neighbourhood (e.g. schools, churches, local businesses, human service agencies, etc).

### What lessons were learned?

- Community gardens had expanded and become self-sustaining.
- Although many partnerships emerged, agencies reported that further supports need to be in place to encourage ongoing connections.
- Agencies reported a tension between delivering the services and monitoring program outcomes; they expressed the need for more supports to enhance the quality of reporting.
- The process of allocating funds should be separated from the process of collaboration; the competition for funds was reported as an obstacle to collaboration.

Other lessons learned were incorporated into the 2011 funding process. These lessons were:

- Applications needed to be more Neighbourhood and Indicator specific.
- Most of the projects funded addressed the *Legacy of Poverty* report recommendations for children (therefore in the 2011 RFP recommendations that received little attention were prioritized).
- Development of outcome statements to facilitate evaluations (based on the four frameworks of poverty).
- Development of quantitative targets with estimations.
- Community organizations had provided feedback that one-year projects are difficult to accomplish longer term outcomes – established a two-year funding option.

In response to the lessons learned, changes have been made to the RFP process and the NPIAC. As well, on July 28, 2011 the BEC held a meeting with all of the agencies implementing approved 2011 projects. Agencies were grouped according to the project's targeted municipality. At the meeting, agencies were given the opportunity to share with the group their project details and responded to the following questions:

- How can we share resources?
- How can we mutually promote our projects?
- How can we respond to the NPIAC goals?

This activity, known as establishing communities of practice, is identified as a leading practice in social services research. Funded agencies are able to identify needs and create or enhance partnerships and resources in order to achieve desired outcomes. The group will continue to communicate in their community of practice and expressed a desire to meet again to review the progress of their projects.

### 3. 2011 NPI Funding

A list of approved projects is included as Appendix D.

A Request for Proposals (RFP) for 2011 NPI was issued by the BEC in April 2011. The proposal criterion was as follows:

- Proposals must have targeted a specific neighbourhood and address an indicator that requires attention.
- Proposals needed to address the recommendations from the *Legacy of Poverty* report.
- Proposals were required to target at least one of the four dimensions of poverty from the *Legacy of Poverty* report.
- Proposals needed to explain how proponents would gather outcome measures for the following:
  - Number of people served (children 0-12; youth 13-18; adults 19-64; seniors 65+).
  - Number of units of service provided (i.e. # of group sessions provided).
  - Number of networks, links and/or partnerships formed in the community.
  - Number of people directly or indirectly involved in civic engagement activities.
- Proposals were open for a one or two year timeframe.
- Proposals were for projects that will make a long term difference in people's lives and in the communities where they live.
- Proposals were required to specify how the submitting agency would work collaboratively with other agencies and groups to enhance partnerships in order to achieve mutual outcomes and reduce duplication.
- Proposals needed to be for neighbourhoods and all individuals who live in that neighbourhood, not just for people receiving social assistance.

A total of 71 proposals were received from 36 community agencies requesting over \$4.1 million in funding. Throughout the month of May 2011, a BEC review committee consisting of 11 individuals representing the community, elected officials of Niagara Region, service agencies, business and government met to review the proposals and make recommendations for funding to the BEC.

Each proposal was reviewed independently by two assessors. The criteria for assessment matched the proposal criteria listed above. After all proposals were discussed the group met to make a final recommendation on which proposals to approve.

A total of 30 proposals from 22 agencies with a total request amount of over \$1.2 million were recommended to the BEC by the review committee. Funding allocation breakdown by municipality is as follows:

2011 Total Project Approved		% of Projects		% of Funding	Neighbourhood
Welland	7	23.3%	\$249,084.55	19.3%	Cordage; West Main
St. Catharines	7	23.3%	\$387,334.12	29.9%	Queenston; Old Western Hill; Merriton; Downtown
Niagara Falls	8	26.7%	\$197,625.50	15.3%	Drummond/Victoria; Elgin
Fort Erie	5	16.7%	\$284,603.56	22.0%	Fort Erie North; Crystal Beach
Port Colborne	3	10.0%	\$175,286.01	13.5%	Three Bridges; Stonebridge
	<b>30</b>		<b>\$1,293,933.74</b>		

These investments focused on individual, neighbourhood and community development supports that will impact 8,002 low income individuals and families in Niagara.

Project Breakdown by Type		Projected # Served
Adults	23%	1,091
Children/Youth	37%	3,296
Families	40%	3,615
Total number of people		8,002

Projects selected were aimed at achieving outcomes at different levels and at different times. This approach is designed to respond to the immediate needs of people living in poverty while building capacity and resources that have longer term impacts. A description for the three levels of impacts is as follows:

1. Individual – Short or Long Term (63% of 2011 projects): Short term projects respond to the urgent needs of individuals (i.e. bus pass, grocery cards); Long term projects have a long term effect on the individual and influences their life path (i.e. skill/confidence building through after school programs).
2. Neighbourhood Infrastructure (17% of 2011 projects): These projects provide lasting infrastructure to neighbourhoods that can be used by individuals living in the neighbourhood (i.e. food bank, community garden).
3. Neighbourhood Community Development: (20% of 2011 projects): These projects create networks and grow leadership amongst the people in the neighbourhood (good food box, community developers).

A more detailed list of these types of investments for 2011 is included as Appendix E. Community Services will report the outcomes achieved by these projects to Regional Council in 2012. Community Services recommends that two members of Public Health and Social Services Committee continue to participate in the proposal review committee in order to enhance transparency and accountability in the allocations process.

#### 4. Secretariat and Convener Roles

This section of the report provides information regarding the 2011 year-to-date activities of Secretariat and Convener.

Following the presentation and approval of COM 24-2010 *Update on "Increasing Prosperity for Families Living in Poverty" 2010 Prosperity Projects*, Public Health and Social Services Committee directed Community Services staff to: "Provide a report on the re-evaluation of the administrative structure of the Committee as it pertains to the *Increasing Prosperity for Families Living in Poverty*" initiative. In response to this direction, Community Services staff reviewed and reported on these options (COM 05-2011) and in February 2011 staff entered a one year agreement with the Business Education Council (BEC) to fulfill the role of Secretariat and with the Niagara Community Foundation to fulfill the role of Convener to support the NPI.

During the Council–Stakeholder Business Planning Session in 2008, stakeholders recommended that this initiative required ongoing administrative and community development supports. A Secretariat was needed to provide administrative supports and oversight; a Convener was needed to bring together community partners to enhance collaboration. Since 2009, the Business Education Council (BEC) has acted as the Secretariat and in 2011 the Niagara Community Foundation (NCF) was awarded the contract as the Convener.

#### Secretariat Role

To date in 2011, the BEC reported the following activities:

Secretariat Tasks	Details
Administer and track funding for the prosperity projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with agencies to submit financial and program data</li> <li>• Review reports against agencies' contracted obligations</li> <li>• Negotiate and correct performance in relation to contract</li> <li>• Flow funds and monitor reporting against expectations.</li> </ul>
Develop and ensure execution of contractual agreements for agencies funded to deliver approved prosperity projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contacted successful and not successful proponents to communicate funding decision</li> <li>• Executed contracts for 2011 funding with 22 agencies for 30 different projects</li> </ul>
Develop and implement a reporting system for agencies receiving funding for prosperity projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Created reporting templates</li> <li>• Designed new RFP application in line with 2009 and 2010 lessons learned</li> <li>• Receive, distribute and track password and user information attached to neighbourhood mapping</li> <li>• Provided information to 65 agencies regarding the application process including direction, answer questions about the process and facilitate connections between proponents with similar projects</li> <li>• Recruited members of the NPI Review committee</li> <li>• Organized and facilitated the review of 2011 proposals including providing the committee with information such as neighbourhood indicators and program details</li> <li>• Created the review template for 71 projects submitted for 2011 funding</li> <li>• Liaised between proponents and the review committee during the 2011 RFP.</li> </ul>

Since 2009, the Secretariat has worked with agencies to negotiate and adjust project funding to align with the NPI funding requirements. This review resulted in a re-allocation of \$196,736. In 2011, the Secretariat has leveraged a total of \$18,050 in 2011. This contribution has been used to enhance the Boys and Girls Club and United Way of St. Catharines and Thorold after school project and support the NPIAC meetings. Further details regarding Secretariat activities are outlined in Appendix F.

### Convener Role

The main objective of the Convener was to build capacity to and link partners. The following chart provides further details regarding the targeted objectives and outcomes achieved to date:

Objectives	Outcomes to date
1 Develop and enhance community partnerships with business, funders, service providers, and residents as a means to create increased capacity to respond to the strategic imperatives linked to the prosperity projects.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Application to Home Depot Foundation approved \$2,500 for community gardens</li> <li>– Stokes seeds donation acquired for community gardens</li> <li>– Initiated Credit Counseling site in Fort Erie at Salvation Army location</li> <li>– made contacts with all 4 school boards as new school year began to determine any new or changed initiatives</li> <li>– meetings with local BIA's to link 2011 approved NPI projects by neighbourhood and business specific communications document</li> </ul>
2 Explore alternative solutions to building prosperity and connecting programs and services at the community level as a means to extending and strengthening resources and partnerships.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Chair quarterly community developer meetings (community developers are in St. Catharines, Niagara Falls, Port Colborne and Welland)</li> <li>– Involved in facilitating a meeting with 2011 approved NPI funded agencies to discuss their programs and how they can complement one another</li> </ul>
3 Facilitate building capacity within employment, housing, education and health sectors to better integrate health and prosperity responses.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Worked with FirstOntario credit union in establishing a Niagara micro credit lending facility of up to \$100,000 to assist individuals with costs associated with establishing self employment</li> <li>– Work with Welland Rotary initiative to assists individuals with developmental challenges to gain employment</li> <li>– Facilitate Housing Standards Committee meetings reviewing rental housing by-law</li> </ul>
4 Support the Niagara Prosperity Initiative Advisory Committee and ensure that the vision and mission is followed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– updated Terms of Reference, and committee structure documents</li> <li>– Facilitate existing working tables: Niagara Prosperity Community Garden Network, Housing Standards group, Micro Credit/Job creation, Transportation, and Community Developers group</li> </ul>
5 Engage people living in poverty in meaningful ways in order to ensure that strategies and investments reflect need.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Worked with Adult Literacy Fort Erie regarding their "Bridges out of Poverty" workshops and extending them to Niagara Falls and St. Catharines</li> </ul>
6 Educate and engage stakeholders regarding strategies to increase prosperity for Niagara families living in poverty.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Attend and promote NPI at community garden, business and Rotary media events (i.e. VIP politician &amp; media event at annual Rotary Ribfest)</li> <li>– Developed NPI news digest distributed to Brock, Niagara College, DSBN and NCDSB to ensure continuity and awareness of NPI</li> </ul>
7 Work to create trust and reduce competitiveness between service providers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Work with United Way and Fort Erie agencies on a steering committee to plan a fall Agency Front Line Summit</li> </ul>
8 Inform advocacy activity based on the outcomes achieved and stakeholder feedback	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Face to face meeting with T Cooper, Director of Hamilton Roundtable</li> <li>– Attended "pre – Social Assistance review" session arranged through Ontario Social Planning Council</li> </ul>

Objectives	Outcomes to date
9 Assist communities to act to alter economic, political or social conditions that make up the context of poverty.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Transportation working group initial interest was inter-municipal which have been adopted by the Region for a Fall 2011 launch of Niagara Falls, Welland and St. Catharines service</li> <li>– Review has now shifted to explore ideas to deal with individual local municipality transportation issues</li> </ul>
10 Work with the Business Education Council in developing and implementing a communication plan to promote the Niagara Prosperity Initiative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– "Convener update" prepared covering initial activities to be distributed by BEC with a summer news digest to the NPI Advisory Committee</li> </ul>

To date in 2011, the Convener has been able to leverage \$102,500 toward NPI initiatives – the Micro-finance initiative and Community Garden projects. Details regarding the Convener’s engagement activities are included as Appendix G.

In reviewing the Secretariat and Convener roles, Community Services staff has drawn from research conducted by Vibrant Communities, a poverty reduction initiative sponsored by the McConnell foundation across Canada. Fifteen poverty reduction initiatives were part of the Vibrant Communities’ review. This research notes that successful initiatives require “a person(s)/organization(s) that convene the members of the change effort” as well as “fiscal/legal agent(s) that manages the human resource and financial arrangements to support the change effort”.<sup>2</sup>

Further, the Vibrant Communities research notes that staffing levels supporting the initiatives varies in both scale and cost. The staffing average is 2-4 dedicated full time staff, complemented by administration support and contractors. Three of the fifteen collaborations have 6-10 staff and are complemented with secondments or alliances in cooperation with other staffed networks. The smallest collaborative allocates \$139,332 to staffing costs; the largest dedicates \$384,800.<sup>3</sup> In comparison, Niagara’s investment is on the lower end of the scale; the amount allocated for these supporting roles in Niagara is \$150,000 or 10% of the NPI investment.

When mobilizing communities to address a complex issue such as poverty, research shows that relationships with stakeholders requires special and sustained attention in order to make positive system wide change.<sup>4</sup> Furthermore, stakeholders clearly expressed that the Secretariat and Convener roles remain with community partners during the Regional Council Business Planning session in June 2008. As noted in COM 45-2010, Niagara Region does not employ staff to directly administer the NPI funds nor act as a Convener for the reasons noted above. Furthermore, staff recognizes that community agencies, such as the BEC and the Niagara Community Foundation have established fundraising relationships with businesses. Assuming the Secretariat and Convener roles in-house may reduce this connection with business partners.

<sup>2</sup> Cabaj, M. (2010) *Governance & Staffing in Collaborative Poverty Reduction Initiatives*. Vibrant Communities June 2010.

<sup>3</sup> Cabaj, M. (2010) *Governance & Staffing in Collaborative Poverty Reduction Initiatives*. Vibrant Communities June 2010.

<sup>4</sup> Foster-Fishman, P. Nowell, B and Yang, H. (2007) “Putting the system back into systems change: a framework for understanding and changing organizational and community systems.” *American Journal of Community Psychology*. 39:197-215.

Although existing staff assist with the management of NPI, transferring these functions within the Region would require an additional 1.5 FTE at an approximate annual cost of \$150,000. This includes the costs of hiring a manager and coordinator to assume these duties. Consequently, staff recommends that the Secretariat and Convener roles remain with community agencies and that non-binding requests for proposals be issued for these two roles to continue in 2012. Staff also recommend that funding for these two roles remain in line with amounts allocated in 2009, 2010 and 2011 (10% of the total NPI investment). These amounts are \$100,000 for the Secretariat and \$50,000 for the Convener.

Recent indicators point to the continued need to support Niagara residents living in poverty. Stakeholders have affirmed the Region's commitment to advocacy, investments in the social determinants of health, programs/services for youth/children and monitoring progress. People who access the funded services and programs reported improvements in their own or children's quality of life. The Convener and Secretariat have been able to provide crucial infrastructure supports to the NPI as well as leveraged funds from the private sector.

Submitted by:

Approved by:



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Katherine Chislett  
Commissioner, Community Services

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Mike Trojan  
Chief Administrative Officer

Appendix A	<i>Building a New Legacy</i> report and highlights
Appendix B	2010 NPI Funded Projects
Appendix C	2010 NPI Funded Projects outcomes
Appendix D	2011 NPI Funded Projects
Appendix E	2011 NPI Funded Projects by level of intervention
Appendix F	Additional Details regarding 2011 year-to-date Secretariat Activities
Appendix G	Additional Details regarding 2011 year-to-date Convener Activities

*This report was prepared by Sarah Pennisi, Director, Social Assistance and Employment Opportunities*

**Appendix A**

Highlights from the New Legacy Report

Unemployment and a shifting labour market have changed the local landscape since Regional Council first endorsed NPI. This shift and the availability of more recent census data required an update to the report that guided the Niagara's Prosperity Initiative, called the *New Legacy* report.

The *New Legacy* report is organized around the four recommendations made in the original report which were re-affirmed by stakeholders. As these recommendations remain pillars for local action, each recommendation has been updated with information related to the recommendation, information about local activities related to implementation and feedback from agency representatives, community leaders and advocates about next steps.<sup>5</sup>

The following table provides a summary of information found in *New Legacy* report. The table includes data that highlights changes in indicators from the 2001 to 2006<sup>6</sup> census data. The table also includes feedback from stakeholders regarding experience with NPI and recommended next steps.

<b>Recommendation 1: Reduce poverty through advocacy</b>	
<b>Change from 2001 to 2006</b>	<b>Key Informant Feedback re: Recommendation 1:</b>
The number of households spending 30% of their income on housing increased by 5.4% from 2001 to 2006.	<p><i>Larger systemic issues remain (housing, transportation).</i> Continued and sustained attention must be given to the obvious but tenacious barriers to prosperity; these include unemployment, underemployment, and the role of supportive services like transportation, education, training, and child care.</p> <p><i>Lack of resources is discouraging full collaboration which would benefit neighbourhoods.</i> As identified by Niagara stakeholders themselves, competition among and a lack of trust among local service organizations can discourage collaboration which further marginalizes people living in distressed neighbourhoods. The current reality of scarce resources among non profit and community groups is a serious impediment to collaboration intended at the Niagara Prosperity Initiatives Advisory Committee.</p>
Households using public transportation increased by 0.5%.	
The portion of the population without a high school diploma increased by 2.1%.	
The portion of female headed LICO families decreased by 7.7%.	

<sup>5</sup> Theoretical sampling was used to select informants to gather perspectives on the funding decisions, the neighbourhood approach, service delivery, and general reflections. In total, eight semi-structured interviews were carried out from May 3 to June 16, 2010.

<sup>6</sup> Census data provides economic information, such as the portion of the population that is below the Low Income Cut Off (LICO). There is no local source for similar data.

**Appendix A-con't**

<b>Recommendation 2: Provide appropriate and flexible supports which address the broader determinants of health for adults living in poverty</b>	
Change from 2001 to 2006.	Key Informant Feedback re: Recommendation 2
<p>Unemployment rose by 0.3%. Among Aboriginal people in Niagara, unemployment rose by 2.3%</p> <p>Social assistance benefits covered 4.7% less of basic needs.</p> <p>Working poor families rose by 0.5%.</p>	<p><i>Economic development initiatives need to be part of neighbourhood prosperity work.</i> Focusing economic development at the neighbourhood level has promising potential but the neighbourhood focus may unintentionally reinforce stigmatization by concentrating efforts at the individual rather than the systems level.</p> <p><i>Business leaders are a critical element of success for labour force development.</i> Job development, retention, training, better wages, and access to financial supports for working people needs to be coordinated with broader policy and economic development strategies. Business champions are necessary partners in ensuring that poverty reduction becomes a sustainable practice.</p> <p><i>Tackling poverty requires plans and actions that ensure decent, adequate housing.</i> Niagara's waiting list for affordable housing continues to grow. Despite calls for a national housing strategy, there has been no policy or program development in this area.</p> <p><i>Stigma and a culture of meritocracy continue to be barriers to action and engagement.</i> Many social policy studies have documented the negative and oppressive experiences of service users accessing programs intended to provide support and assistance. A concerted effort is necessary to make poverty reduction an urgent issue for all of Niagara's citizens. A proactive media strategy can be developed and implemented to create awareness of poverty in Niagara and of the strategies and actions being undertaken to address it.</p> <p><i>Meaningful engagement of people living in poverty must receive special attention.</i> This can be achieved through various means, including door to door canvassing in neighbourhoods in need of attention. This is a way to gather information about enhancing opportunities for social inclusion; improving the social determinants of health for adults living in poverty includes access to services and supports for employment, training and civic engagement.</p>

<b>Recommendation 3: Mitigate the negative effects of low income on children and youth through programs and services</b>	
Change from 2001 to 2006.	Key Informant Feedback re: Recommendation 3:
<p>The portion of lone parent families increased by 1.2%.</p> <p>The portion of female headed lone parent families increased by 0.6%.</p>	<p><i>Niagara Region developed the Neighbourhood Profiles with the intention to provide information to guide discussions about conditions in neighbourhoods, including barriers and assets.</i> This tool has the potential to further mobilize and engage residents to collectively develop strategies regarding access and appropriateness of community assets that can mitigate the negative effects of low income on children and youth.</p> <p><i>The people who benefit from the services and programs may not be aware of their connection to projects, such as Niagara's Prosperity Initiatives.</i> Work needs to be enhanced to meaningfully engage people with lived experiences of poverty. This process of engagement is not token or mechanical, but rather is seen as instrumental in rekindling lost hope or addressing isolation and stigma.</p> <p><i>Appropriate responses to local dimensions of poverty need to be flexible.</i> This flexibility emerges as tension about the appropriateness of funding agencies to deliver programs across the region as opposed to funding local agencies to deliver programs within their own municipality. An opportunity for this assessment and discussion is on the horizon resulting from the implementation of full day learning for junior and senior kindergarten children.</p> <p><i>Service providers struggle with the need to measure outcomes and provide service.</i> From the service provider's perspective, the urgency of poverty relies on a process of learning by doing. Although this process relies on a process of measuring results, evaluating activities and processes is also recognized as important in understanding impacts. A pragmatic approach to building knowledge includes reflections on the practice, the process, and the people.</p>

**Appendix A-con't**

<b>Recommendation 4: Monitor progress</b>	
Change from 2001 to 2006.	Key Informant Feedback re: Recommendation 4:
Voter participation rates increased by 1.9% ( <i>this is one indicator of how involved people are in their communities</i> ).	<p><i>Sustainable commitments are built by generating community ideas and involvement. A driver for the prosperity initiatives is to increase capacity at the individual and neighbourhood levels; special attention must be focused on cultivating local leaders and enhancing their skills in order to foster collective local action geared toward transforming the distressing circumstances of poverty.</i></p> <p><i>Quantitative data tells us what people do; it doesn't tell us why. Although some measures indicate a positive impact for portions of the population, it is important to note that 2006 census is based on 2005 surveys taken before the economic downturn occurred. As well, a comprehensive approach to data analysis and program evaluation must include diverse vantage points and perspectives. Qualitative research methods should be incorporated into the data collection process in order to produce knowledge that is accessible and has high educative value for practitioners, service providers, and service users.</i></p>

**Appendix B**

**2010 Prosperity Initiatives: Three Bridges - Port Colborne**

Category	Agency	Project Name	Project Description
1 Youth Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Community Living Port Colborne-Wainfleet</li> </ul>	Healthy Living Port Colborne	Youth after School and Summer Recreation Program
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Niagara Catholic District School Board</li> </ul>	Niagara Community Development In Targeted Neighbourhood Communities	Mobilize community partners and neighbourhood champions to establish sustainable activities designated to engage the community and promote active, healthy lifestyles
2 Family Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Family and Children's Services Niagara (representing OEYC Niagara Centre)</li> </ul>	Parents as Literacy Supporters program	Reading programs for children and parents – provided with books and nutrition
3 Healthy Living	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bridges Community Health Centre</li> </ul>	Youth Health Promotion Strategy	A peer-led, youth engagement approach to enhance the health of youth in Fort Erie , Port Colborne and Wainfleet
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Community Care St. Catharines and Thorold: Niagara Nutrition Partners</li> </ul>	Niagara Nutrition Partners	Distribution of promotional information and presentations on school food nutrition programs
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Parish of St. James and St. Brendan's Anglican Church</li> </ul>	Back to the Basics	Families will learn to preserve food and market it for extra income
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Port Cares</li> </ul>	Community Food Bank project	Set up Community Food Bank in Port Colborne – participants will learn how to feed their families more nutritionally using local produce
4 Neighbourhood/ Business Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hope Furniture Bank</li> </ul>	Neighbourhood Drop Off Days	Direct engagement of community and service clubs to plan and execute Neighbourhood Drop Off Days for furniture that will then be distributed to families in need.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Port Cares</li> </ul>	Neighbourhood/Business Engagement	Work with the local communities and relevant partners and agencies to assess needs identify gaps, and organize and launch neighbourhood based solutions to reduce and prevent poverty.

**Appendix B-con't**

**2010 Prosperity Initiatives: Eastdale/Cordage – Welland**

	Category	Agency	Project Name	Project Description
1	Youth Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Centre de santé communautaire Hamilton / Niagara</li> </ul>	S'amuser pour la vie	Activities for francophone youth: including dance and tennis with nutrition classes and food vouchers
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>United Way of South Niagara</li> </ul>	Welland Neighbourhood Project	Youth after School and Summer Programs
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>YMCA of Niagara</li> </ul>	Youth Leadership Centre	A community centre where youth can come and participate in activities that focus on leadership/development and recreational activities with access to computers and internet for job searches and homework help.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Niagara Child and Youth Services</li> </ul>	Increase Access to NCYS Mental Health Services for Children, Youth and Families	Mental health counseling sessions for children, youth and families.
2	Family Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Family and Children's Services Niagara (representing OEYC Niagara Centre)</li> </ul>	Parents as Literacy Supporters program	Reading programs for children and parents – provided with books and nutrition
3	Healthy Living	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Community Care St. Catharines and Thorold: Niagara Nutrition Partners</li> </ul>	Niagara Nutrition Partners	Distribution of promotional information and presentations on school food nutrition programs
4	Neighbourhood/ Business Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hope Furniture Bank</li> </ul>	Neighbourhood Drop Off Days	Direct engagement of community and service clubs to plan and execute Neighbourhood Drop Off Days for furniture that will then be distributed to families in need.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>United Way of South Niagara</li> </ul>	Neighbourhood/Business Engagement	Work with the local communities and relevant partners and agencies to assess needs identify gaps, and organize and launch neighbourhood based solutions to reduce and prevent poverty.

**Appendix B-con't**

**2010 Prosperity Initiatives: Fort Erie North – Fort Erie**

Category	Agency	Project Name	Project Description
1 Youth Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Raft</li> </ul>	After School Program	After School Program providing access to free recreation, education and leisure programs and services out of Fort Erie Public School.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Boys and Girls Club of Niagara</li> </ul>	Neighbourhood Expansion Project	After School programs offered out of 20 Lewis Street five evenings per week.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Crystal Beach Public School</li> </ul>	The Beach Program	Deliver programs that increase self-esteem, nutrition, health & wellness and recreation in an after-school program model. Collaborative with the Fort Erie Community Policing, Fort Erie YMCA, Powerhouse Project, John Howard Society, Boys & Girls Club, Bridges Community Health, Ontario Early Years and "Just Girls" program.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fort Erie Multicultural Centre</li> </ul>	North Rising	Collaborative that joins arts, culture, literacy, parenting support and nutrition education into an after school program which aims to build the social skills and developmental assets of youth.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Niagara Child and Youth Services</li> </ul>	After School Youth Resiliency Program	Based on the 40 Assets model this program will provide a weekly group for 50 youth over ten months, facilitated by a caring adult, with the goal of empowering vulnerable youth.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Niagara Child and Youth Services</li> </ul>	Increase Access to NCYS Mental Health Services for Children, Youth and Families	Mental health counseling sessions for children, youth and families.
2 Family Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Family and Children's Services Niagara (representing OEYC Niagara Centre)</li> </ul>	Parents as Literacy Supporters program	Reading programs for children and parents – provided with books and nutrition
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>John Howard Society</li> </ul>	The Fort Falls Connection	Summer inter-municipal transit service between Fort Erie and Niagara Falls.
3 Healthy Living	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bridges Community Health Centre</li> </ul>	Youth Health Promotion Strategy	A peer-led, youth engagement approach to enhance the health of youth in Fort Erie , Port Colborne and Wainfleet
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Community Care St. Catharines and Thorold: Niagara Nutrition Partners</li> </ul>	Niagara Nutrition Partners	Distribution of promotional information and presentations on school food nutrition programs
4 Neighbourhood/ Business Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hope Furniture Bank</li> </ul>	Neighbourhood Drop Off Days	Direct engagement of community and service clubs to plan and execute Neighbourhood Drop Off Days for furniture that will then be distributed to families in need.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Boys and Girls Club of Niagara</li> </ul>	Neighbourhood/Business Engagement	Work with the local communities and relevant partners and agencies to assess needs identify gaps, and organize and launch neighbourhood based solutions to reduce and prevent poverty.

**Appendix B-con't**

**2010 Prosperity Initiatives: Drummond/Victoria - Niagara Falls**

Category	Agency	Project Name	Project Description
1 Youth Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Niagara Child and Youth Services</li> </ul>	After School Youth Resiliency Program	Based on the 40 Assets model this program will provide a weekly group for 50 youth over ten months, facilitated by a caring adult, with the goal of empowering vulnerable youth.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Folk Arts Council of St. Catharines Multicultural Centre</li> </ul>	Youth Host Outreach Project	Summer programming for newcomer youth in 1/2 day and day long workshops and outings.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Niagara Catholic District School Board</li> </ul>	Niagara Community Development In Targeted Neighbourhood Communities	Mobilize community partners and neighbourhood champions to establish sustainable activities designated to engage the community and promote active, healthy lifestyles
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Boys and Girls Club of Niagara</li> </ul>	Neighbourhood Expansion Project	After School programs offered out of 20 Lewis Street five evenings per week.
2 Family Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Family and Children's Services Niagara (representing OEYC Niagara Centre)</li> </ul>	Parents as Literacy Supporters program	Reading programs for children and parents – provided with books and nutrition
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bethlehem Projects of Niagara</li> </ul>	Increasing access to children's programs for families through integrated services	Based on early learning principles, children get access to interactive parent/child "play and learn" activities.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Niagara Peninsula Children's Centre (Speech Services Niagara)</li> </ul>	A Summer Family Literacy Program for Kindergarten Children at Risk for Literacy Difficulties	Summer family literacy program for children identified by JK teachers as struggling with key foundational skills in literacy.
3 Healthy Living	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Project S.H.A.R.E. of Niagara Falls Inc.</li> </ul>	Neighbourhood Gardens	Coordinator will assist Glengate Alliance Church members plan and develop a large garden on church property where people will connect socially through pot luck lunches and engage in physical activity sessions while working in their garden plots.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Community Care St. Catharines and Thorold: Niagara Nutrition Partners</li> </ul>	Niagara Nutrition Partners	Distribution of promotional information and presentations on school food nutrition programs
4 Neighbourhood/ Business Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hope Furniture Bank</li> </ul>	Neighbourhood Drop Off Days	Direct engagement of community and service clubs to plan and execute Neighbourhood Drop Off Days for furniture that will then be distributed to families in need.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>YMCA of Niagara</li> </ul>	Neighbourhood/Business Engagement	Work with the local communities and relevant partners and agencies to assess needs identify gaps, and organize and launch neighbourhood based solutions to reduce and prevent poverty.

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**2010 Prosperity Initiatives: Queenston/Haig - St. Catharines**

	Category	Agency	Project Name	Project Description
1	Youth Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>District School Board of Niagara</li> </ul>	DSBN Summer H.E.A.T. 2010	Early intervention strategy designed to allow parents and their children (ages 3-7 yrs) the opportunity to solidify prior learning and participate in new learning together: on site at the school, in the home, and in the community.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Folk Arts Council of St. Catharines Multicultural Centre</li> </ul>	Youth Host Outreach Project	Summer programming for newcomer youth in 1/2 day and day long workshops and outings.
2	Family Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Family and Children's Services Niagara (representing OEYC Niagara Centre)</li> </ul>	Parents as Literacy Supporters program	Reading programs for children and parents – provided with books and nutrition
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bethlehem Projects of Niagara</li> </ul>	Increasing access to children's programs for families through integrated services	Based on early learning principles, children get access to interactive parent/child "play and learn" activities.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Goodwill Industries Niagara</li> </ul>	Stokes Community Village Programs	Programs offered out of the Stokes Building for all age groups - recreational/physical; homework; cooking.
3	Healthy Living	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gateway Residential &amp; Community Support Services</li> </ul>	Good Food Box Program	The Good Food Box makes accessible fresh produce to people with low income.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Community Care St. Catharines and Thorold</li> </ul>	St. Catharines Community Gardens Project	Development and building of a community garden that will provide nutritious food and food programs for local families.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Community Care St. Catharines and Thorold: Niagara Nutrition Partners</li> </ul>	Niagara Nutrition Partners	Distribution of promotional information and presentations on school food nutrition programs
4	Neighbourhood/ Business Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hope Furniture Bank</li> </ul>	Neighbourhood Drop Off Days	Direct engagement of community and service clubs to plan and execute Neighbourhood Drop Off Days for furniture that will then be distributed to families in need.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Start Me Up Niagara</li> </ul>	Queenston Neighbourhood: Building Lives. Building Community	Initiate a community development strategy that would engage residents, business, and other sectors to revitalize the neighbourhood.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Raft</li> </ul>	Neighbourhood/Business Engagement	Work with the local communities and relevant partners and agencies to assess needs identify gaps, and organize and launch neighbourhood based solutions to reduce and prevent poverty.

**Appendix B-con't**

**2010 Prosperity Initiatives: Old Western Hill - St. Catharines**

	Category	Agency	Project Name	Project Description
1	Youth Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>District School Board of Niagara</li> </ul>	DSBN Summer H.E.A.T. 2010	Early intervention strategy designed to allow parents and their children (ages 3-7 yrs) the opportunity to solidify prior learning and participate in new learning together: on site at the school, in the home, and in the community.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Folk Arts Council of St. Catharines Multicultural Centre</li> </ul>	Youth Host Outreach Project	Summer programming for newcomer youth in 1/2 day and day long workshops and outings.
2	Family Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Family and Children's Services Niagara (representing OEYC Niagara Centre)</li> </ul>	Parents as Literacy Supporters program	Reading programs for children and parents – provided with books and nutrition
3	Health Living	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gateway Residential &amp; Community Support Services</li> </ul>	Good Food Box Program	The Good Food Box makes accessible fresh produce to people with low income.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Community Care St. Catharines and Thorold: Niagara Nutrition Partners</li> </ul>	Niagara Nutrition Partners	Distribution of promotional information and presentations on school food nutrition programs
4	Neighbourhood/ Business Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hope Furniture Bank</li> </ul>	Neighbourhood Drop Off Days	Direct engagement of community and service clubs to plan and execute Neighbourhood Drop Off Days for furniture that will then be distributed to families in need.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Raft</li> </ul>	Neighbourhood/Business Engagement	Work with the local communities and relevant partners and agencies to assess needs identify gaps, and organize and launch neighbourhood based solutions to reduce and prevent poverty.

**Appendix B-con't**

**2010 Prosperity Initiatives: Downtown - Grimsby**

	Category	Agency	Project Name	Project Description
1	Youth Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Negotiating with Niagara Child and Youth Services</li> </ul>	Increase Access to NCYS Mental Health Services for Children, Youth and Families	Mental health counseling sessions for children, youth and families.
2	Family Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Family and Children's Services Niagara (representing OEYC Niagara Centre)</li> </ul>	Parents as Literacy Supporters program	Reading programs for children and parents – provided with books and nutrition
3	Healthy Living	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Community Care St. Catharines and Thorold: Niagara Nutrition Partners</li> </ul>	Niagara Nutrition Partners	Distribution of promotional information and presentations on school food nutrition programs
4	Neighbourhood/ Business Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hope Furniture Bank</li> </ul>	Neighbourhood Drop Off Days	Direct engagement of community and service clubs to plan and execute Neighbourhood Drop Off Days for furniture that will then be distributed to families in need.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Grimsby Affordable Housing Partnership</li> </ul>	From Garden to Table	develop a 50 x 30' garden to provide access to fresh vegetables for low income families in Grimsby
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Grimsby Affordable Housing Partnership</li> </ul>	Neighbourhood/Business Engagement	Work with the local communities and relevant partners and agencies to assess needs identify gaps, and organize and launch neighbourhood based solutions to reduce and prevent poverty.

**Appendix C**

Outcomes of 2010 Prosperity Initiatives

The development of the evaluation process for NPI includes the following groups:

- Expertise from PhD sources (internal and external to Niagara).
- Niagara Research Planning Council.
- Tamarack (an Institute dedicated to the art and science of community engagement and collaborative leadership and exists to build vibrant and engaged communities in Canada).

They provided feedback including how projects are funded, where investments are made, what types of interventions should be supported and how evaluation should occur. This feedback has been incorporated into the design for the 2011 RFP process as well as the NPI structure.

Based on the data and resources available, a formative evaluation was used to review the 2010 funded projects. This type of evaluation has the purpose of improving programs and services. 2010 outcomes show positive impacts in three dimensions of poverty: Social determinants of health, Experiences of powerlessness and social exclusion and Neighbourhoods and communities.

In analyzing the information reported by the funded agencies, projects were categorized to match these dimensions of poverty. Four corresponding categories emerged: access to healthy food; transportation, programs for youth/children and healthy living. Details are as follows:

Category	Targeted Neighbourhood	Outcomes Reported	Types of Projects
Healthy Food	Three Bridges Eastdale/Cordage Drummond/Victoria Fort Erie North Queenston/Haig & Old Western Hill Downtown Grimsby	Improved quality of life by eating healthy and saving costs of produce purchases Improved neighbourhood spaces because gardens produced a harvest of vegetables and flowers. Strengthened neighbourhood relationships as a result of the close bonds that developed between participants contributing also to a sense of social inclusion. Strengthened capacity for change as 45 people from many sectors were actively engaged in neighbourhood committees (200 surveys, 63 people attended forum) Increased opportunities for civic engagement resulted from the creation of 4 subcommittees where neighbourhood action plans were developed.	Food Bank Programs Good Food Box Community Gardens Nutrition training and education
Access to Transportation	Fort Erie North	Improved neighbourhood spaces by holding 22 local outings for youth; this also created opportunities for engagement 3 to 4 times per week. Resources dedicated to reducing poverty were leveraged through the partnership of 7 local agencies with 11 local businesses. Increased access to services and programs which resulted in 2 summer jobs for youth, 147 people that attended a job fair that included 6 employers. This resulted in 24 job offers. Fees collected from 640 riders also generated \$2,291 to offset operating costs.	Bus Passes Inter-municipal transit supports

**Appendix C-con't**

<b>Category</b>	<b>Targeted Neighbourhood</b>	<b>Outcomes Reported</b>	<b>Types of Projects</b>
Programs for Children/Youth	Three Bridges Eastdale/Cordage Fort Erie North Drummond/Victoria Queenston/Haig & Old Western Hill Downtown Grimsby	Increased access to services and programs resulted in a reported gain in children's literacy; their ability to identify the names and sounds of letters, identify print and their ability to manipulate sounds and words increased. Children also acquired life skills and practiced health lifestyle choices in nutrition, exercise, literacy and dental hygiene. Improved neighbourhood space resulted from the 2 dance recitals held. In lieu of an entry fee, guests were encouraged to bring non-perishable food items, which were boxed and distributed to 40 participating families. Neighbourhood relationships were strengthened because students had a safe place to go with peers to participate in programs.	After school programs Literacy programs
Healthy Living	Three Bridges Queenston/Haig & Old Western Hill Eastdate/Cordage Fort Erie North Drummond/Victoria	Improved neighbourhood space was created as a result of a partnership with the St. Catharines Mayor's Graffiti Committee who has allocated \$25,000 to community projects in designated neighbourhoods. Household assets were increased by providing 151 people with necessities for healthy living such as bedding and furniture. Increased access to services and programs resulted from fifteen different programs targeted to families.	Neighbourhood and Business Engagement Distribution of school nutrition information

Appendix D

**Fort Erie  
2011 Prosperity Initiatives**

Agency	Project Name	Project Description	Neighbourhood
Boys and Girls Club of Niagara	Fort Erie Community Engagement Project	The Boys and Girls Club expanded the programming to engage more children living in Fort Erie North and Crystal Beach through additional bussing. The club identified parents, or other adults, specifically newcomers to Canada, looking for job opportunities in the child related field as has been providing the training and hire them as support staff.	Crystal Beach; Fort Erie North
District School Board of Niagara	Summer H.E.A.T. (Helping Everyone Achieve Together)	The Summer H.E.A.T. program is a targeted strategy designed by the District School Board of Niagara to support students and families during the summer months. This 3 week program for students age 3-8 enhanced student achievement by providing highly engaging; science based activities, opportunities for meaningful parent engagement as well as a focus on healthy living.	Crystal Beach
John Howard Society of Niagara	IMPACT Fort Erie	The John Howard Society of Niagara, in partnership with the Niagara Regional Police Service (NRPS), provided athletic tournaments during selected transition periods of the school year, at FESS. In partnership with the District School Board of Niagara, Brock University and many of our local retailers, we intend to run athletic tournaments and skills camps during Summer break, and March Break. The initiative will be partnered with NRPS volunteers, and Brock athletic volunteers.	Fort Erie North
The Adult Literacy Council of Greater Fort Erie	Fort Erie North CAFÉ (Creating a Foundation for Excellence)	This project includes training for service providers, literacy tutoring, stress workshops, legal clinics, and healthy eating workshops. This project is a partnership between like-minded agencies and is designed to increase the capacity of the Fort Erie North Neighbourhood by developing a community hub. This hub will service the specific needs of the people in the neighbourhood through program delivery in locations that are easily accessible given the limited access to transportation.	Fort Erie North
Youth University	Neighbourhood Access Initiative - Tutoring and After-school Program	Led by Brock University student volunteers from varying faculties, students (beginning in Grade 6), are mentored, tutored in literacy and numeracy skills, and engaged in hands-on activities that identify and connect their interests with future careers and post secondary education (PSE) pathways. To foster motivation, planning and preparation for PSE, students have the opportunity to attend day programs on Brock University Campus. These supports exist through secondary and PSE.	Fort Erie North

Appendix D-con't

**Niagara Falls  
2001 Prosperity Initiatives**

Agency	Project Name	Project Description	Neighbourhood
District School Board of Niagara	Summer H.E.A.T. (Helping Everyone Achieve Together)	The Summer H.E.A.T. program is a targeted strategy designed by the District School Board of Niagara to support students and families during the summer months. This 3 week program for students age 3-8 enhanced student achievement by providing highly engaging; science based activities, opportunities for meaningful parent engagement as well as a focus on healthy living.	Drummond/ Victoria
Gateway (Good Food Box)	Good Food Mobile Market	The Good Food Box (GFB) expanded into Niagara Falls. GFB provides a choice of nutritious fresh fruits and vegetables to local residents at wholesale prices, on a bi-monthly basis.	Drummond/ Victoria; Elgin
John Howard Society of Niagara	IMPACT Niagara Falls	The John Howard Society of Niagara, in partnership with the Niagara Regional Police Service (NRPS), provided athletic tournaments during selected transition periods of the school year, at Stamford. In partnership with the District School Board of Niagara, Brock University and many of our local retailers, athletic tournaments and skills camps will happen during Summer break, and March Break. The initiative partners NRPS volunteers, and Brock athletic volunteers.	Drummond/ Victoria
Learning Disabilities Association of Niagara Region	Reading Rocks Junior	Reading Rocks Jr. – is a literacy program for children aged 4-6, who are at-risk for reading disabilities. The project brings together three community partners (LDANR, Brock U, and both Niagara School Boards) to provide vulnerable children with high-quality literacy programming at no cost. Reading Rocks Jr. is a program that combines empirically supported literacy instruction with motivation and self-efficacy.	Drummond/ Victoria
Niagara Catholic District School Board	Neighbourhood Access Initiative - Tutoring and After-school	Led by Brock University student volunteers from varying faculties, students (beginning in Grade 6), are mentored, tutored in literacy and numeracy skills, and engaged in hands-on activities that identify and connect their interests with future careers and post secondary education (PSE) pathways. To foster motivation, planning and preparation for PSE, students have the opportunity to attend day programs on Brock University Campus. These supports exist through secondary and PSE.	Elgin
Project S.H.A.R.E. of Niagara Falls Inc.	Garden Workshops	In 2010 a consultant helped people living in "at risk" neighbourhoods on a low income establish backyard gardens. In 2011, workshops built on existing synergies that break down barriers like transportation by offering on site programming. Three strong neighbourhood "leaders" with existing plots will host teaching gardens, as well as 3 partner sites -Glengate Church and 2 NRH. Neighbours attended workshops, leisure activities and volunteer at these sites, encouraging them to start gardens of their own.	Drummond/ Victoria
YMCA of Niagara	Community Y House	The Community Y House provides recreational programming for youth 6-12 years of age. The program is held in the Niagara Regional Housing - Warden and Waters Family Community. Youth are able to participate in a free recreational program that focuses on physical activity, healthy lifestyles and youth engagement. Youth are able to participate in a program right in their neighbourhood, and in the housing complex where some of them live.	Drummond/ Victoria
YWCA Niagara Region	Women's Leadership Project	This project trains women through a program called Step Up to Leadership. It will run as a 12 week program of leadership skills that can be translated to a variety of settings including boards, committees and other community activities. Beyond the training program there is support to find placements and form a support group that will help with problem solving. Successful participants will act as mentors for the next group.	Drummond/ Victoria

**Appendix D-con't**

**Port Colborne  
 2011 Prosperity Initiatives**

Agency	Project Name	Project Description	Neighbourhood
Port Cares	Food Service Associate	Port Cares will offer a 12 week essential skills based pre-employment Food Service Associate Program. Groups of 12 participants will train 6 times over two years at the Community Food Centre. The focus will be on food safety & sanitation, food preparation (including set up, serving, clean up), financial literacy, interpersonal communication skills, computer literacy, healthy living skill building, and customer service. Work experience and industry related certifications are provided.	Three Bridges; Stonebridge
Community Living Port Colborne/Wainfleet	It's All About the Kids	This program offers 3 sessions per school year, in three schools (public, catholic and French) in the Three Bridges areas. Each session hosts 3 - 5 week programs totaling 15 weeks per session at each school. The program focuses on different themes (basketball, volleyball, art...) and includes a healthy cooking component. At the end of each program parents are invited to witness what the kids have accomplished and what their children can successfully cook.	Three Bridges
District School Board of Niagara	Summer H.E.A.T. (Helping Everyone Achieve Together)	The Summer H.E.A.T. program is a targeted strategy designed by the District School Board of Niagara to support students and families during the summer months. This 3 week program for students age 3-8 enhanced student achievement by providing highly engaging; science based activities, opportunities for meaningful parent engagement as well as a focus on healthy living.	Three Bridges

Appendix D-con't

**St. Catharines  
2011 Prosperity Initiatives**

Agency	Project Name	Project Description	Neighbourhood
Bethlehem Housing and Support Services	Skills of Success for Women	The Skills of Success (SOS) for Women program is a pre-vocational program designed to build upon a woman's strength in order to increase personal and economic self-sufficiency. The program provides 10 three-hour workshops in the areas of Assertiveness, Healthy Relationships, Legal Issues, Communication, Goal Setting, Money Matters, Self Care, Crisis Management and Employment Opportunities. This 30 hour program is designed to raise awareness of community resources available.	Queenston; Old Western Hill; Merriton; Downtown
Climate Action Niagara	The Stokes/ Goodwill Gardens	The Stokes-Goodwill Gardens is a neighbourhood initiative supporting existing programming with workshops for the Goodwill Culinary students and inclusion of neighbourhood residents through an outdoor recreation area and active food garden. Participants are involved from planning to construction, to preservation of foods and herbs for local food security and higher culinary standards. The project provides the surrounding community with indoor and outdoor meeting and kitchen space.	Queenston; Downtown
John Howard Society of Niagara	IMPACT St. Catharines	The John Howard Society of Niagara, in partnership with the Niagara Regional Police Service (NRPS), intends to provide athletic tournaments during selected transition periods of the school year, at West Park. In partnership with the District School Board of Niagara, Brock University and many of our local retailers, athletic tournaments and skills camps will happen during Summer break, and March Break. The initiative partners NRPS volunteers, and Brock athletic volunteers.	Old Western Hill
Niagara North Community Legal Assistance	Injured Worker Speakers School	Through an intensive 15 week program the Injured Workers Speaker School develops leaders who will use their own stories and the knowledge they learn through the program to lobby and fight for change. Students include injured workers and family members. A graduation speech will be presented at a public meeting. There will be a follow-up of four meetings after the course and an expectation that one student will be hired to help with the next session as a trainee.	Queenston
The RAFT	Neighbourhood Awakening - A Community Development Initiative	Using a trained community developer, the project builds community capacity in two neighbourhoods in need of attention in St. Catharines. The initiative strengthens neighbourhood relationships, improves prosperity and creates a venue for a unified neighbourhood voice. It creates synergy between the City's official economic development plan, the neighbourhood's business owners and community members, targeting under employed at risk youth.	Old Western Hill; Downtown
United Way of St. Catharines & District	Rykert Youth Programs	Rykert Youth Programs (RYP) brings free educational, recreational, and leisure opportunities to the heart of the neighbourhood through a preteen program, serving children ages 10 to 12, and a teen program, serving youth ages 13 to 18. Through a multitude of programs - from homework help and physical activity, to nutritious snacks and community projects - youth develop life skills, as social cohesion amongst neighbours increases, while mitigating the negative effects of low-income.	Old Western Hill
YWCA Niagara Region	Women's Leadership Project	This project trains women through a program called Step Up to Leadership. It runs as a 12 week program of leadership skills that can be translated to a variety of settings including boards, committees and other community activities. Beyond the training program there is support to find placements as well form a support group that helps with problem solving. Successful participants will act as mentors for the next group.	Downtown

Appendix D-con't

**Welland  
2011 Prosperity Initiatives**

Agency	Project Name	Project Description	Neighbourhood
Climate Action Niagara	Sprouting Roots Welland	Sprouting Roots Welland is a collaborative initiative between Climate Action Niagara, the Oak Centre, the Consumers Survivors Initiative and Niagara Regional Housing that enables residents and clients to upgrade their life skills while providing local access to healthy nutritious food, reducing their food budgets, providing food security and by supporting an emerging community garden on Fitch Street beside Regional Housing with educational capacity.	West Main
Community Legal Services of Niagara South - CLSNS	Volunteer Program - Community Legal Clinic	CLSNS develops a volunteer program for low-income families in the Cordage and West Main neighbourhoods; individuals work as volunteers for a 6 month term, 2 days/week in the legal clinic. The volunteers receive training on the job in clerical and administrative skills which assist in making each volunteer employment ready. Volunteers also receive an opportunity through their volunteer activity to increase their own legal literacy.	Cordage; West Main
Faith Tabernacle - 2011 Program Enhancement	Faith Tabernacle Community Outreach	This is an enhancement of a very successful program funded by the NRPI 2010. It involves classes at McLaughlin Community House cooperating with NRHS and RAFT and Plymouth School. Music lessons increased (in the number of students served & additional electives) due to high demand. A ladies group, block party, and summer sports camp were added. Two summer students were employed to deliver the program.	Cordage; West Main
Faith Tabernacle - 2011 to 2013 Program Delivery	Faith Tabernacle Community Outreach	Programs include Kids Life Labs (music, sewing, cooking, craft classes, etc) at Plymouth and programming at McLaughlin Community House in cooperation with NRHS and RAFT. The Girl Talk program mentors girls to nurture healthy self-image, etc. A school feeding program provides meals at 4 schools in Welland. A Block Party and Summer Sports Camp are part of the program.	Cordage
Faith Tabernacle - McLaughlin Community Gardens	Faith Tabernacle Community Outreach	This program builds upon past successes with a community garden at McLaughlin Community House in cooperation with NRHS and RAFT. Gardening and landscaping skills are taught to local area residents in this low income neighbourhood. The landscaping skills enhance employment opportunities. It also provides food for area residents that is incorporated into cooking classes. The program expanded to create home gardens at the residences of the participants.	Cordage
Strategy to End Poverty (STEP) - Niagara	Cooperative Build - City Lands Bordered by Southworth, McLaughlin	This project provides a re-visioning and enhancement of that neighbourhood through the creation of a model community of 40-50 dwellings put together by a coalition of community partners and with the participation of the City of Welland both as a grantee of the lands and an enthusiastic participant. The coordinator is responsible to discern the full range of contribution of each of the partners to this project.	Cordage
The RAFT	Neighbourhood Awakening - A Community Development Initiative	Through a community developer, build community capacity within Welland through initiatives that strengthen neighbourhood relationships, improve prosperity and create a venue for a unified neighbourhood voice. The initiative creates synergy between the financial and economic goals of the city with the reality of the neighbourhood, through active engagement with community members, local business and at risk youth. The initiative creates positive change and encourages economic success.	Cordage; West Main

## Appendix E

List of examples the different levels of investments for 2011 Prosperity Initiatives:

1. Individual – Long Term are:
  - Skills of Success for Women
  - Volunteer Program - Community Legal Clinic
  - It's All About the Kids
  - Summer H.E.A.T. (Helping Everyone Achieve Together)
  - Faith Tabernacle Community Outreach
  - IMPACT Fort Erie, Niagara Falls, St. Catharines
  - Reading Rocks Junior
  - Neighbourhood Access Initiative - Tutoring and After-school
  - Injured Worker Speakers School
  - Food Service Associate
  - Rykert Youth Programs
  - Neighbourhood Access Initiative - Tutoring and After-school Program
  - Women's Leadership Project
  
2. Neighbourhood Infrastructure are:
  - The Stokes/Goodwill Gardens
  - Sprouting Roots Welland
  - Faith Tabernacle Community Outreach
  - Fort Erie North CAFÉ (Creating a Foundation for Excellence)
  - Community Y House
  
3. Neighbourhood Community Development are:
  - Fort Erie Community Engagement Project
  - Good Food Mobile Market
  - Garden Workshops
  - Cooperative Build - City Lands Bordered by Southworth, McLaughlin
  - Neighbourhood Awakening - A Community Development Initiative

**Appendix F**

Further details regarding Secretariat Activities – Year-to-Date 2011

BEC participated, organized and /or facilitated the following meeting activity:

<b>Meeting</b>	<b>Amount</b>
NPI Advisory Committee	8
NPI Steering Committee	11
Secretariat/Convener meetings to encourage business engagement (eg Turkstra Lumber and Home Depot)	8
Business Caucus Meeting	12
RFP Preparation and Information Session	4
Review Team Meetings - 2011	7
Interactive Mapping information session	1
Micro Credit development	4
Meeting with agencies re: reporting	2
	57

**Appendix G**

Convener Engagement Activities – year to date 2011

The Convener participated facilitated the following engagement activities:

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Amount</b>	<b>Description</b>
Garden Network	9	Initiated Niagara Prosperity Garden Network. Monthly meetings started in March 2010 and membership and participation continued to grow each month. Sharing of best practices, visiting of garden sites plus 3 supporting business contributed to the success of the 2010 gardens.
Housing Standards	5	Community group with mission to improve living conditions primarily with private sector landlords for renters.
Transportation	1	Contributed to inter municipal transit system moving forward with letter to Regional Council endorsed by NPI membership
Micro-Credit Job Creation	2	Met with agencies to scope out how to integrate the micro-credit into current job readiness supports
Community Developers	12	Encouraged and supported this network to share best practices.
Community Committee / Outreach	22	Coordinated with NR Corporate Communication and hosting agencies, locations and participants media event to promote NPI neighbourhood initiatives.
Individual Agency meeting	23	Provided information to agencies (both funded and not funded) to link the NPI objectives and agency ideas/goals.
Business Engagement	9	Initiated Micro-Finance concept in Niagara with leadership from Pen Financial e.g. CEO Bob Watson. Also some of the local Chambers of Commerce heightened awareness of local NPI Initiatives in their monthly newsletters.