



LINCOLN'S PATHWAY TO PROSPERITY

A summary of the Town of Lincoln's Economic
Development Strategy & Action Plan

2019 - 2023

MESSAGE FROM MAYOR EASTON & COUNCIL

Building a vibrant, strong and prosperous community does not happen by accident. It takes hard work and a proactive approach that starts with creating and pursuing a shared vision – one that reflects the hopes and aspirations of the community as a whole.

Lincoln's vision – **a place to grow, a place to prosper, a place to belong** – was developed through community-wide consultation with input from hundreds of residents and stakeholders. It is the job and priority of Council to work with all members of the community in support of that vision.

Key to creating a prosperous future for Lincoln is undertaking a strategic and rigorous approach to economic development. This approach was adopted during the past term of Council and started with securing our first full-time economic development officer. In late 2017, the Town engaged Sierra Planning and Management and its partner, the Global Investment Attraction Group, to develop a formal Economic Development Strategy and Action Plan to help prioritize and direct the Town's economic development efforts over the course of the next five years.

This publication is a summary of the detailed strategy document presented to Council in September 2018. The strategy serves as a roadmap for Lincoln's economic development efforts through to 2023.

The months ahead in Lincoln promise to be exciting as we build and launch new tools and processes that will enhance the Town's ability to address challenges and take advantage of opportunities that will strengthen our community.

Economic advantage and opportunity live in Lincoln. We have a well-established entrepreneurial spirit and culture. Our five-year strategy will help lay the groundwork for success, and we invite you to join Council and the Town on this exciting pathway to prosperity.



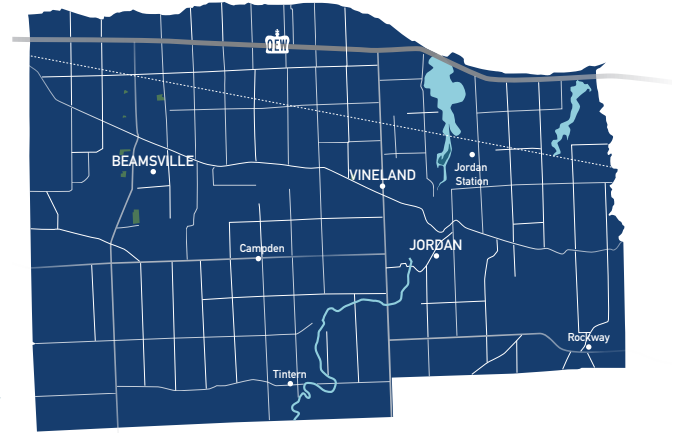
CONTENTS

LINCOLN – A COMMUNITY ON THE MOVE	4
Employment picture	4
Economic picture	5
WHY INVEST IN LINCOLN?	6
Location	6
Quality of life	6
Higher education and research	7
Major developments and opportunities	8
DRIVING RESULTS	9
Promote an “Open for Business” message	10
Business retention and expansion	11
Innovation and leadership	12
Attracting new investment	12
Talent and workforce development	13
Marketing	14
SECTORS OF FOCUS	14
Agriculture	15
Food and beverage	16
Tourism	17
Manufacturing	18
PLAN IMPLEMENTATION	19



LINCOLN - A COMMUNITY ON THE MOVE

Home to about 24,000 people, the Town of Lincoln is located in the Niagara region on the south shore of Lake Ontario. The QEW, a vital cross-border Canada-US corridor, transects the town's north end. Lincoln has a diverse economy; from exceptionally productive agricultural and horticultural sectors, to manufacturing, value-added agricultural businesses and tourism, Lincoln is on the move.



Population: **23,787**
(2016 census)

Lincoln is the sixth most populated of Niagara's 12 municipalities, outpacing the region as a whole in growth from 2011 to 2016. Over the past two decades, Lincoln has grown steadily with a **26.5 per cent** increase since 1996.



Predicted Growth:

2031: **28,060**
2041: **31,590**



Median Age:

Lincoln: **44.5**
Ontario: **41.3**



Employment picture

Jobs in Lincoln: **11,915** (May 2016)

Top Sectors:

14%

Manufacturing
(includes beverage
manufacturing)

12.5%

Health care / social services

11.5%

Agriculture



A mobile workforce

Only one in three jobs are held by Lincoln residents. Many employees commute from St. Catharines, Grimsby, or Hamilton. Conversely, two of three Lincoln residents travel to these and other communities for work.

Lincoln vs. Ontario

Lincoln's employment rate is **3.2 per cent** higher than the Ontario average and its unemployment rate is **2.8 per cent** lower (2016 Census).



Economic picture

A leader in agriculture

Lincoln's key economic and employment sectors are agriculture, manufacturing and tourism. In 2016 Lincoln led both the Niagara region and the entire Golden Horseshoe in gross farm receipts. Lincoln boasts the highest concentration of greenhouses in Niagara and dominates the greenhouse floriculture production in Ontario.



Agriculture



\$\$\$ High Value



\$253 Million

- Total Gross Farm Receipts
- 13% of the total across the entire Golden Horseshoe



The **highest concentration** of greenhouses in Niagara



Tourism



Leveraging Niagara's tourism reach –
12.7 million annual visitors



50 wineries, plus craft beer, cider and spirits



Festivals

Winter WineFest, Get Fresh in the Valley, Wrapped Up in the Valley, Graze the Bench



Manufacturing



15 per cent increase in manufacturing jobs between 2012-2017



Beverage and wine production accounts for **one-third of all** manufacturing jobs (602)



The concentration of beverage manufacturing jobs is **22 times** the Ontario average

WHY INVEST IN LINCOLN?

Lincoln is a highly livable small community ideally located near major population centres, including the Greater Toronto Area, Hamilton and Buffalo, NY.



QEW in Lincoln



Aerial view of Lincoln



Megalomaniac Winery

With our abundance of tender fruit farms, greenhouse operations and award-winning wineries, distillery and brewery, Lincoln is a *Centre of Excellence for Agriculture*. Lincoln prides itself on having policies and procedures in place that help foster this vital segment of our economy.

Location, location, location


With over **800,000 people** within a **35-kilometre radius**, Lincoln businesses have ready access to nearby markets and a large pool of educated and skilled workers.

Access to a vibrant workforce


Niagara: **214,000**

Hamilton: **435,000**

Driving times to major city downtowns

 **Toronto**
90 km / 50 mins

 **Hamilton**
35 km / 26 mins

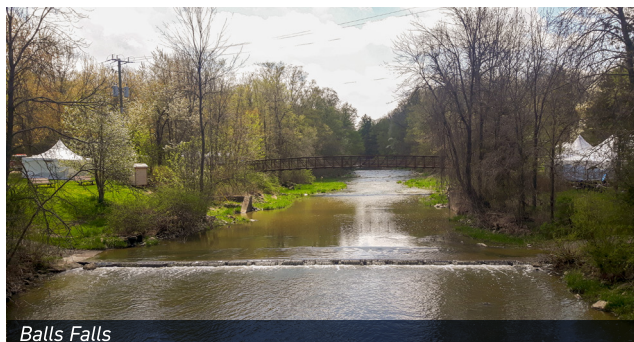
 **Buffalo**
69 km / 45 mins

Quality of life

One of Lincoln's greatest strengths is its livability. Residents enjoy the benefits of quaint, neighbourhood living with ready access to big city amenities. In short, Lincoln is a perfect place to work, live and play.



uLinc passenger




Balls Falls



Lincoln ReRooted

Affordable homes (Average sale price, 2017)


 **Lincoln:**
\$512,347


 **Grimsby:**
\$592,446

 **NOTL:**
\$811,549

High Household Income (Median after-tax, 2015)

 **Lincoln:**
\$75,696

 **Niagara region:**
\$58,235

 **Ontario:**
\$65,285

Higher education and research

Lincoln benefits from the region's academic and research institutions. Brock University and Niagara College provide a steady supply of top talent that benefit Lincoln businesses.



vineland

RESEARCH & INNOVATION CENTRE

The Vineland Research and Innovation Centre (Vineland), based in Lincoln and closely affiliated with the University of Guelph. Vineland Research has championed the importance of business development partnerships while investigating and identifying leading edge technologies and innovations of value to Canadian horticulture. Vineland Research scientists and researchers are dedicated to horticultural and greenhouse sciences that directly benefits Lincoln's agricultural sector.



Brock Lincoln Living Lab

Brock University and the Town of Lincoln have partnered to create the Living Lab collaborative project that enriches opportunities for students and advances Lincoln's economic, social and community development. Brock's Environmental Sustainability Research Centre is working with the Town on a number of innovative projects focused on community sustainability.



Major developments and opportunities

Two Secondary Plans approved by Town Council in 2018 present opportunities for signature developments and long-term economic activity. Both promise to increase land availability for commercial use, creating a significant opportunity for economic diversification within Lincoln.

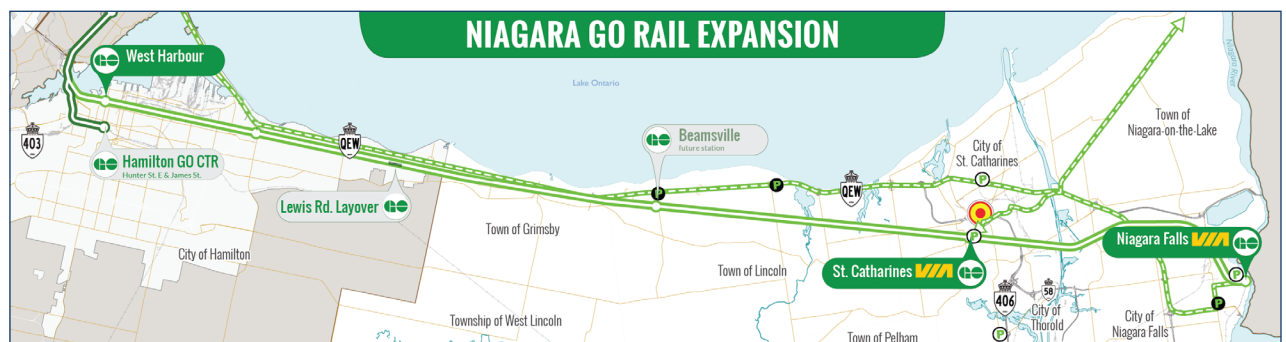
Prudhommes Landing

Prudhommes Landing is a \$1.2 billion development site and the last prominent block of lakefront land along the QEW. The plan includes:



Beamsville GO Station

Beamsville is a proposed GO Train stop along the Niagara GO Transit corridor connecting Niagara and Toronto. The Secondary Plan covers 254 hectares highlighted by rezoned commercial land. The Town will be working with Metrolinx and private sector partners to make this a reality.



Lincoln's Commitment to Economic Development

Recent Initiatives:

- Future Focus Corporate Plan 2014-2018
- Establishing Economic Development Officer position, 2017
- Economic Development Strategy and Action Plan, 2018
- Employment Lands Study
- Tourism Strategy, 2019

Community Improvement Plans:

- Beamsville Core and Ontario St. Commercial Area
- Vineland Central Business District
- Mixed-use and Residential Intensification
- Employment Lands Study
- New Industrial Lands & Rural Areas Community Improvement Plans

DRIVING RESULTS

The overarching goal in economic development is to improve the economic well-being of a community by developing and implementing an integrated mix of policies, programs and initiatives. Success is measured by growth in the municipal tax base, retention and attraction of investment and talent, and by sustained economic growth and diversity.

Economic development is a long-term, incremental endeavour that also seeks to enhance quality of life in balance with other community goals, such as sustainability and overall complete communities.

The principal economic development roles and strategies that will drive results are:



1. Promote an
"Open for Business" message



2. Business retention and
expansion



3. Innovation
and entrepreneurship



4. Attracting new investment



5. Talent and
workforce development



6. Marketing



Strategy 1: Promote an “Open for Business” message

Existing businesses and potential new investors make decisions based on perceptions of the local business climate. Municipalities that successfully attract new investment typically have a consistent vision, clear goals, and predictable, transparent and balanced policies that are applied in a timely manner. The Town of Lincoln must continue to position the community in a positive light by enacting favorable economic development policies that underscore our “open for business” message.

Objective 1: Attract, encourage and promote new development initiatives to foster growth

Key Actions:

- Establish a business expeditor role to better meet the needs of prospector requirements through to final decision, supported by a Development Approval Flow Chart
- Establish an adequate supply and market choice of serviced employment lands in appropriate locations
- Develop and promote the signature Prudhommes Landing area and other areas offering employment lands and/or economic development and tourism related commercial opportunities
- Advocate to secure the Beamsville GO Rail station
- Identify potential partners and policies for the development of additional lands for agri-tech ventures
- Explore developing new Community Improvement Programs and monitor the competitiveness of Lincoln's Development Charges, property taxes and fees
- Evaluate the merits of an Annual or biennial Niagara Agricultural Forum

Objective 2: Equip the Town of Lincoln to be economic development and investment ready

Key Actions:

- Establish a comprehensive and robust economic development website with associated social media and other features
- Establish a Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system to handle lead and prospect tracking and reporting and to build and manage contact and distribution lists
- Gather and regularly update in-depth site location information, including user-friendly maps, to better respond to inquiries and opportunities
- Create a searchable inventory of industrial and commercial land and buildings
- Establish a Lincoln business directory
- Create or update marketing material, including a fact sheet and a community profile

Objective 3: Establish frameworks for ongoing dialogue between the Town and economic development stakeholders

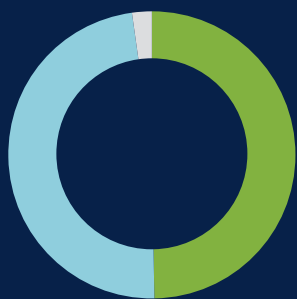
Key Actions:

- Establish a pattern of regular meetings with principal producers and business groups
- Sustain dialogue with the tourism sector through involvement and direct contact with the principal tourism stakeholders
- Consult with stakeholders to build consensus around Lincoln's value proposition, opportunities and challenges
- Work with other clusters of businesses in Lincoln to explore the formation of BIAs



Strategy 2: Business retention and expansion (BR+E)

Number of Businesses in Lincoln by Employee Count (2018)



- 1-4 employees 447
- 5-99 employees 433
- 100+ employees 18

Initiatives that help retain or create new jobs through business expansion are a key part of economic development. We know that as many as 70 to 80 per cent of new jobs are generated from existing businesses. It is generally easier and less expensive to keep and grow existing businesses than it is to attract new investment. The Town can play a key role by helping small businesses access available resources and programs to support growth.

Objective: Engage Lincoln businesses and agricultural enterprises to understand and support the intentions and needs of existing business

Key Actions:

- Meet with larger employers to understand their capabilities, plans and needs
- Regularly mount structured BR+E calling program
- Create and support initiatives to connect local businesses to sources of assistance and funding





Strategy 3: Innovation and leadership

Entrepreneurship and innovation both involve a willingness to accept risk in an effort to obtain greater return. Innovation can be a critical factor in helping emerging firms develop new products or services, reach new markets or successfully and rapidly scale their operations. It is also equally important for well-established firms and is a proven driver of job creation across all industries and enterprises. The Town's role is to forge connections for local firms and entrepreneurs with programs and resources in the Niagara region and beyond to support business establishment and growth through innovation.

Objective: Encourage and support the development of a dynamic ecosystem with an innovative and entrepreneurial culture

Key Actions:

- Support and grow the partnership with Spark Lincoln, a collaborative innovation hub located in Beamsville
- Connect Lincoln entrepreneurs and businesses to resources in Niagara and the Greater Golden Horseshoe that support innovation and entrepreneurship
- Attract events that will stimulate, support and highlight local innovation, scaling and entrepreneurship
- Build on the recently signed Niagara College-Lincoln Memorandum of Understanding for innovation and leadership

Spark Lincoln

- 1,000 sq. ft. of co-working and meeting space
- Coaching and mentoring
- Youth retention initiatives



Strategy 4: Attracting new investment

Attracting new investment is a highly competitive endeavour. Because it can be a daunting undertaking for a small municipality, the Town of Lincoln should focus on collaborative economic development initiatives with higher levels of government, neighbouring jurisdictions and industry associations that also have a stake in a prospective new investment.

Objective: Target and pursue new investment prospects within the Team Niagara framework

Key Actions:

- Identify and develop compelling value propositions for high priority sub-sectors and niches
- Provide information, as part of Team Niagara (Niagara Economic Development officers) investment attraction efforts, on Lincoln's assets, workforce, priorities, differentiating factors, sites and buildings, and value propositions
- Invite investment prospects to Lincoln and demonstrate how the community meets their requirements
- Identify opportunities for expansion and work with the local management of externally-owned firms to make the business case for existing or new mandate



Strategy 5: Talent and workforce development

To grow, expand and succeed, businesses need access to a highly skilled workforce. Today's workplace is knowledge-based, technology-driven and globalized, with change occurring at an exponential pace. In this environment, life-long learning and adaptability are critical. Cognitive skills – such as teamwork and critical thinking – are in high demand.

Objective: Develop, encourage and support initiatives to attract, retain and adapt Lincoln's talent pool to meet the evolving requirements of businesses and agricultural enterprises

Key Actions:

- Work with the Niagara Workforce Planning Board and others on research projects and workforce initiatives that align with Lincoln's priorities
- Identify and quantify employment sectors where a significant number of people commute to work from Lincoln or its neighbouring communities as these talent pools will be attractive to prospective new investors or to local companies looking to expand
- Establish a mentorship program to connect business leaders and entrepreneurs with those aspiring to start, sustain and expand businesses

Lincoln's Commitment to Economic Development

- Two-thirds of Lincoln residents commute to work out of town
- Young families and former residents with roots in Niagara seeking relief from housing costs and congestion in GTA
- Work-from-home professionals looking for lifestyle advantages
- Youth retention initiatives
- Seniors looking for post-career involvement



Why collaborate?

- Site selectors often choose a larger economic region before narrowing to a specific site
- Cost-sharing
- Improved access to federal and provincial funding
- Stronger value propositions and better targeting of desired sub-sectors and niches



Key partnerships

REGIONAL

- Niagara Region Economic Development
- Niagara Development Corridor Partnership
- Niagara Industrial Association

INTER-REGIONAL

- Hamilton-Niagara Partnership (Invest Hamilton Niagara)

PAN-REGIONAL

- Ontario Food Cluster
- Ontario Manufacturing Communities Alliance

Strategy 6: Marketing

Having established an economic development office, the Town of Lincoln has the expertise to develop the messaging and branding necessary to support a comprehensive, multi-year marketing strategy. The targeted audience is multi-faceted: existing businesses, prospective new investors, worker talent and visitors.

Objective: Establish consistent, targeted and current messaging that raises awareness and differentiates Lincoln

Key Actions:

- Establish a stand-alone economic development website
- Develop greater depth of messaging in marketing material, including compelling value propositions for the priority sub-sectors
- Expand communication vehicles to incorporate video, newsletters, media releases and corporate success stories
- Develop targeted lead generation initiatives based on marketing
- Collaborate with Team Niagara on site selection and media visits to Lincoln

SECTORS OF FOCUS

Determining a community's economic development priorities begins by targeting a limited number of sectors where it has demonstrable strengths, can truly differentiate its offering, and where it can support local expansions and mount highly targeted initiatives that will resonate with prospects considering new business locations.

Lincoln's strong roots in agriculture presents an ideal roadmap for identifying sectors of focus throughout the initial five-year term of the Economic Development Strategy and Action Plan.

Lincoln's four sectors of focus not only help differentiate Lincoln from other municipalities, they also generate excellent opportunities for collaboration. The sectors are:



1. Agriculture



2. Food and Beverage



3. Tourism



4. Manufacturing

Agriculture

Lincoln is one of Canada's premier locations for high revenue agriculture. Its farms account for **\$13 of every \$100 in gross farm receipts** in the Golden Horseshoe while representing only three per cent of the region's farmland acreage. Economic development efforts to leverage this enviable status for further growth are paramount.






Objective: Mount and support initiatives to grow agricultural sector revenues, competitiveness, and innovation

Key Actions:

- Use regular meetings with producer groups to be informed of issues, concerns, opportunities and challenges to enhance advocacy efforts
- Review OMAFRA's suite of funding programs to determine where Lincoln producers and organizations may benefit
- Work to resolve policy conflicts between the Town and Niagara Region to enable access to water and sewage mains in areas outside urban boundaries
- Support work of the Irrigation Working Group of the Niagara Agricultural Policy Action Committee
- Pursue provincial funding initiatives to enable natural gas trunk expansion in support of the greenhouse sector
- Promote linkages among the agriculture sector, Vineland Research and Innovation Centre, post-secondary educational institutions, Federal and Ontario officials and programs, and suppliers of equipment, technology and systems, including entities outside Niagara involved in sector-related innovation

Lincoln knows how to grow!

Lincoln has the highest number of farms in all of Niagara generating additional income from direct-to-consumer sales

				
GRAPES	PEACHES	PEARS	FLORAL	VEGETABLES
143 farms	62 farms	51 farms	48 greenhouse operations	10 greenhouse operations
4,500+ acres	1,600+ acres	450 acres	8+million sq. ft.	180,000 sq. ft.
OTHER FARM OPERATIONS:			CANNABIS MARKET BY 2020:	
Poultry 23	Equine 8	• 800,000 kg • \$6.5 billion		
Oilseed/grain 21	Vegetable/melon 8			

SUPPORTING 3,419 JOBS IN LINCOLN

Food and beverage

Lincoln's food and beverage industry represents a natural progression along the value chain that starts with agriculture. Led by wine production, **the concentration of beverage manufacturing jobs in Lincoln is 22 times the Ontario average.** Lincoln's wineries have spearheaded direct-to-consumer strategies that result in substantial tourism gains, a model that can be applied to other food and beverage categories.

Objective: Expand marketing channels and outlets, achieve greater economic returns, and attract and grow local food and beverage ventures

Key Actions:

- Adopt the best practices demonstrated in the Peterborough AMO Pilot Project which developed an expedited approach to reviewing and granting approvals for micro-breweries, micro-distilleries, brew-pubs and licensed restaurants
- Encourage the development of an agri-food incubator with shared space and approved commercial food preparation and testing facilities
- Work with Toronto area food incubators and other partners, such as Niagara College, to offer their graduates growth space in Lincoln for their start-ups
- Facilitate collaborative marketing efforts (e.g. food map, wayfinding signage, website, social media, etc.)
- Undertake a feasibility study for a Lincoln Farmers' Market and/or a Food Hub
- Assess feasibility of arranging collaborative retailing for alcoholic beverages produced in Lincoln

A Lincoln-led food incubator?

A key challenge for food entrepreneurs is securing access to commercial kitchens that have government health approval.

Food incubators – initially started in Toronto to leverage under-utilized community facilities – can provide shared space that meets this need.

With high costs and congestion in Toronto, there is opportunity to partner with food incubators to provide shared space that would allow them to expand and scale while being closer to inputs.



Bench Brewing



Honsberger Estates Winery



Lincoln is situated in one of the world's most recognizable travel destinations – Niagara. The growth in reputation, variety and extent of Niagara's wineries – a central feature of Lincoln's offering – has made the region's wine country offering a growing visitor draw that complements "The Falls" experience and expands visitors' choice. The challenge for Lincoln and the area is to raise the level of awareness of this unique offering by building upon local DMO efforts.

Objective 1: Develop a comprehensive, Lincoln-centred tourism strategy and action plan to provide needed infrastructure, expand capacity, increase visitor accommodations, and create memorable destinations, value and services to attract more visitors to Lincoln

Key Actions:

- Develop a comprehensive, focused, Lincoln-centred tourism strategy and action plan to assess current strengths and weaknesses, opportunities and constraints, competitiveness, ways to increase visits, revenues and overnight stays
- Develop an action plan to attract investment in new and expanded accommodations
- Undertake a comprehensive wayfinding signage program based on branding and identity recommendations arising from the tourism strategy
- Expand e-information for visitors, through WiFi networks, social media, websites and other approaches that the tourism strategy may recommend
- Explore models for shared transportation and hop-on, hop-off visitor transit – locally and with links to the GTA

Objective 2: Initiate action on local tourism-related needs that lend themselves to immediate action

Key Actions:

- Develop tools and establish links with Niagara Region and the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport to be able to seek out and attract investment in accommodation and signature destination attractions in Lincoln
- Assess and consider improvements to the Town's existing wayfinding signage program for tourism-related businesses and agricultural enterprises



Manufacturing

More than a third of the jobs in Lincoln's manufacturing sector are in beverage manufacturing – principally wineries and craft beverage producers. At the same time, a number of other manufacturing subsectors, including agri-tech and greenhouse-related manufacturing, have realized promising growth in the past five years.

Objective: Support the competitiveness, retention, growth, and attraction of new investment in manufacturing and technological systems in Lincoln

Key Actions:

- Create a database of information about the principle Lincoln manufacturing firms and their needs
- Develop and support initiatives to connect Lincoln manufacturers, especially those oriented to export and to technology development and adoption, with programs and sources of assistance and funding
- Map manufacturing supply chains to identify gaps that represent opportunities for new investment or expansion locally
- Meet with Lincoln-based suppliers to the greenhouse, cannabis, wine and viticulture, and tree fruit and berry sectors to identify opportunities to develop in-depth business cases to increase local research and development, manufacturing, and the supply of services
- Liaise with the Niagara Industrial Association and its members to monitor opportunities and concerns and to ensure Lincoln locations and suppliers are known to them

Manufacturing jobs on the rise – 2012-2017

General Machinery:
135 jobs / 13%

Plastic Products:
120 jobs / 44%

Architectural and Structural Metals:
103 jobs / 49%

Rail Rolling Stock:
50 jobs / 28%

Fertilizer:
46 jobs / 53%

Medical Equipment/Supplies:
45 jobs / 36%

Fabricated Metal:
37 jobs / 9%



Automated Mushroom Harvesting at Vineland Research and Innovation Centre

Greenhouse Sector Advances

- Vertical farming
- Cannabis production automation
- Computer sensing & monitoring
- Irrigation control & efficiencies
- LED lighting

PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

Investment and economic development readiness is an essential prerequisite to pursue opportunities and to manage inquiries and prospects promptly.



a place to
GROW

a place to
PROSPER

a place to
BELONG

