



**Chief Administrative Officers (CAO's)
Office**

TO:	Committee of the Whole – Council Business Planning
MEETING DATE:	April 19, 2017
SUBJECT / REPORT NO:	Holland Delegation Report No AD 17-04
PREPARED BY:	Mishka Balsom, GNCC Darren Ward, VRIC Mayor Sandra Easton Councillors Rob Foster and Dave Thompson Michael Kirkopoulos, CAO
SUBMITTED BY:	Michael Kirkopoulos, CAO

RECOMMENDATION:

1. That report AD 17-04 regarding the Holland delegation be received for information.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The purpose of this report is to provide an overall summary of the Holland delegation and its benefits to Lincoln. Testimonies from each delegate serve to outline the importance of the tour, their unique perspectives based on their expertise and organization interests, and on how the Town most effectively uses this information and experience to formulate future policy direction.

Exposing policy and decision makers to new information, innovation and technology, better positions Council on future policy direction on the potential of the greenhouse sector in Lincoln and Niagara. Such information will inform future discussions with producers and ensure that planning applications are intrinsically understood so that we can respond and enable effectively and protect investment opportunities.

The report will also serve as an engagement tool in follow-up with the producers who generously assisted with the planning for this trip, along with other levels of government or interested stakeholder bodies.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND:

The Town of Lincoln declared intention to enhance its economic prosperity by enabling the growth on farm value-added activities and further formalized this in its Official Plan that received Provincial endorsement in late 2016.

Throughout 2014-2016 Council accessed the new policy direction to support on farm value-added activities thereby enabling progressive economic growth in the agricultural sector. Although many of the planning applications were grape and winery related it was becoming clear that the obvious contribution to the local GDP by horticulture and specifically the greenhouse flowers and vegetable markets may benefit from similar attention.

In mid summer 2016 Mayor Sandra Easton convened a meeting with producers, some of whom were located in Lincoln to discuss how the sector might benefit from further discussions on future development. Mayor Easton had obtained earlier correspondence from the Ontario Greenhouse Association about their growth targets and believed there was a solid base to begin more local discussions.

The Town determined that in order to enter into a meaningful planning process we needed to include Councillors who had responsibility for leading the Agricultural tourism, planning, and economic development agendas. At the time of the delegation, there was no established Committee specific to economic development and was not represented by a Councillor at that time. Mayor Sandra Easton, Deputy Mayor Rob Foster, Chair of Sport Recreation and Culture Dave Thompson, CAO Mike Kirkopoulos represented the Town of Lincoln. Key partners who were knowledgeable and supportive of Lincoln's Centre of Excellence for Agriculture model were also invited to include Niagara College, Brock University, Greater Niagara Chamber of Commerce (GNCC), Lincoln Chamber of Commerce, and Vineland Research and Innovation Centre (VRIC), and Niagara Region Economic Development staff.

Furthermore, a group leader was hired who had previous experience in organizing tours for similar purposes, including Flowers Canada, to ensure most effective delegation. The Town hired Fabiola Prins who developed an itinerary with delegation members to ensure primary goals were achieved. The final delegation team included the Town of Lincoln, GNCC and VRIC. While the other partners were unable to join, a commitment to continue to correspond and include the remaining partners throughout the process.

Objectives of delegation:

- The role that agriculture can play in tourism, business
- Build relationships with foreign-based business
- Develop better understanding of new or innovative technologies
- The difference this sector can make in a community – what is each of their role
- Enhanced and expanded government relations

FINANCIAL – STAFFING – LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS:

Financial:

The seven-person delegation cost approximately \$21,004, with GNCC and VRIC costs covered by their applicable organizations. Costs related to the delegation included flights, hotel, and meals.

Staffing: none

Legal: none

RELEVANT CONSULTATION:

As noted in the historical background, Mayor Sandra Easton convened a meeting with producers, along with receiving correspondence from the Ontario Greenhouse Association about their growth targets and believed there was a solid base to begin more local discussions.

STAFF COMMENTS:

In general, delegations are an important tool for economic development as they serve to open doors, providing on-the-ground support, business-to business contacts, and information and tools for all Canadian exporters, especially small and medium-sized enterprises.

Traditionally, delegations have not been a practice for Lincoln, but serve a core purpose in better understanding a sector, attracting foreign-based business, and developing relationships.

As the objectives of this delegation were to identify agriculture value-added activities to enable economic growth in the agricultural sector, it's important to review Lincoln's agri-business landscape and its importance this sector will have on our municipalities GDP. In 2011, agribusiness in Niagara had a GDP impact of \$1.2 billion.

Lincoln has the most square footage of greenhouses in use of all municipalities in Niagara, with 6,962,925 square feet under cover, followed by Niagara-on-the-Lake. The vast majority of Lincoln greenhouses business is floriculture. Table 1 below outlines square feet of in-use greenhouse by type.

Table 1
Square feet of in-use greenhouse by type, Niagara Region and Lincoln, 2011

	Niagara	Lincoln	Overall % by Lincoln
Total	20,974,904	6,962,925	33.2
Flowers	16,513,252	6,854,959	41.5
Vegetables	4,308,574	80,820	1.9
Other products	153,078	27,146	17.7

StatCan Census of Agriculture, 2011

Furthermore, Table 2 below outlines the comparison in the total number of businesses by industry in the greenhouse sector in Niagara and Lincoln. The first row includes the total number of greenhouse businesses, with the remaining rows specify by the type of greenhouse industry.

Table 2

Overall:	Niagara	Lincoln	Lincoln %
Overall - greenhouse, nursery and floriculture production	195	58	29.7
By industry:			
Other food crops grown under cover	17	4	23.5
Floriculture production	129	48	37.2
Nursery and tree production	49	6	12.2

DELEGATE TESTIMONIALS:

Testimonies from each delegate serve to outline the importance of the tour and their unique perspectives based on their expertise and organization interests. Key learnings or identified next steps are noted.

Greater Niagara Chamber of Commerce – Mishka Balsom

Our organization:

The Greater Niagara Chamber of Commerce (GNCC) is a Niagara business organization, with over 1,600 members representing 50,000 employees, dedicated to the success of Niagara organizations in order to ensure the long-term prosperity of the region. We provide a forum for Niagara businesses to discover common interests, inspire and establish mutually supportive policies and programs, and promote innovation and growth.

Current market situation:

The economic importance of Niagara's agri-business sector means that it must remain competitive both within our region, Ontario and Canada.

Population: World population is expected to increase over the coming decades, some estimating it will grow by more than 2 billion by 2050. The population of Ontario is projected to grow by 30 per cent in the next twenty-five years, adding 4.1 million people if trends since 1971 hold true. It will remain Canada's most populous province under all projected growth scenarios. Canada itself will reach a population of 51 million by 2063 under current trends. If the U.S.A. reaches a population of 500 million by the 2050s – as is projected – it will cease to become a food exporter. 57 per cent of Canadian food imports currently come from the United States. Most of the world's countries are net food importers; as global population increases, Canada's role as a food exporter will become more important.

Trade agreements: Another challenge will be presented if repeal or reform of NAFTA proceeds. 55 per cent of Canadian domestic food exports currently go to the United States. While agricultural and horticultural products have not been targeted by the present administration thus far, many political scientists have categorized current U.S. foreign policy as "unpredictable," and the Canadian agribusiness sector may have to contend with growing trade protectionism in its largest export market.

CETA offers tremendous potential for the Canadian agribusiness sector. The EU is the world's largest economy and the largest importer of agribusiness products in the world, importing \$104 billion worth in 2014. Canada ships \$2.4 billion worth of agriculture and food products to the 28 member states of the EU today, but with half-a-billion consumers in one of the world's largest markets, there is potential to expand, and Canada's current levels of export are lower than they could be, with only 6 per cent of Canadian agribusiness exports headed to the EU.

EU tariffs on agribusinesses products are high. The day that CETA is implemented, tariffs on almost 94 per cent of Canada's exports to the EU will be eliminated immediately. This could result in new Canadian exports to the EU.

Understanding competition: If Lincoln's agribusiness industry is to take advantage of the growing demand driven by these demographic pressures, it must out-compete other jurisdictions. To determine how Lincoln stacks up to other competitors and in an effort to determine on how we can best support this economic cluster, the GNCC went to the Holland to assess market leaders.

Key observations:

- In meeting with Sabine Nolke, Canada's Ambassador to the Holland, and Trade Commissioners, it became clear that the majority of international trade relationships will be developed due to the efforts of individual communities reaching out directly to EU businesses and governments.
- Netherland's agri-business sector is a data driven industry, allowing them to stay globally competitive.
- The culture and commitment to innovation is the foundation of Netherland's business success.
- Innovation and growth happen due to the cooperation between regional and national governments, financial institutions, industry and innovation hubs.
- Netherland has a strong brand, being recognized for their leadership and excellence worldwide.
- Local Dutch municipalities have identified certain clusters of opportunities and support those with all resources available to them.

Opportunities:

- Greater integration and coordination within the Niagara agri-business industry allows it to bolster its advocacy before all levels of government - helps to build the competitiveness of the entire sector by taking advantage of industry-wide innovation and accelerating the pace of R&D. This means that partnerships with Niagara's post-secondary institutions, research agencies, innovation hubs and business associations are critical to support Lincoln's initiative to maximize competitive advantages.

Moving forward:

- The GNCC has the ability to leverage partnership with other organizations such as the Ontario and Canadian Chambers of Commerce, to a) advocate for improved access to current, relevant data, b) to ask for a greater provincial and federal commitment to R&D funding to support the private sector, c) promote a

well-marketed national brand to increase foreign investment, encourage the world's most talented people to immigrate to Canada and add value to quality-dependent exports, like agri-business products.

- Niagara is known for the strength of its tourism cluster. We need to effectively market and brand the opportunities of the agri-business sector to key businesses planning expansion into North America
- Leverage the private sector and help companies get from idea to product. Harnessing the power of “big data” and ensuring data are secure will also be critical to competitive success.
- Continue dialogue and provide leads to the Trade Commissioners of the Canadian Embassy to the Holland.
- Remove barriers for the increasing number of small food start-ups and niche products that sell based on health and ethical grounds rather than purely on price and taste. Helping this sector flourish, would allow them to more successfully integrate into Niagara's existing agri-tourism sector.

Vineland Research and Innovation Centre (VRIC) – Darren Ward

Objectives:

VRIC was pleased to accompany the Town of Lincoln delegation to Holland as it shares in the Town's vision of maintaining a prosperous local horticultural industry and enhancing its success. VRIC embraced the chance to align with and engage in the Town's efforts on the mission as well as future initiatives going forward as a result. The trip was also used specifically to observe the application of robotics, automation and technology in Dutch greenhouse operations. Holland is recognized as the world leader in horticulture, and this success has been aided through effective use of technology. Understanding the differences between local operations and support networks, and those in Holland could be used to formulate strategies and initiatives for more effective use of technologies in local facilities. Contacts made at Dutch greenhouses, manufacturers, government and comparable research institutions would be beneficial in future innovative efforts and collaborations.

Benefits of delegation and observed learnings:

The local horticultural industry faces increasing costs of production due to increasing prices of energy, inputs and labour. In addition, increasing land prices add to the cost of new greenhouse builds and expansions. This is at odds with an increasing population and associated demand for greenhouse production. Local producers need to maintain high yields, maximum productivity and low costs of operation to meet demands and remain competitive against imports. This scenario has placed earlier pressure on Dutch growers, who have adapted to the changing conditions to maintain and strengthen their industry. A delegation such as this one with the Town of Lincoln affords the ability to understand first-hand how Dutch growers accomplished this and how principles could be applied to the local industry.

Older, less efficient greenhouses in Holland have been replaced by newer modern structures which have been designed with energy efficiency in mind. Our region is well positioned in this respect, with several local premier greenhouse builders capable of designing and building energy efficient, state of the art structures for expansions or new builds. Equally important are the computerized systems which maintain the interior

environments. Dutch manufacturers of these systems have a strong local presence, while systems from Canadian companies are also available, providing a number of good options for important facility controls. Advanced initiatives in Holland include the use of alternative energy sources. For example, the Green Well Westland facility derives its heat from geothermal energy, which it also sells to neighbouring greenhouses. While some local facilities have adopted the use of biomass systems, more potential opportunities exist to reduce energy costs through the use of alternative energy sources.

Dutch growers have embraced the use of automation wherever possible throughout their entire production process starting with planting and ending at packaging. Benefits to the industry have included lower costs, increased productivity and consistent pace and quality. The typical large scale and low variability of Dutch facilities allows for full and efficient utilization of automation equipment. While there are some larger local vegetable and floral facilities who have the scale to benefit from automation, there are still a number of smaller facilities where automation cannot be justified.

A major difference in the industry structure in Holland that allows for mono-culture focus is the presence of large intermediaries who receive the product and take care of storage, packaging, sales, marketing and onward logistics (e.g., Royal Flora, ZON). This allows the Dutch growers to produce fewer crops at larger scale and focus their efforts on the process of growing efficiently. While the Ontario industry does have some degree of similar intermediaries, relations between growers and large sales channels are direct. Local vegetable producers do tend to focus on fewer crops and there are some floral producers who similarly focus on fewer varieties and higher volumes. There are however a number of smaller vegetable facilities and a number of floral growers who produce multiple crops in smaller quantities. The smaller scale and wider diversity of product in these facilities preclude the effective use of available automation solutions, which are optimized for higher volumes. This highlights a major difference between the local and Dutch industries, where evolution to larger economies of scale and automation solutions more suited to local requirements would provide benefit.

Items to be considered as result of delegation:

Learnings from the delegation have added value and helped to focus VRIC's efforts on technology, robotics and automation in several key areas:

- With recent increases in energy costs, VRIC has placed emphasis on identifying applicable technologies to help local growers reduce energy costs. The mission to Holland provided examples of successful implementations.
- Local and Dutch grower requirements for robotics and automation are different. An opportunity exists to focus on the needs of local growers that can practically be solved by automation but where viable solutions are not currently available. The VRIC robotics and automation program is currently engaged in projects to fill these gaps, and will continue to seek out future opportunities.
- A majority of currently available robotics and automation equipment for the horticultural industry is produced in Holland, with few companies locally represented. This presents challenges in initial adoption as well as future sales and service. VRIC's robotics and automation projects will continue to focus on providing opportunities for local machine manufacturers and sales/service channels. An increased local base of expertise and availability will allow local

growers to realize the benefits of automation by easing initial adoption and future service.

In Search of Sustainability - Mayor Sandra L. Easton

“In Search of Sustainability; The Netherlands”, was a moniker I attached to our trip diary which assigned the environmental, economic and innovation goals supporting gathering a team toward a shared purpose with financial support for Council and Town staff from the citizens of the Town of Lincoln.

At a provincial level, the Greater Golden Horseshoe, Food and Farming Alliance Policy Strategy primarily informed the motives of the delegation and the future focus of Council and our grower partners through five goals;

- Growing the Cluster
- Linking Food, farming and health
- Fostering Innovation
- Enabling the Cluster
- Cultivating new approaches

These five goals stand alone to provide the Town of Lincoln Trade Delegation 2016 with the direction needed to fulfil those goals.

From a strictly local perspective, the primary goal also included informing and educating Council through the first person experience of the Mayor, representative Council Members, CAO, external partners from research, business development and regional economic development along with the guidance of local growers and producers.

In early discussions with grower/producers from both Lincoln and other areas of Niagara, the importance of learning and education about the greenhouse and horticulture sectors was galvanized. The decades of connections with the Netherlands and the expertise and technology that has been imported over that period has tremendously influenced the economy of the Town of Lincoln. If we were going to be true to the provincial endorsement of the Food and Farming Alliance priorities it had to begin with a commitment to understanding best practice. Taking the local experience into account, the best place to start was the Netherlands.

More specifically, any on the ground education was outlined as including;

- A general understanding of Niagara and local Lincoln producers and those who are part of the value chains
- The best itinerary and opportunities for connections with growers, producers, scientists, educators and innovators, government in the Netherlands, those areas akin to Lincoln
- A Canadian view from the Netherlands about opportunities for export and what that entails; best sought out at the Canadian Embassy and Ambassador Sabine Nolke as well as Trade Ambassador responsible for Agriculture Diederik Beutener
- An establishment of our partners from this end including post-secondary education, scientists, business development and researchers, regional economic

development with an understanding of changing market conditions and the global economy

- We hoped to experience the use of traditional and alternate energy sources particularly as it relates to added cost to existing and new projects
- Exposure to another small agricultural landscape. Lincoln is 65% protected and therefore we need to begin to evaluate decisions based on high gross, full production land-zoned agriculture. Included here is an appreciation of the urban/rural connection and a mutual understanding of taking full advantage of available land for food and flower production, and growing crop capacity in small spaces including the potential for introducing totally new products.
- Understanding of a centuries old co-operative model
- Technology and data in any form we find it

In preparation for the trip, we attempted to find reports on previous delegations by both the Town of Lincoln and Niagara Region. Eventually we were able to find, “Ontario Greenhouse Floriculture Markets in the United States prepared in concert with The Ontario Greenhouse Alliance, the Province of Ontario and Niagara Economic and Tourism Corporation (2004)”, The Town of Lincoln Trade Delegation that increased greenhouse production during the 1980-1990 as discussed with former Mayor Ray A. Konkle, as well as former Chair of Regional Council, Debbie Zimmerman. As well, a gift from Mr. Ron Vahrmeyer to Mayor Easton, “Floral Passion”, the chronology and profile of greenhouse, horticulture producers and growers in the Niagara area; Vandermeij, Bogner and VanKanten brought considerable clarity to the successful evolution of this sector and further validated Council’s next steps to formalize an extension to the Centre of Excellence for Agriculture through this trade delegation.

Observed Learnings

- Traditional auction houses are managing market processes and the burgeoning European markets. They expect to continue to survive both as a co-operative and as independents. A consistent, high quality product is the most important credential in the market place. Canadian producers understand the merits and risks of both.
- The Dutch are technology savvy. They may choose not to use advanced technology but they have been exposed to it. It may be implemented in a limited way. We need to understand the profile of logistics professionals and the potential for new job creation. Big data and the use of metrics requires much more attention.
- Like Niagara and Ontario, Holland has high performance research facilities tied to education and investment in agriculture
- Competition – the more the better
- Product development, packaging and patents are one in the world of innovation
- The Canadian Embassy has the interest in facilitating exports in tender fruit. This may require different varieties to meet the demands of transport and delays. We have a role to play with local producers locally to address barriers and delays in product movement.

- Agri-tourism is a market well exploited in the Netherlands
- Innovation brings the potential for robust small manufacturing and many new tech-related jobs
- There are markets and research in the area of hydroponics, aquaculture beyond food and horticulture to support the life sciences in pharmaceuticals and nutraceuticals

Turning our thoughts to the original title, In Search of Sustainability we can check our progress against that future goal.

- To reach the highest level of sustainability in the agriculture sector and specifically horticulture, floriculture, and food production
- To establish a platform for enabling market growth and development through our partnerships with the sectors

Considerations

- Were our goals relevant to the experience
- What are the most influential drivers of capacity in our partnerships
- As a team do we have the expertise to support sustainable growth within the agriculture sector
- Should we look to legacy projects with the District School Board of Niagara, Niagara College, Brock University, in the development of a logic model to explain the theory of change needed during planning and implementation and for program evaluation as to the effectiveness of the change model.
- How beneficial would be a graphical depiction of the logical relationship between the resources, activities, outputs and program outcomes
- Can we evaluate the “if – then” (causal relationship) between the elements of future programs
- What resources in Canada and the Netherlands can assist us with market research and a better level of understanding?
- Big data should drive better directions and decision analysis
- Migrant workers are heavily relied on and although it is believed by some that this is not sustainable, we have now reached 50 years of support to agriculture in Ontario by migrant workers
- We have not begun to experience those jobs that will populate the agricultural industry of the future in Lincoln

With care, Lincoln is sitting on a bubble of entrepreneurship and investment in rebuilds and startup companies to support the greenhouse and horticultural sectors. Many of the same principles could be generalized to other agricultural sectors.

Key factors in manufacturing are those future jobs in clean technology, models of sustainable energy and industrial bio-technology. The cost of land in Lincoln as compared to Holland, plus the availability of water, fixed and variable energy sources may drive Council to protect designated land for greenhouse expansion and to consider servicing same.

In a post journey discussion, it became clear there were ongoing relationships and potentially a cross continent and bi-national memorandum of understanding to establish the anchor institutions including provincial ministries to establish a growing forward agenda and the establishment of funding opportunities.

Although Flowers Canada and The Ontario Greenhouse Alliance are natural partners, in order for our local growers to fully benefit from the Centre of Excellence for Agriculture concept in action, we first acknowledge and appreciate their full support and guidance and secondly look forward to the execution of a comprehensive agenda with them. And to the larger cohort within the agriculture sector of Lincoln and Niagara, we anticipate the application of much that we have learned and expect to put into practice with the widest net cast as progress is made.

Town of Lincoln Council - Councillor Dave Thompson

Objectives:

- Observe how Holland develops clusters, what roles each partner plays, including the "Innovation Quarter"
- Investigate Holland's planning policy and practices
- Observe technology and IT-related items in terms of cutting edge and innovative
- Build relationships with business and government leaders that can only be accomplished by face-to-face meetings

Benefits of delegation and observed learnings:

- Overall, came back with a sense that Council needs to be open to innovation and creative thought around how we govern and how we solve problems, no answer is incorrect and possibilities are what should drive us. Transition from the comfort of how we've always done things.
- Triple Helix or Golden Triangle - focus on development to facilitate this occurring
- Planning department is planning for 10-15 years down the road and for the future growth numbers (full build out)
- Primacy of agricultural/greenhouse development - top priority for planning to facilitate and assist this development
- Innovation Quarter - garnished funding from upper levels of government for creation of organization (cluster incubator program with set parameters)
- Geo-thermal - meetings with federal ministries with regards to geological surveys that have been completed already to look at feasibility for this type of technology
- Developed relationships with large companies around breeding, utilizing Niagara's recent Foreign Trade Zone for advanced manufacturing and sales to the North America market
- Great opportunity to meet and build relationships with the Trade Commissioner and Ambassador to facilitate connections with local companies for export to Holland and vice versa with regards to businesses that wish to establish business in Lincoln.

Items to be considered as result of delegation:

- Land-use planning – opportunity to investigate their legislative policy to see if there is a framework that we could garnish to better serve the urban/rural

situation, and certainly they have developed a sense of inclusion and community with regards to how the urban sees the rural (agriculture) and cooperation for the good of the whole community (We vs. Me philosophy)

- Opportunity to look at zoning above the escarpment and make policy that is encouraging for operators to have facilities in that area
 - Develop incentive plans to encourage moving facilities up the hill and incorporate energy efficiency opportunities such as the geo thermal
 - Services supporting horticultural industry need to be planned for and implemented in the areas above the escarpment to encourage the development.
- Try and assist in the creation of an Innovation Quarter type of organization that feeds the creative innovative entrepreneur and gives them resources to succeed. Acquire model used and determine if applicable to Lincoln's context.
- Connections with Municipality of Lansingerland allows for investigation, if we choose to do so, and how they deal with policy around urban/agricultural planning

Town of Lincoln Council - Councillor Rob Foster

Objectives:

- To see what opportunities might exist, in the spirit of our focus on agriculture
- To see a place that "gets it"

Benefits of delegation and observed learnings:

- Terrific opportunity and honour to visit Holland on behalf of the Town
- Observed progressive business occurring such as new agribusiness
- Maximum use of land
- Communities that work together for betterment of prosperity
- Active transportation policy in action
- Greater understanding of how to mitigate local planning challenges
- Holland is progressive and "gets it" - sustainable development, technology, education

Items to be considered as result of delegation:

- Opportunity to work with the province to expand the concept of the Greenbelt to include providing property for agri-technology uses
- Target post-secondary institutions interested in our community and to attain space for them to build agri-centres
- Lincoln needs to find its niche

Town of Lincoln - Michael Kirkopoulos, Chief Administrative Officer

Objectives:

- The goal of travelling to Holland and meeting with local business owners with ties to the Lincoln community, similar comprised municipalities as Lincoln, and representatives of the Canadian Government, up to and including the trade commissioner and Ambassador, were all in an effort to strengthen economic,

political and cultural ties with the Netherlands, the world's leader in horticulture, floriculture and agri-technology.

- The delegation provided Lincoln the ability to meet other firms interested in the same market and synergies are often created between trade mission participants through their sharing of market information and valuable networking

Benefits of delegation, observed learnings, and items to be considered:

- The delegation included local business and research experts that were able to speak to Lincoln and Niagara's sustainable development and urban infrastructure opportunities, business, and higher education sectors.
- The delegation was also instrumental in beginning to promote the Niagara region's business advantage and create opportunities for new partnerships.
- The delegation visited a number of cities, including Amsterdam, The Hague and Lansingerland; as well as research centers and universities, as well as The Innovation Quarter – the regional economic development agency.
- The meeting with Lansingerland and The Innovation Quarter, was a first step in beginning to formalize agreements and memorandums of understanding within the research, infrastructure, technology, science and health sectors and a possible twinning
- A meeting with Sabine Nolke, Canadian Ambassador to the Netherlands was facilitated, with the goal of ensuring from a political perspective, that the opportunity to forge new relationships, strengthen existing ones and examine areas for future cooperation were on the agenda
- Ultimately, as is the desire with all trade delegations and this one in particular, the goal is to begin to develop much needed relationships and business leads. This visit gave us an opportunity to build a fuller understanding of Holland, a key trading partner with Canada, Niagara and Lincoln as a possible and expanded market.
- An additional element of the visit was the meetings set up and privately arranged with potential client companies
- This trip allowed all participants an opportunity to gain knowledge of the culture of Holland through direct contact with local business, people and government representatives

ALTERNATIVES FOR CONSIDERATION:

n/a

COMMUNICATION/ENGAGEMENT OVERVIEW:

The seven-person delegation engaged a number of key business and government officials during the delegation. Tours of specific business operations were identified, overview of the Innovation Quarter, face-to-face meetings with companies interested in a North American footprint, along with meetings with Canadian and Netherlands government officials who are key in fostering business relationships abroad.

ALIGNMENT TO CORPORATE PLAN:

Delegations serve as an important tool for economic development. As such, Council's Future Focus Corporate Work Plan identifies economic development as a priority, specifically "partnering with other levels of government to implement an economic

development strategy to establish Lincoln as a “Centre of Excellence for Agriculture” – a catalyst for industry and business growth.”

ATTACHMENTS

None