



Annual Report 2020/2021

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The Niagara Parks Commission

Our Role & Mandate

Niagara is a region steeped in history and blessed by geography. As steward of one of the world's greatest natural wonders, The Niagara Parks Commission plays a key role in maintaining, protecting and showcasing the grandeur of the Falls, as well as the entire Niagara River corridor, while contributing to the economic growth and success of the Niagara region and Ontario.

As a self-funded agency of the provincial government, Niagara Parks is responsible for the maintenance of 1,325 hectares of parkland, stretching 56 kilometres along the Niagara River corridor from Lake Erie to Lake Ontario.

Our mandate remains the same as it was when the Commission was first established in 1885: to preserve and promote the natural beauty and cultural heritage along the Niagara River corridor for the enjoyment of visitors while maintaining financial self-sufficiency.

The Commissioners

Sandie Bellows, Chair	Appointed Commissioner October 17, 2018 Appointed Chair January 17, 2019 Term expires September 16, 2021
April Jeffs, Vice Chair	Appointed Vice Chair January 31, 2019 Term expires January 30, 2022
Eldon Bennett, Commissioner	Appointed May 10, 2017 Term expired May 9, 2020
Sylvie Chartrand-Rafi, Commissioner	Appointed March 21, 2018 Term expired March 20, 2021
Graham Coveney, Commissioner	Appointed February 28, 2019 Term expires February 27, 2022
Natasha Dicienzo, Commissioner	Appointed May 2, 2019 Term expires May 1, 2022
Jim Diodati, Commissioner	(Regional Municipality of Niagara nominee) Appointed February 25, 2015 Term expires November 25, 2021
Betty Disero, Commissioner	(Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake nominee) Appointed February 21, 2019 Term expires November 25, 2021
Jessica Friesen, Commissioner	Appointed April 16, 2020 Term expires April 15, 2023
Lois Anne Giles, Commissioner	Appointed June 20, 2012 Term expires August 15, 2022
Vincent Kerrio, Commissioner	(City of Niagara Falls nominee) Appointed April 18, 2007 Term expires November 30, 2021
Wayne Redekop, Commissioner	(Town of Fort Erie nominee) Appointed February 25, 2015 Term expires November 25, 2021
Ted Salci, Commissioner	Appointed July 9, 2020 Term expires July 8, 2023

A Message from the Chair

As the Chair of The Niagara Parks Commission, it is my pleasure to present the 2020/21 Annual Report on behalf of the dedicated staff and board members who serve this organization.

Since 1885, Niagara Parks' mandate has remained unchanged – to protect and preserve the lands along the Niagara River corridor from Lake Erie to Lake Ontario. As the environmental and cultural stewards of this land, it is our responsibility to protect its natural features and promote our rich heritage, culture and lifestyle, all while contributing to the economic growth and success of both the Niagara region and the province.

Our 2019/20 fiscal year saw a new record high of \$127 million in gross revenue but also ended with uncertainty as our public-facing operations closed on Friday, March 13, 2020, as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. The year that followed was an unprecedented one for both our organization and the entire world.

While every industry was impacted by the pandemic, as our Minister, the Honourable Lisa MacLeod has said, "Ontario's heritage, sport, tourism and culture industries were among the first and hardest hit by the COVID-19 pandemic – and will take the longest to recover." Public health measures implemented to protect the health of Canadians resulted in closed borders and restrictions on travel that severely impacted our visitation and revenues during the summer months of 2020 and eventually led to another full closure of our sites and attractions on December 26, 2020, which would carry through the remainder of the fiscal year.

The unprecedented challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic in relation to Niagara Parks are lengthy and ongoing. However, as we conclude this fiscal year, I felt it was important to highlight our persistence in overcoming these obstacles to continue delivering on our mandate and to thank all of the remarkable people who have worked tirelessly to make that possible.

The leadership of our Premier Doug Ford and Minister Lisa MacLeod in stewarding us through every step of this crisis has been nothing short of exceptional and there is no better example of their commitment to Niagara Parks than the emergency stabilization grant for our organization that was announced by Minister MacLeod on December 4, 2020, at our Floral Showhouse. This historic support ensured that Niagara Parks could meet its immediate financial obligations, while also covering the mounting costs of investments in health and safety measures implemented in response to COVID-19, providing an essential lifeline during our time of greatest need.

Beyond financial support, Minister MacLeod has been a steadying presence and constant advocate for the tourism industry at every opportunity while also providing leadership and invaluable guidance as we planned for our eventual recovery. The principles and ideas outlined in her insightful White Paper Reconnecting Ontarians: Re-emerging as a Global Leader, provided an essential framework for our board and staff to pursue goals that will deliver both social and economic value to Ontarians, with this work already well underway.

From the outset of the COVID-19 pandemic, ensuring the health and safety of our guests and staff has been the first consideration in all our operational decisions at Niagara Parks. In planning our initial reopening in 2020, we implemented a cross departmental COVID Response Team to develop a comprehensive plan that would guide our measures and protocols. This approach provided the foundation for our successful achievement of the Safe Travels Stamp from the World Travel & Tourism Council, demonstrating our commitment to delivering the highest levels of health and hygiene measures and protocols.

Supporting health and wellness goes beyond considerations of cleanliness and protective equipment. The past year further reinforced how crucial our public green spaces are to supporting the mental health and physical wellbeing of our local community. Despite limited visitation from outside the province, we witnessed record numbers of people enjoying nature on our property and taking advantage of the world-class outdoor recreation facilities we offer at Niagara Parks, including our championship golf courses and hiking trails.

As a global tourism destination that typically welcomes millions of international visitors each year, at times it can be overlooked how closely we work with the four municipalities that encompass our lands. The events of this past year have further strengthened our connections to our local community and we have made ongoing efforts to ensure we communicate and collaborate with them as effectively as possible. In support of this goal, I, along with our CEO David Adames, provided formal updates to our municipal councils of the City of Niagara Falls, Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake and Town of Fort Erie along with Niagara Regional Council and key community organizations including local Rotary clubs.

The environment that our organization operated in through much of the 2020/21 fiscal year was unique given that for much of the time we were unable to welcome guests to visit us in person. Our staff quickly pivoted to expand our digital offerings with new virtual programming that continued to keep our audiences engaged while supporting important partners in our community. Our virtual Black History Speaker Series received an incredible response with well-attended sessions as did our Virtual Golf Fitness Workshops. These efforts further demonstrated the power of technology to keep us connected with our guests, especially when in-person events were not possible.

While our public-facing operations were closed for significant portions of the year, our commitment to our role as the environmental stewards of the Niagara River Corridor remained unchanged. We made significant progress toward our ongoing efforts to support habitats for species at risk and invested further in the restoration of our coastal wetlands habitats along the Niagara River, while continuing to foster relationships with our partners including Parks Canada and Brock University's Environmental Sustainability Research Centre.

The unique environmental features of Niagara Parks' lands, from the imposing walls of the Great Gorge to the winding white water of the Niagara River, and of course, the Falls themselves, have been recognized and celebrated across the world for generations. However, we are also home to some incredible examples of built heritage, including the three historic decommissioned hydroelectric power plants located on Niagara Parks land. The adaptive reuse of these outstanding structures has been a key part of our long-term vision and 10-year Strategic Plan. In June of 2020, our Minister Lisa MacLeod officially announced that a \$25 million loan had been secured through the Ontario Financing Authority to transform the "Canadian Niagara Power generating station" into a multi-faceted visitor experience and Niagara's newest landmark attraction.

It cannot be overstated how important this project has been to our entire team at Niagara Parks and for the Niagara Falls destination as a whole over the past year. The Niagara Parks Power Station has become a symbol of hope and optimism for the future of tourism in our region. The speed at which our staff have worked in keeping this one-of-a-kind project on time and on budget is truly remarkable and I could not be more excited to open our doors to the public officially in the summer of 2021!

As we continue with our recovery process moving forward, our role as a leading destination and key demand driver for tourism in Ontario will be more important than ever. We will continue to work with our Ministry, sister agencies and destination partners to identify and explore new opportunities to support the tourism industry. I am proud to serve on the Board of Directors for the Niagara 2022 Canada Games, which will host their closing ceremonies in Queen Victoria Park, as well as their golf competitions at our Legends on the Niagara facility.

The 2020/21 fiscal year was a test of our strength and resolve as an organization. With the support of our Premier and Ministry, and the dedication of the board and staff, I am proud to say that we have met this challenge and are ready to move forward with our recovery. This process will take time; however, I am confident that the plans we have implemented along with the addition of new world-class experiences like the Niagara Parks Power Station will position us well to deliver on our mandate, while contributing to Ontario's spectacular double bottom line of economic and social prosperity.

10-year Strategic Plan

Vision: Niagara Parks is guided by its board approved 2018-2028 Strategic Plan. The vision of this plan has Niagara Parks striving to become:

- an innovative example of sustainability as the environmental and cultural stewards of the Niagara River corridor;
- a welcoming, accessible and inspiring place offering world-class experiences;
- a source of national pride and identity; as well as,
- one of the most spectacular parks in the world.

Themes: In order to fully embody the vision and direction of Niagara Parks, the 10-Year Strategic Plan presents four themes to direct Niagara Parks' efforts, which were exemplified by the work undertaken by Niagara Parks over the course of the 2020/21 year.

These themes include:

- Preserving and showcasing our rich heritage, culture and lifestyle;
- Leveraging and activating our natural wonders and iconic experiences;
- Supporting a dynamic business environment with a focus on attracting investment, connection to local communities, job creation and economic well-being; and,
- Taking experiences, services and hospitality to the next level.

2020/21 Year in Review

Preserving and showcasing our rich heritage, culture, and lifestyle

June 2020 - Minister MacLeod Officially Reopens Niagara and Announces Loan for Power Station Adaptive Reuse

Following a closure of over three months in response to the first wave of COVID-19, the Honourable Lisa MacLeod, Minister of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries made a transformative announcement on June 19, 2020, at the brink of the iconic Horseshoe Falls. Minister MacLeod shared for the first time publicly that a \$25 million loan had been secured through the Ontario Financing Authority that would support the adaptive reuse transformation of the historic “Canadian Niagara Power generation station” into a new landmark visitor attraction to open in 2021. Minister MacLeod was then joined by Niagara Parks Commission Chair Sandie Bellows along with Niagara Falls Mayor Jim Diodati and other key tourism stakeholders for a ribbon cutting ceremony to officially welcome visitors back to Niagara as part of Stage 2 of the provincial reopening plan. Niagara Parks would see the majority of sites and attractions open in the weeks to come, with new industry leading health and safety measures in place.

September 2020 – Annual Monarch Release

On September 5, Niagara Parks held its annual monarch release program at the Niagara Parks Butterfly Conservatory. Guests of the free event had the opportunity to tag monarchs before releasing them to embark on their incredible journey to Mexico for the winter. In addition to the release initiative, Niagara Parks staff educated visitors on the monarch’s fascinating lifecycle and the unique conservation efforts being taken to support these amazing insects.

November 2020 - Indigenous Veterans Day

In collaboration with local Indigenous partners, Landscape of Nations 360°, Niagara Parks hosted “Valour and Victory”, an event in honour of Indigenous Veterans Day, held at the Landscape of Nations Memorial located in Queenston Heights Park. The ceremony recognized the contributions and sacrifices made by Six Nations and Native Allies in supporting their British and Canadian compatriots, and securing victory at pivotal events at Queenston Heights and throughout the War of 1812. The event included moving remarks and reflections from local Indigenous leaders and was concluded with a traditional Tobacco Ceremony.

December 2020 – Announcement of Recovery Support Funding for Niagara Parks

On December 4, a virtual media conference was held at the Niagara Parks Floral Showhouse, at which Minister Lisa MacLeod announced that Niagara Parks would receive a one-time grant of \$12.8 million from the Ontario Government. This grant was provided in order to ensure the financial sustainability of the organization, as it dealt with the ongoing impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on its operations and revenues. The unprecedented, one-time emergency stabilization funding was

crucial in assisting Niagara Parks with meeting its immediate financial challenges while continuing to deliver on its mandate leading up an eventual recovery for tourism in Ontario.

January through March 2021 – Black History Speaker Series

Niagara Parks hosted a three-part virtual speaker series exploring perspectives on Black history and culture in Canada, delivered by leading historians and commentators. The three-part virtual series featured an incredible line-up of speakers comprising acclaimed author Saladin Allah, renowned historian, Rochelle Bush and Order of Ontario recipient, Rosemary Sadlier. Each session focused on a unique topic related to Canadian Black History and culture and the sessions generated excellent attendance and significant positive media attention.

March 2021 – Visit by Premier Ford, Minister MacLeod and Minister Bethlenfalvy

On March 29, Niagara Parks was honoured to host Ontario Premier Doug Ford, Minister of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries, Lisa MacLeod and Minister of Finance, Peter Bethlenfalvy for a roundtable discussion on tourism recovery with key Niagara stakeholders, held at Table Rock Centre. Following the roundtable discussion, a virtual media conference took place with the Horseshoe Falls serving as a backdrop for important announcements from the Premier and both Ministers, reinforcing the significant support measures for tourism included in the 2021 provincial budget unveiled just days earlier. Ministers MacLeod and Bethlenfalvy also took time for a tour of the latest progress in the adaptive reuse construction at the Niagara Parks Power Station.

Leveraging and activating our natural wonders and iconic experiences

April 2020 - Special Falls Illuminations

During a time of uncertainty for so many, the nightly illumination of Niagara Falls endured as a source of hope and inspiration in the spring of 2020, while raising awareness for important causes and contributions. Numerous illuminations took place throughout the year to honour the contributions of frontline healthcare heroes, with the first in April accompanied by a special lights and siren salute from the Niagara Parks Police Service at the brink of the Horseshoe Falls. Later that month, Niagara Falls joined tourism landmarks across North America, in a coordinated purple illumination to demonstrate support for impacted hospitality workers.

September 2020 - Namaste Niagara

Niagara Parks' popular Namaste Niagara series returned in September with four exclusive outdoor sessions at Oakes Garden Theatre, followed by brunch at Table Rock House Restaurant overlooking the Horseshoe Falls. The move to historic Oakes Garden Theatre allowed additional space for participants to safely distance while enjoying their restorative hour-long practice. The new venue received excellent feedback from guests and plans are underway to continue the program with additional dates at this location on an annual basis.

November and December 2020 - Winter Festival of Lights

Public health measures implemented to combat COVID-19 were prohibitive to many of the typical annual events held at Niagara Parks and for this reason, the 2020/21 edition of the Winter Festival of Lights was especially important. As an entirely outdoor experience that could be enjoyed either on foot with appropriate physical distancing or while staying inside personal vehicles, the Winter Festival of Lights was enjoyed safely and responsibly and saw record attendance in November and December. In support of the provincial stay-at-home orders issued in late December, the festival concluded early for the season, ending on December 30.

December 2020 – Annual Poinsettia Show at the Floral Showhouse

The spectacular Poinsettia Show held at the Niagara Parks Floral Showhouse has become an annual holiday tradition for many. This past year's show, Technicolour Christmas, showcased engaging holiday arrangements with a colourful kaleidoscopic twist, which included special lighting installations throughout the Showhouse, bringing the space to life for visitors each evening and complementing the more than 1,400 poinsettias on display. The lighting installation represented the rainbow over the Horseshoe Falls, with each colour paying tribute to something unique. The red signifying Canada, yellow for the regional "Crush the Curve" initiative, blue in support and recognition of the contributions of healthcare and frontline workers, purple in solidarity with the tourism and hospitality industry, and green to promote peace and mindfulness.

Supporting a dynamic business environment

June 2020 - Table Rock Centre Phase II Redevelopment

Table Rock Centre is Niagara Parks' flagship visitor location located at the brink of the Horseshoe Falls which typically welcomes over three million guests through its doors annually. The redevelopment of this key revenue generating location is a major priority within Niagara Parks' 10-year strategic plan, and 2020 saw the completion of Phase II of its redevelopment. Under the direction of the Niagara Parks Engineering team, the successful bidder for the contractor of the project was Niagara-based Merit Contractors Niagara, along with support from a number of Ontario consultants and sub-contractors. The completion of Phase II of redevelopment featured the continued transformation of the ground level into a bright and cohesive space, integrating new contemporary design features, while preserving and respecting the history of the building. Along with the stunning new architectural features, visitors can now enjoy new fast casual food offerings available at the Table Rock Market, including artisan deli fare and Niagara craft beers and VQA wines served on tap. The redevelopment also included improving the guest experience for Journey Behind the Falls, with an enclosed ticketing and waiting area.

July 2020 - Opening of TaylorMade Performance Centre

The Legends on the Niagara complex added a new reason for players to visit, further establishing the course as one of Canada's premier public golf destinations with the opening of the TaylorMade Niagara Performance Centre in July. The Centre is one of only eight facilities of its kind in Canada and offers state-of-the-art fitting services featuring the latest technology to optimize player performance and game improvement while providing the ultimate golf club fitting experience. In addition to custom fitting services the Centre also offers industry leading instructional programming facilitated by Niagara Parks Professional Golfers' Association (PGA) Professional staff.

February 2021 - School of Horticulture Offers New Enrollment Opportunities

The Niagara Parks School of Horticulture expanded its reach to potential students by introducing integration with the Ontario College Application System (OCAS). The integration of the school into the software provides a streamlined application process for student applicants, while also raising awareness and exposure for the School. The Niagara Parks School of Horticulture has an 80-year history of delivering innovative, experiential learning opportunities to its students, and this valuable partnership will ensure that all Ontario students seeking a career in horticulture are aware of the Niagara Parks School of Horticulture and the unique learning opportunities that it offers. Niagara Parks was assisted in this development by key alumni of the School of Horticulture.

February 2021 - Niagara Parks Mobile App Development

Niagara Parks continues to seek new opportunities to improve its digital delivery and customer service with innovative and modern solutions and tools. As part of this focus, Niagara Parks has contracted Ontario based Olio Digital Labs to lead the development of a customized, mobile app that will offer guided wayfinding, push notifications, ticket and package sales, and event and attraction information for guests. The Niagara Parks mobile app will be deployed using a minimum viable product (MVP) approach, which will allow Niagara Parks to analyze how users react to the core app functions before expanding on the application with data-driven decisions in future phases. The app is on schedule to be available for download on Apple and Android devices in July 2021.

March 2021 – Niagara Parks Partners with SMARTlab

Late in 2020, Niagara Parks staff began exploratory conversations with SMARTlab, a not-for-profit, globally recognized PhD program which combines theoretical research and practice to deliver innovative, implementable solutions to the communities where it is based. In March, Niagara Parks finalized a memorandum of understanding with SMARTlab on a licensing agreement that will see SMARTlab and Niagara Parks collaborate on a variety of research projects over a ten-year period. The partnership will provide mutual benefits through a state-of-the-art technology lab, community education and outreach, commercialization of IP and innovation consulting. These activities will also promote cultural heritage and innovation along the Niagara River corridor.

Ongoing - Expansion of Pay and Display Parking Program

Throughout 2020, Niagara Parks continued the expansion of its paid parking program at high-demand sites throughout its property. This initiative has allowed Niagara Parks to better manage and control the limited number of parking spaces at these locations and to reduce the heavy congestion of vehicles during peak tourism months. During periods when Niagara Parks' public-facing operations were closed in 2020/21, paid parking revenues generated from visitors safely enjoying walkthrough access of Niagara Parks' green spaces was an especially important revenue stream for the organization. Continued growth of the pay and display parking program has been identified as a component of Niagara Parks' 2021-2024 Business Plan.

Taking experiences, services, and hospitality to the next level

March through June 2020 – Development and Implementation of COVID-19 Safety Measures

The need to keep guests and staff safe at Niagara Parks at the outset of the COVID-19 pandemic was a new challenge for the health and safety team at Niagara Parks. The organization moved quickly in creating a cross departmental response team to conduct a comprehensive audit of all Niagara Parks operations and develop detailed health and safety plans specific to each site. These operational plans were developed in consultation with public health officials and with the priority of ensuring the safest environment possible for staff and guests upon reopening. As part of this approach, Niagara Parks implemented a hierarchy of controls that allowed the staff to minimize the risk of workplace transmission. Upon completion, Niagara Parks' Reopening Operational Plan was reviewed by Public Health Ontario, paving the way for Niagara Parks to reopen many of its sites and attractions for the summer season.

Ongoing - ERP Procurement and Implementation

Niagara Parks has made a commitment to the modernization of its financial management infrastructure, with the implementation of a new Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system at the core of these efforts. During the 2020/21 fiscal year, Niagara Parks began the Phase I launch of its new ERP system, Unit 4 Business World. Phase I of this implementation included the launch of core financial management functions and financial planning modules. Phase II, to be added in 2021/22 will add additional capabilities including fleet/asset management, project management, work orders and Human Resources modules.

August 2020 – Chef's Table Dining Experiences at Table Rock House Restaurant

Due to capacity restrictions related to indoor dining which were in place throughout the year along with significantly lower visitation levels, operations at Niagara Parks' renowned Table Rock House Restaurant were limited in 2020/21. Taking on these challenges with an innovative, solutions-based approach, the Niagara Parks Culinary Team developed an exclusive Chef's Table dining experience

with guests enjoying a locally sourced, five-course, wine-paired dinner at their own private table overlooking the Falls.

January 2021 - Refurbishment of the Falls Incline Railway

In a typical year, there are over 1.3 million rides the Niagara Falls Incline Railway, which provides a convenient and memorable experience connecting the Fallsview Tourist area with Niagara Parks' flagship visitor location, Table Rock Centre. In January, the attraction received a comprehensive safety inspection and mechanical tune-up (required every five years) as well as a full exterior makeover to be consistent with Niagara Parks current brand standards. This essential maintenance work was carried out primarily in-house, which helped to limit costs associated with external vendors while providing off-season hours for Niagara Parks' engineering staff.

March 2021 - Upgrades to Niagara Parks Boat Launch Facilities

Niagara Parks operates and maintains six public boat launches along the Niagara River and these sites require annual repairs and maintenance to ensure they are accessible and safe for users to access. To cover the costs of this work, Niagara Parks announced its plans in November to introduce paid parking at the sites. To help with the program's implementation, staff collected input via a virtual Public Information Centre and online survey which assisted staff with determining what improvements to prioritize, based on the feedback of users. Upgrades to the facilities are already underway and will continue in the coming years.

November 2020 - Exploration of Expanded Pedestrian Promenades in Queen Victoria Park

Clifton Hill represents a key gateway experience for visitors entering into Queen Victoria Park and is one of the highest pedestrian traffic areas in Niagara Parks. Staff worked in collaboration with the City of Niagara Falls and Clifton Hill BIA to develop plans for improving the pedestrian walkways in this key visitor location through lane reductions and public realm enhancements. This ambitious project connects directly to the goals established in the Queen Victoria Park Master Plan related to pedestrian safety and connections, while also strengthening alignment and collaboration with the City of Niagara Falls. Initial construction work on this initiative will commence in 2021.

Economic Performance – General Overview

Much like the rest of the world at the time, Niagara Parks entered the 2020/21 fiscal year in the midst of a closure of its public-facing operations. The previous year brought record visitation and generated revenue to Niagara Parks and the organization ended the 2019/20 year in a strong financial position with a surplus of \$22.9 million and generated revenues of \$127 million.

In contrast, the financial challenges faced by Niagara Parks throughout the 2020/21 fiscal year were devastating. Niagara Parks' revenue declined by approximately \$78 million, resulting from an estimated 70% reduction in overall visitation. While Niagara Parks experienced several years of financial surpluses prior to 2020, which allowed for strategic investments in key projects to enhance the experience of our visitors across our sites, Niagara Parks ended the 2020/21 fiscal year with a deficit before interest and depreciation of \$23.8 million on revenues of \$50 million.

Facing a financial crisis unlike anything the organization had experienced before, the board and Niagara Parks staff undertook immediate actions including implementing a workforce adjustment plan, as well as immediate adjustments to both operating and capital expenditures. The capital budget was reduced from \$25.6 million to \$9.5 million. In terms of workforce, at its peak, Niagara Parks employed 1,050 staff in 2020/21, compared to 1,802 the year before.

Due to the impacts of the pandemic on its operations, Niagara Parks received an Emergency Stabilization Grant from the Province of \$16.4 million to offset the sudden loss of revenues and to meet its operational and financing commitments. The emergency funding helped to ensure Niagara Parks was able to continue to deliver the safest environment possible for guests and staff, including investments in the highest standards of health and safety measures, as well as properly maintain its assets during a period of severely reduced revenues.

As a result of the pandemic, Niagara Parks has invested more than \$600,000 in new health and safety procedures and products to ensure its sites would be as safe as possible for guests and staff. Some examples of these investments include a full campaign of signage, floor markings and digital media to promote COVID-19 safety, additional staff training, protocol development (i.e. use of masks, PPE, sanitization/disinfecting, hand-washing, secondary screening etc.), thermal camera technology, ventilation upgrades where possible, the installation of plexiglass at various sites, use of foggers for deep cleaning/disinfecting, etc.

Niagara Parks also implemented a COVID-19 Response Team that was tasked with monitoring the effectiveness of the organization's health and safety measures and compliance with local, provincial and national regulations. Since inception, the team has met weekly to assess Niagara Parks' response to COVID-19 and identify any gaps or challenges that needed to be addressed.

While the impacts of COVID-19 on visitation levels and generated revenue throughout 2020/21 were drastic, Niagara Parks welcomed the increased interest in and appreciation for its spectacular outdoor spaces, which continue to be at the core of the organization. Niagara Parks' hiking trails, parks, gardens and outdoor spaces provided an essential respite for people looking to reconnect with nature, resonating with the organization's rich 136-year history.

In addition to the enjoyment of our outdoor spaces, Niagara Parks continued to connect and engage guests in other ways, including by bringing various events and programming that were traditionally held in-person, online. Throughout the year, Niagara Parks hosted online virtual speaker series, virtual yoga sessions, and Niagara Parks Golf hosted virtual workshops focused on preparing players of all ages and skill levels for the upcoming golf season.

With support from the Province, Niagara Parks was able ensure key initiatives and projects continued to progress, which will prove to be essential as the organization looks toward future recovery plans. In 2020, the Commission entered into an agreement with the Ontario Financing Authority to borrow \$25 million to finance the adaptive re-use and turn the liability of a closed power plant in to a new revenue-generating attraction. This loan has allowed the project to progress well throughout 2020/21 and the new attraction will open to the public in the summer of 2021.

The Niagara Parks Power Station will be innovative, iconic and year-round and will serve as a demand generator to increase visitation to Niagara Parks and the Niagara region and will provide a new source of revenue for the organization. The attraction will also act as an economic driver for additional jobs. A full description of the project is provided in the performance-based outcome measures under the growing future revenues category.

Another highlight of 2020/21 was the launch of Phase II of Niagara Parks' Table Rock Redevelopment Project in July 2020. A phased redevelopment that began in 2018, this multimillion-dollar investment in Niagara Parks' highest revenue generating facility will prove to be critical to Niagara Parks' recovery. The new Table Rock Centre will provide a seamless and cohesive guest experience throughout the entire facility, from the stunning new retail store to the redeveloped Table Rock Market culinary outlet. When travelers do start to return, they will begin their Niagara Parks adventures at a completely renovated Table Rock Centre.

During 2020/21, Niagara Parks' finance team began the implementation of a new Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) software to modernize Niagara Parks' Financial Systems. As part of this project, Niagara Parks completed a review of all financial and procurement processes across all departments and business units to take advantage of the efficiencies and improved controls available in the new software.

At the end of fiscal 2020/21, Niagara Parks once again closed its public-facing operations as the province struggled to contain a dangerous second wave of the COVID-19 pandemic. However, Niagara Parks remains focused on recovery, including the safe reopening of its public-facing operations and welcoming back of staff, focusing on the domestic tourism market until international travel resumes, and the opening of its brand-new attraction in the summer of 2021, the Niagara Parks Power Station.

April 1, 2020 - March 31, 2021 Actual Operating Results				
<i>(in thousands of dollars)</i>	2021			2020
	Budget	Actual	Variance	Actual
Revenues	\$53,971	\$49,823	\$(4,148)	\$126,654
Operating Expenses	\$69,272	\$49,780	\$(19,492)	\$102,592
Net Surplus for the period before interest and depreciation (EBID)	(\$15,301)	\$43	\$15,344	\$24,062

Economic Performance: Outcome-Based Performance Measures

A board-governed agency of the Province of Ontario, Niagara Parks continues to operate under a mandate first established by the government of the day in 1885: that it preserve and protect the natural beauty and cultural heritage along the Niagara River Corridor while maintaining financial self-sufficiency.

Niagara Parks operates within the accountability framework of the province as set out in the Agencies and Appointments Directive, affirming the government's intent and expectations for Niagara Parks to pursue sound fiscal management strategies. This is further demonstrated by the new requirement effective January 1, 2019, which states that in addition to output measures and associated targets, all board-governed agencies are required to report on outcome-based measures.

As an operational agency, Niagara Parks has the authority to sell goods or services to the public in a commercial manner and to receive revenues from its commercial activities, which has allowed Niagara Parks to generate the profits necessary to fulfill its mandate.

Additionally, as part of revisions made to the Agencies and Appointments Directive, the following outcomes have been identified to ensure Niagara Parks continues to deliver on its historic mandate while maintaining a strong financial position: Growing Revenue, Enhancing the Visitor Experience, and Ensuring Cost Certainty.

The following projects have been identified as Niagara Parks' initiatives with measurable data designed to achieve these outcomes, with the caveat that Niagara Parks significantly shifted its budgets, investment plans and priorities as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Growing Revenue: Niagara Parks Power Station

Input and Output: The Niagara Parks Power Station will officially open its doors to the public as Niagara's newest landmark attraction on July 30, 2021. Construction at the historic facility has been ongoing since June of 2020, when it was first announced by Minister of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries, Lisa MacLeod, that funding to Niagara Parks had been secured through a loan of \$25 million provided by the Ontario Financing Authority. The attraction will open in phases with \$20 million invested in Phase I, the majority of which is funding the restoration of the historic facility, including all necessary upgrades, as well as interactive exhibits and interpretive installations, and a \$5 million investment into an immersive nighttime multimedia experience, "Currents: Niagara's Power Transformed".

Phase II will include an exciting new attraction that will allow guests to experience the remarkable century-old Tailrace Tunnel that empties at the base of the Horseshoe Falls for the first time. Of the \$25 million loan, \$5 million will be invested into Phase II, set to open in July 2022.

Outcome: The one-of-a-kind structure is considered to be the only fully intact, decommissioned hydroelectric power plant of its era in the world and its adaptive reuse has been a historic and transformational project for Niagara Parks. Constructed in 1905 as the “Canadian Niagara Power Company generating station” the massive facility was a historic achievement in engineering and architecture, remaining operational until 2006.

Operations at the Niagara Parks Power Station will begin with the opening of a daytime guest experience featuring interactive exhibits and interpretative installations that explore the history and science of hydroelectric power generation at the station. Starting on September 3, the nighttime immersive multimedia experience “Currents: Niagara’s Power Transformed” created by Thinkwell Group, will bring the dormant station back to life for visitors utilizing state of the art sound and 3D projection mapping technology.

The day and nighttime experiences will be available for purchase individually, together, or in a bundled package with other Niagara Parks experiences including dining at Table Rock House Restaurant. The opening of Phase I of the attraction is anticipated to be a catalyst for contributing to the recovery of tourism in Ontario and function as a key demand driver and important revenue generating attraction for Niagara Parks.

Beginning in July 2022, Phase II of the attraction will invite visitors to explore the vast underground portions of the Niagara Parks Power Station. Guests will travel deep into the underground infrastructure of the building via glass enclosed elevator, finishing their ride nearly 200 feet below the main floor. Visitors will then make their way through the enormous, century-old Tailrace Tunnel to emerge north of the base of the Horseshoe Falls with stunning panoramic views of the lower Niagara Gorge and American Falls.

Beyond the ticketed visitor experiences, the Niagara Parks Power Station offers a multitude of exciting new potential revenue streams for the organization moving forward. A section of the renovated inner forebay of the station has been left unfinished with plans to add a substantial culinary offering in the future. Once operational, the Niagara Parks Power Station will have exciting potential to be utilized as a large activation space for corporate events, weddings and product launches, including the future addition of large patio areas on the roof of the building, overlooking the Horseshoe Falls.

The project has been an important economic driver for the Niagara region and Ontario throughout the adaptive reuse construction process, which has seen over 75 unique projects awarded to nearly 50 companies, employing well over 300 workers. This is in addition of the dozens of Niagara Parks staff who were kept employed during what otherwise would have been a layoff period during the off-season. Projections for the first five years of operation for the new attraction include:

- 1.7 million visitors
- \$22 million net surplus before interest and depreciation
- 60 new jobs operating the attraction

Enhancing the Visitor Experience: Health and Safety Protocols

Input and Output: From the outset of the COVID-19 pandemic, Niagara Parks staff began discussions on how to enhance our health and safety protocols across the organization to better protect our guests and staff. Niagara Parks implemented a cross-functional COVID Response Team tasked with monitoring and assessing the organization's health and safety measures and compliance with local, provincial and national regulations. Niagara Parks has invested over \$600,000 toward health and safety protocols, products and measures in fiscal 2020/21.

Outcome: With its public-facing operations closed for a large part of the 2020/21 year, Niagara Parks used this time to develop comprehensive health and safety plans across its sites so that when it was time to reopen, the organization could do so safely and efficiently.

Risk assessments and site plans specific to each of Niagara Parks' individual sites and operations were developed to ensure the effective implementation of industry leading protocols and relevant local, provincial and national guidelines. Niagara Parks also developed its own COVID-19 protocols across its sites, which includes requirements around the use of masks and face coverings, PPE, sanitization/disinfecting practices, hand-washing, secondary-screening, capacity guidelines to ensure safe physical distancing, etc. Niagara Parks staff are provided with safety training at each of our locations to ensure all relevant health and safety requirements are met at all times.

Niagara Parks developed a public-facing safety campaign, "Let's Work Together", which included signage, floor markings and digital media to promote COVID-19 safety and protocols to help our guests feel safe and comfortable when visiting Niagara Parks. This includes an online resource centre with information on the types of health and safety measures in place at our restaurants, attractions and retail shops, designed to help our guests understand the requirements and plan their visits to Niagara Parks.

Niagara Parks also invested in new health and safety products and technology, including a thermal camera at Journey Behind the Falls, upgrades to ventilation where possible, the installation of plexiglass at: service counters, the Whirlpool Aero Car, WEGO bus system and golf carts, the use of an anti-microbial coating spray at identified sites, as well as foggers for deep cleaning/disinfecting.

The investment into the highest standards of health and safety measures across the organization and commitment to following all local, provincial and national guidelines, as well as industry leading standards around health and safety, will ensure that Niagara Parks is fully prepared to welcome back guests as safely as possible. Though the timeline for when tourism will return to previously

recorded numbers is unknown, Niagara Parks is committed to providing all of our guests with the best visitor experience possible.

Ensuring Cost Certainty: Workforce Adjustment

Input and Output: Niagara Parks employs a highly skilled and dedicated staff team, encompassing a wide array of industries and backgrounds. To ensure efficient use of its financial resources in the current business climate, while continuing to effectively deliver on its mandate, Niagara Parks implemented a workforce adjustment plan for the organization. The multi-faceted approach to this plan was executed with the goal of maintaining a focus on front-facing services while reducing overall costs related to staffing where possible.

Outcome: As a key component of the workforce adjustment plan, Niagara Parks undertook an operational review of two departments: Parks, Environment and Culture and Engineering, Parking and Transportation. The review was conducted with the consulting services of Deloitte, with the objective of assessing the current functions of both departments in delivering on Niagara Parks' mandate and business requirements. The resulting report provided recommendations for future functions and operational structure, along with opportunities for cost savings and the development of KPIs that can be used by the CEO for assessing the impact of the review and future changes.

In immediate response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Niagara Parks developed a progressive workforce management plan, allowing the organization to support staff as much as possible, while effectively managing finances and resources. Seasonal staffing levels were adjusted dynamically throughout the fiscal year in accordance with business needs with required staffing levels reviewed weekly. This resulted in labour cost savings of 43% for the organization during 2020/21, when compared to the previous fiscal year.

Looking forward, Niagara Parks will continue to explore further opportunities to streamline service delivery across the organization and save costs, while providing “best in class” service. This includes the elimination of duplication of services, and the centralization of key administration functions.

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Economic Performance – Risk Analysis

As outlined in Niagara Parks' Business Plan and reported in Niagara Parks' quarterly reports to the Ministry, the following categories are applied to Niagara Parks' risks: Strategic/Policy/Performance; Accountability/Governance; Operational; Workforce; Information, Technology, and Infrastructure; Other. The following risks and their risk management strategies have been identified for the 2020/2021 fiscal year:

Operational

Risk Factor: Further Interruption of Revenue Producing Operations by COVID-19

Risk Description: As a self-supporting enterprise agency of the Ministry of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries, Niagara Parks is dependent on the financial success of its revenue producing operations to fulfill its mandate. Over the past fiscal year, Niagara Parks was required to close its public-facing operations on two separate occasions for long stretches of time which severely impacted its ability to generate revenue. The majority of Niagara Parks' revenues are variable and dependent on visitation, while many of its costs related to the stewardship and maintenance of its property are fixed.

Mitigation Strategy: Niagara Parks acted quickly to significantly reduce its expenditures related to administration while focusing on the maintenance of critical agency assets during periods when Niagara Parks' public-facing operations were closed. The organization developed robust health and safety plans specific to all of its locations which were informed by the guidance of provincial and regional public health officials. These plans have continued to be updated as the situation evolved by a new cross-departmental health and safety team which will remain in place moving forward to identify potential future risks and develop proactive solutions to address them.

Strategic/Policy/Performance

Risk Factor: Redevelopment of the Canadian Niagara Power Decommissioned Generating Station on time and on budget.

Risk Description: The redevelopment of the Niagara Parks Power Station is a large-scale construction project to restore and operate the decommissioned historic power plant as the newest attraction for Niagara Parks. The historic power station is the last remaining example of a fully intact, decommissioned hydroelectric plant left in the world. There are risks related to resource and timing constraints, as well as potentially unforeseen challenges raised by working with a historical property.

Mitigation Strategy: The business case has been prepared and reviewed with the Ministry. Niagara Parks entered into an agreement with the Ontario Financing Authority to borrow \$25 million to finance capital expenditures in order to develop a new revenue producing attraction and reduce the power plant stabilization liability. Detailed engineering estimates of stabilization components have been completed and Niagara Parks has extensive experience in attractions and undertaking

significant construction projects. As well, Niagara Parks provides ongoing project updates with the board (monthly) and weekly reviews at the senior management level are conducted to ensure objectives and timelines can be met and that expenditures are monitored carefully and remain within budget.

Risk Factor: Ability to Preserve Assets and Deliver on Environmental Stewardship Mandate

Risk Description: Niagara Parks relies on its revenue producing operations to fund its environmental and cultural stewardship initiatives. The impacts of COVID-19 in the past fiscal year resulted in Niagara Parks generating only a fraction of its forecasted revenues with further impacts projected into the next fiscal year and beyond. Efforts related to cash conservation and expenditure reduction over the past fiscal year resulted in the deferring of capital works and maintenance projects where possible. Over an extended period of time, this could result in failure to effectively maintain environmental and structural assets to the standard which the organization has in the past.

Mitigation Strategy: Niagara Parks has implemented a multi-year capital planning process to inform the strategic prioritization of capital works investments. This includes the integration of a Condition Assessment database. This software offers a comprehensive solution for Niagara Parks staff to monitor the status of the organization's capital assets and provides them with a categorized ranking system to which considers key metrics related to safety, asset integrity and strategic relevance. In addition to this, Niagara Parks continues to seek and identify redundant assets for sale and closely monitor all capital budget expenditures to ensure they align with the revised 10-year capital plan developed with consideration of the revenue impacts resulting from COVID-19.

Information Technology and Infrastructure

Risk Factor: Safeguarding of Niagara Parks Secure Digital Information

Risk Description: The internet has and will continue to expose all organizations, including Niagara Parks to ongoing the possibility of a damaging cyber-attack which could compromise public confidence and negatively impact revenues. As Niagara Parks increases its use of web based Software as a Solution (SaaS) products to support its business needs, additional risks of malware and ransomware attacks to the Niagara Parks network will continue to be introduced.

Mitigation Strategy: Niagara Parks employs a highly experienced and competent IT staff who have augmented their knowledge base with the strategic use of independent consultants for specialized advice and external audits. This approach has led to the implementation of a comprehensive cyber-attack defense strategy which includes best-in-class second generation firewalls, rigorous security checklists for SaaS providers, use of industry leading anti-virus software and proactive staff monitoring of emerging cyber threats.

Other Risks

Risk Factor: Insurance Coverage Costs

Risk Description: The COVID-19 pandemic has had an adverse impact on the corporate insurance market, resulting in significantly higher premiums. Property insurance is also proving more difficult to place due to large-scale disasters such as wildfires, flooding and hurricanes causing large claim liabilities around the globe. In order to obtain coverage in March 2020, and again in March 2021, Niagara Parks' premiums and deductibles were both increased significantly.

Mitigation Strategy: Appraisals of key property values, such as Table Rock, will ensure properties are not over/under-insured. Prior to submitting insurance claims, conduct cost benefit analyses of claims such as pandemic impact to business interruption. Investigate with the Ministry whether Niagara Parks can obtain coverage through Provincial programs to reduce costs.

Business Climate

Where the Commission's Dollars Came From 2020/2021 (April 1, 2020 to March 31, 2021)	Where the Commission's Dollars Went 2020/2021 (April 1, 2020 to March 31, 2021)
Boat Tour Lease Agreement – \$6.5 (15%)	Maintenance – \$14.8M (24%)
Zipline and Adventure Course Agreement – \$0.5 (1%)	Working Capital - \$5.1M (9%)
Gift Shops, Restaurants, & Attractions – (0%)	Gift Shops, Restaurants & Attractions - \$1.5M (2%)
Land Rent – \$7.5M (17%)	Administration - \$9.6M (16%)
Grant Funding – \$16.9 (39%)	Asset Additions - \$19M (31%)
Construction Loan Advances - \$11.4 (26%)	Interest Paid - \$1M (2%)
Other Income - \$0.8 (2%)	Long-Term Debt Repayment - \$2.4M (4%)
	Strategic Initiatives – \$0.1M (0%)
	Power Plant Stabilization – \$1.3M (2%)
	Other Expenses – \$5.9M (10%)
Where the Commission's Dollars Came From 2019/20 (April 1, 2019 to March 31, 2020)	Where the Commission's Dollars Went 2019 (April 1, 2019 to March 31, 2020)
Boat Tour Lease Agreement – \$15.8M (23%)	Maintenance – \$21.9M (28%)
Zipline and Adventure Course Agreement – \$2.3M (3%)	Working Capital - \$3.9M (6%)
Gift Shops, Restaurants, & Attractions – \$41.3M (59%)	Gift Shops, Restaurants & Attractions \$0 (0%)
Land Rent – \$7.4M (11%)	Administration - \$11.5M (15%)
Grant Funding – \$0.06M (0%)	Asset Additions - \$24.6M (32%)
Construction Loan Advances - \$0 (0%)	Interest Paid - \$1M (1%)
Other Incomes – \$2.7M (4%)	Long-Term Debt Repayment - \$2.5M (3%)
	Strategic Initiatives – \$0.3M (0%)
	Power Plant Stabilization – \$0.2M (0%)
	Other Expenses – \$10.9M (14%)

Comparative Performance – Niagara Parks’ Revenue Producing Operations (\$`000)

	2020/21	% of sales	2019/20	% of sales
Revenue	\$17,292	-	\$97,499	-
Cost of Goods Sold	\$1,839	11%	16,624	17%
Gross Profit	\$15,453	-	\$80,630	-
Operating Expenditures	\$17,253	99%	\$41,094	41%
Net Income Before Administrative Overhead and Depreciation	\$(1,493)	(10%)	\$41,347	42%

Niagara Parks Attendance

	April 1, 2020 to March 31, 2021	April 1, 2019 to March 31, 2020	Increase / (Decrease)	NOTES
Paid Attractions				
Journey Behind the Falls	79,481	903,777	(824,296)	
Butterfly Conservatory	64,450	314,867	(250,417)	
Whirlpool Aero Car	33,944	133,906	(99,962)	
White Water Walk	62,092	269,847	(207,755)	
Niagara's Fury	0	319,014	(319,014)	
Floral Showhouse	12,685	58,509	(45,824)	
Total	252,652	1,999,920	(1,747,268)	
Golf				
Oak Hall Par 3 Golf Course	0	1,384	(1,384)	
Whirlpool Golf Course	30,356	28,154	2,202	
Legends on the Niagara	67,871	54,701	13,170	
Total	98,227	84,239	13,988	
Historic Sites				
Old Fort Erie	2,486	15,678	(13,192)	
Laura Secord Homestead	979	6,990	(6,011)	
Mackenzie Printery	191	4,486	(4,295)	
McFarland House	312	2,762	(2,450)	
Total	3,968	29,916	(25,948)	
Transportation				
WEGO Transportation Service	88,748	1,332,557	(1,243,809)	Note 1
Falls Incline Railway	114,834	1,187,336	(1,072,502)	
Total	203,582	2,519,893	(2,316,311)	
Total Attendance	558,429	4,633,968	(4,075,539)	

Note 1: WEGO attendance represents Green Line ridership along the Niagara Parkway only.

Commissioner Remuneration

Niagara Parks Commissioners are paid a per diem when working on Commission business and fulfilling their duties as a member of the Commission Board. The per diem of \$250 for the Chair, \$175 for the Vice-Chair and \$135 for each member of the Board is set by the Government of Ontario.

The table below lists the remuneration paid to Commissioners during the 2021 fiscal year (April 1, 2020 to March 31, 2021), as well as reimbursed out of pocket expenses.

Commissioner	Remuneration	Expenses	Total
Sandie Bellows, Chair	\$33,500.00	\$0	\$33,500.00
April Jeffs, Vice-Chair	\$2,012.50	\$0	\$2,012.50
Eldon Bennett, Commissioner	\$135.00	\$0	\$135.00
Sylvie Chartrand-Rafi, Commissioner	\$0	\$0	\$0
Graham Coveney, Commissioner	\$202.50	\$0	\$202.50
Natasha DiCienzo, Commissioner	\$1,687.50	\$0	\$675.00
Jim Diodati, Commissioner	\$1,620.00	\$0	\$1,620.00
Betty Disero, Commissioner	\$1,350.00	\$0	\$1,350.00
Jessica Friesen, Commissioner	\$2,025.00	\$0	\$2,025.00
Lois Anne Giles, Commissioner	\$2,025.00	\$26.40	\$2,051.40
Vincent Kerrio, Commissioner	\$0	\$0	\$0
Ted Salci, Commissioner	\$1,147.50	\$0	\$1,147.50
Wayne Redekop, Commissioner	\$1,350.00	\$0	\$1,350.00
TOTAL	\$47,055.00	\$26.40	\$47,081.40