

Planning Justification Brief

# Part Lot 20, Concession 1, Geographic Township of Caistor, Township of West Lincoln

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Proposed Rural Settlement Area Expansion



Prepared for Andre Leblanc  
by IBI Group  
June 1, 2021

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# 1 Introduction

Mr. Andre Leblanc (“Owner”) is the Owner of the lands legally described as PT LT 20 CON 1 CAISTOR AS IN RO703128 EXCEPT 30M194; WEST LINCOLN (“subject lands”). IBI Group has been retained by the Owner to provide an independent professional planning opinion with respect to the subject lands, and specifically whether a portion could be considered as a candidate for expansion of the Caistorville Rural Settlement Area (“RSA” or “Hamlet”). This report provides the planning review and analysis and is intended to be the main component of a submission to the Region of Niagara within the overall Municipal Comprehensive Review (“MCR”) and New Regional Official Plan Project (“NROP”) processes for consideration of an RSA expansion through the Settlement Area Boundary Review (“SABR”) component. Accordingly, this report reviews the site context and planning framework, and provides independent analysis to recommend an expansion area to be incorporated through the MCR and NROP.

## 2 Subject Lands and Context

### 2.1 Location and Size of Subject Lands

The subject lands are located immediately south of the existing Caistorville Hamlet area, on the east side of Caistorville Rd, as depicted in **Figure 1** below. The lands are about 36 ha in area, with frontage on Caistorville Rd of approximately 1445 m and frontage on Indian Line of approximately 308 m. The lands are vacant, with the exception of two small accessory structures. Portions of the lands are actively farmed while other portions contain woodland and wetland areas. There are also several existing drainage features which traverse the lands, as well as several ponds. The lands are located near the westerly limit of both the Region and the Township boundaries.

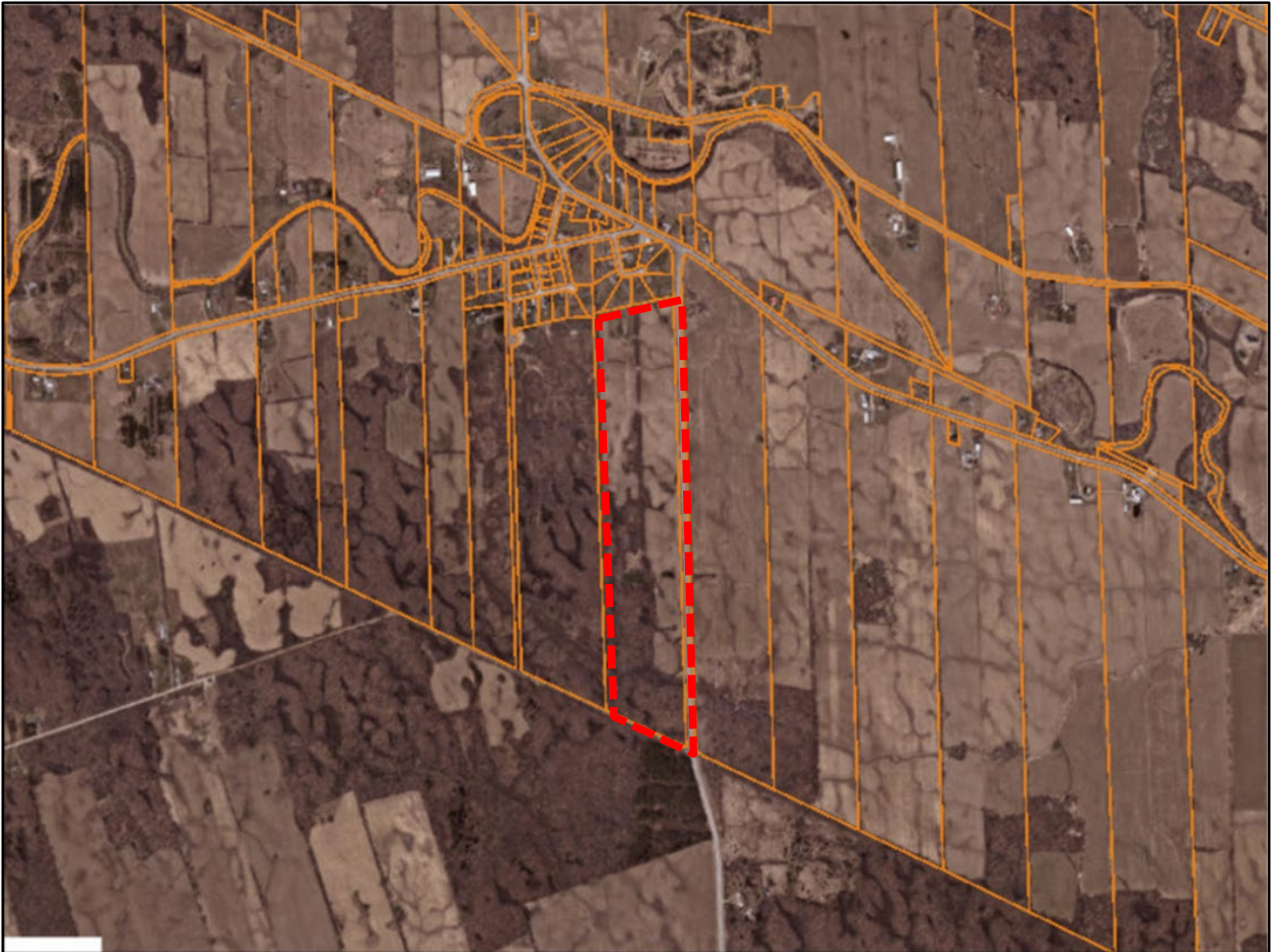


Figure 1 - Subject Lands and Surrounding Context, Approximate Extent of Subject Lands in Red

## 2.2 Location and Size of Existing Caistorville Rural Settlement Area

The existing Caistorville RSA is located in the westerly area of the Region, as depicted in **Figures 2 and 3** below. It is arranged around the irregular intersection of Caistorville Rd and York St, also connecting to North Chippawa Rd and Concession One Rd. The RSA is also irregular in shape, bounded to the north by a curved, linear water feature we understand is named Wolf Creek. It is approximately 42.5 ha (105 acres), and is surrounded by agricultural uses, some of which contains natural heritage features and open space lands.

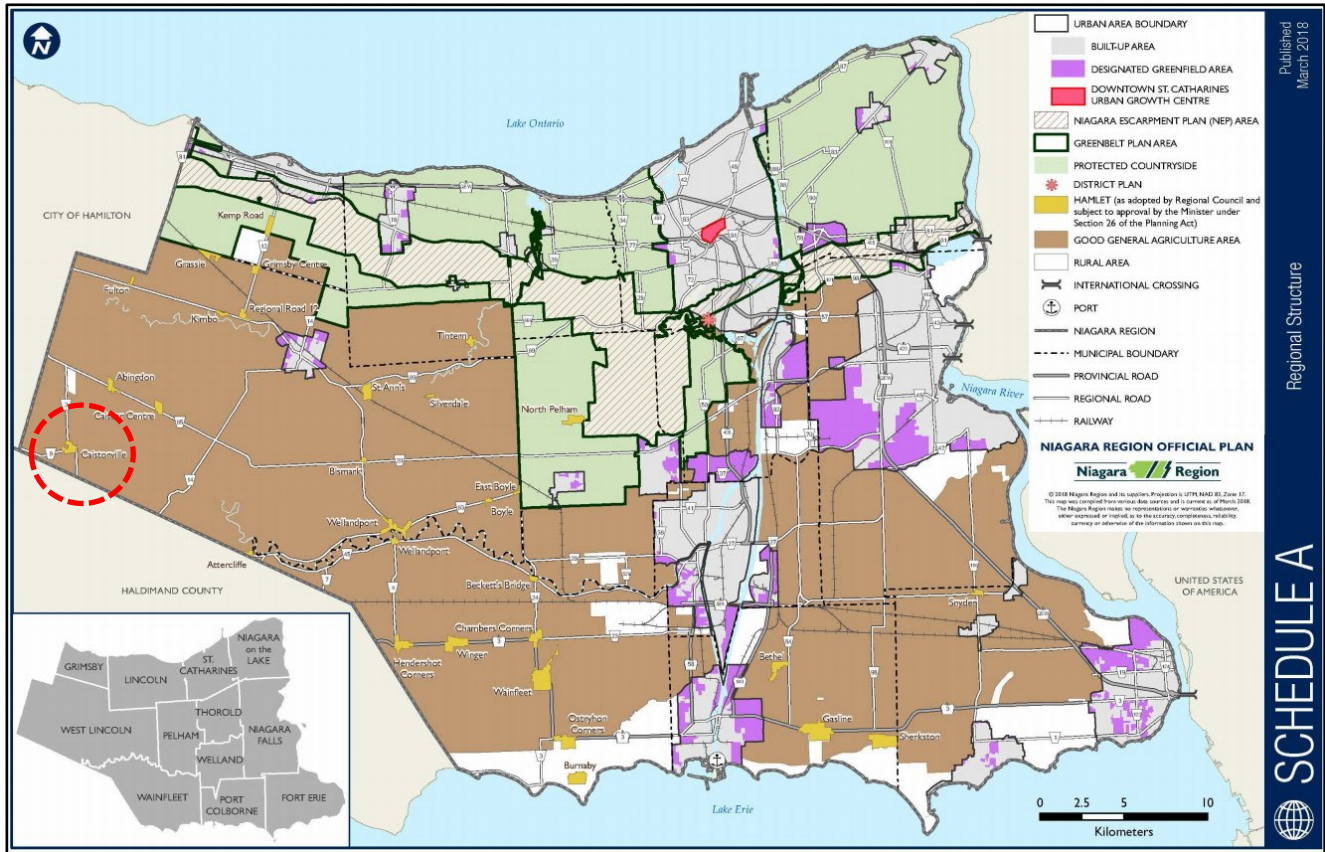


Figure 2 - Location of Caistorville in Context of Region



Figure 3 - Location of Caistorville in Context of Region - Google Earth Imagery

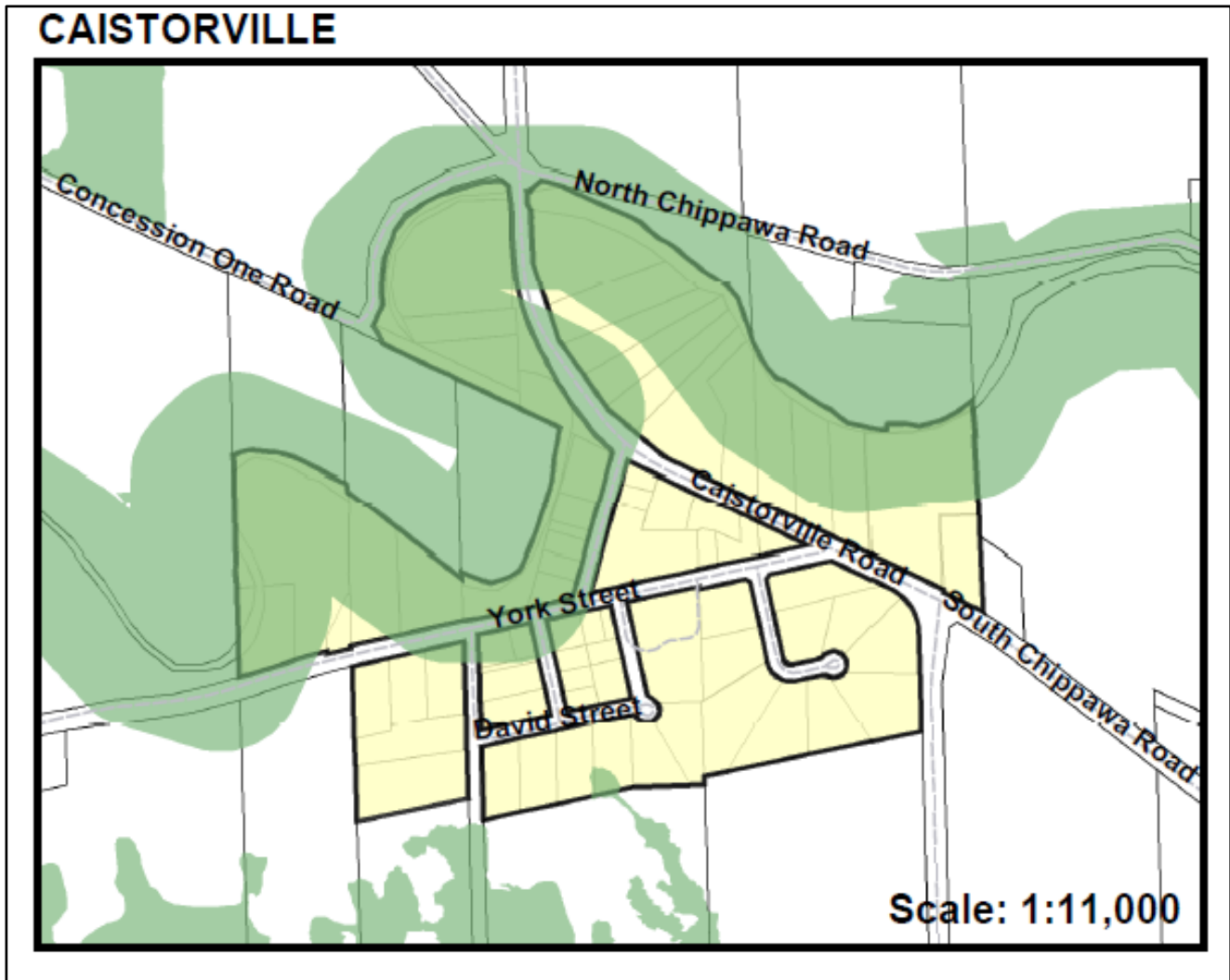


Figure 4 - Location and Extent of Existing Caistorville RSA - Town of Lincoln Official Plan Mapping

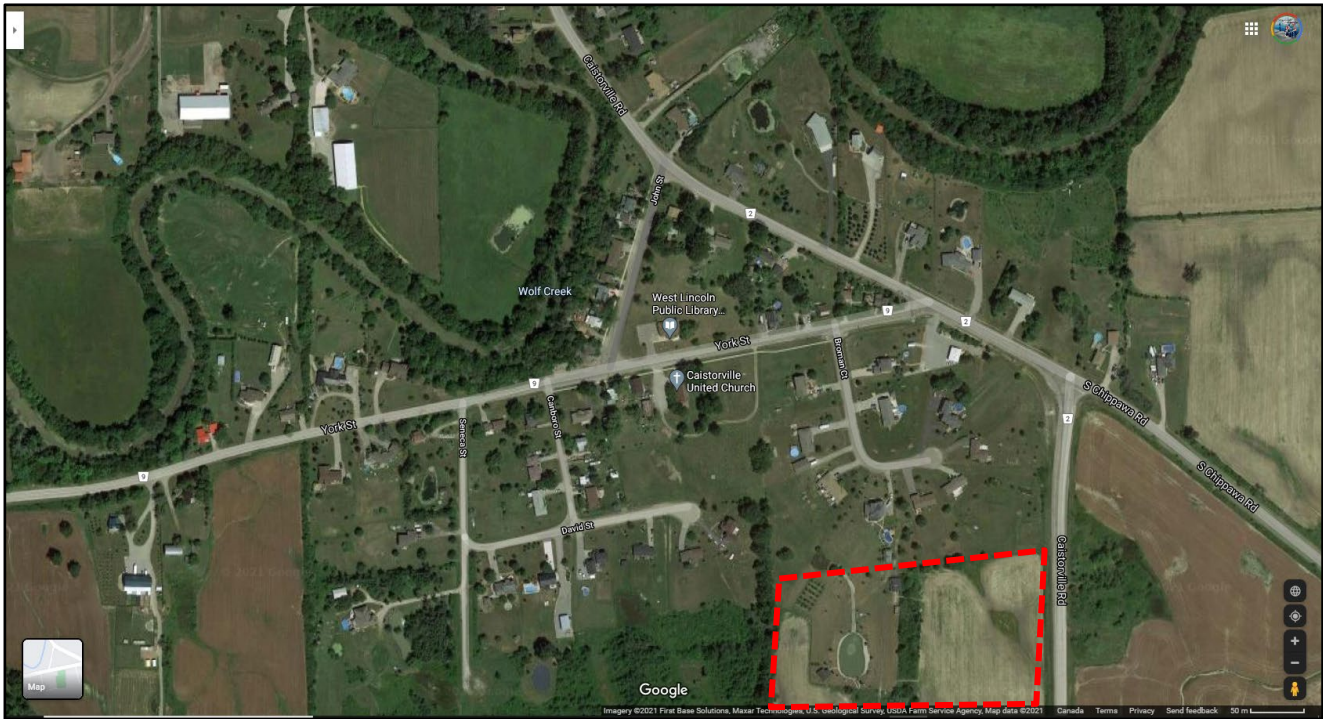


Figure 5 - Zoomed View of portion of Caistorville RSA, Portion of Subject Lands in Red, Google Earth Air Photo

### 3 Proposed Rural Settlement Area Expansion

This report will provide a review and justification for a proposed RSA expansion area on the subject lands of approximately 7.3 ha (18 acres), as shown in **Figure 6**. This expansion would be to the existing southerly RSA boundary, on relatively flat lands currently used for agriculture, immediately adjacent to existing rural residential development arranged around Broman Court. This expansion area would equate to an approximately 17% increase in the size of the existing RSA. Making assumptions for minimum lot sizes of 0.4 ha to comply with standard zoning requirements and to provide area for on-site individual private services, and a new public Right-of-Way (“ROW”) width of 18 m, this proposed expansion area is capable of accommodating 13 new rural residential lots arranged around a “C-shaped” road, with two new connections to Caistorville Rd. The westerly and southerly boundary of the proposed expansion would follow delineated 30 m buffers from existing wetlands, and the expansion area and concept development plans incorporate existing drainage features with associated buffers, preserving connections external to the subject lands.



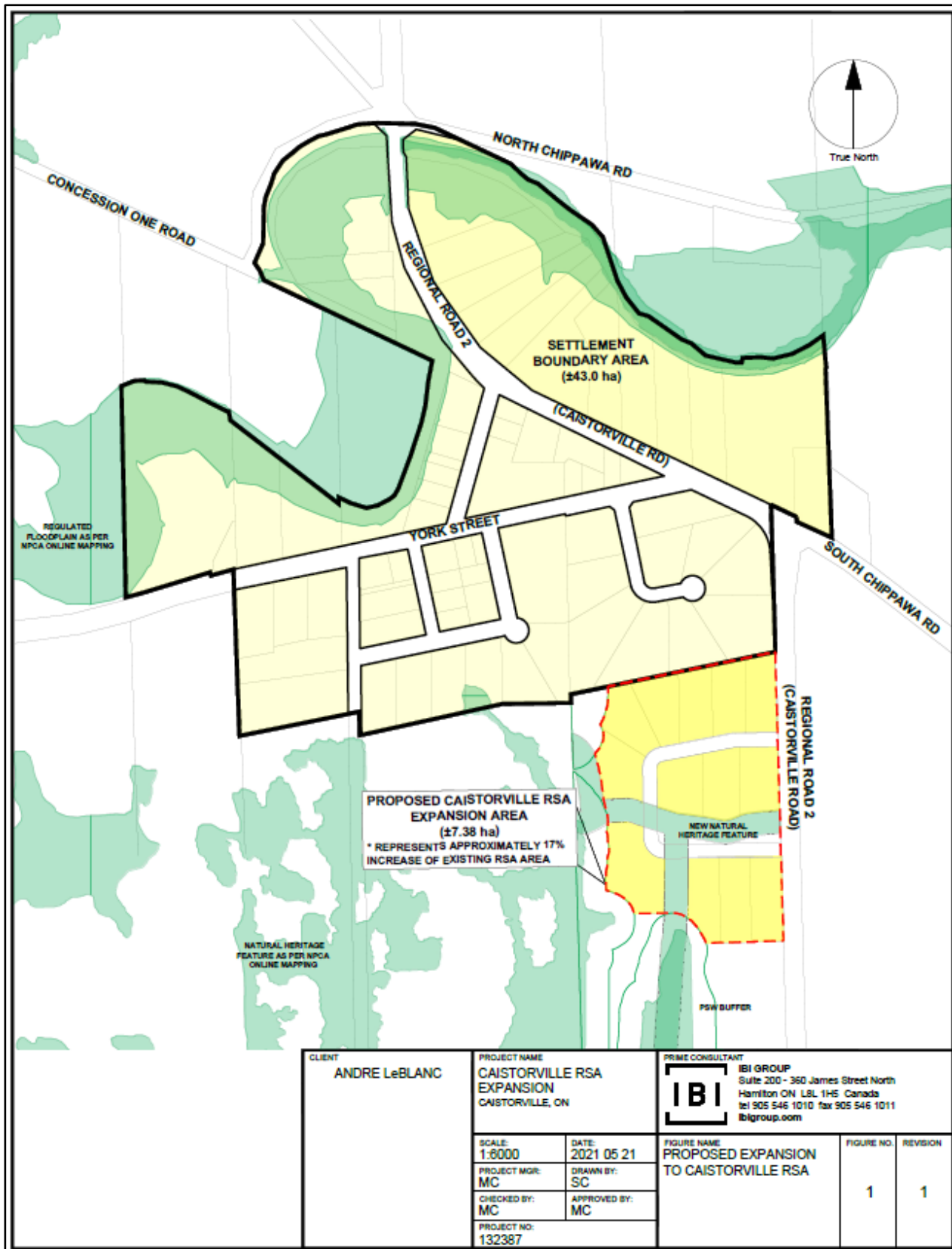


Figure 6 - Proposed Expansion Area in the Context of the Existing Settlement Area

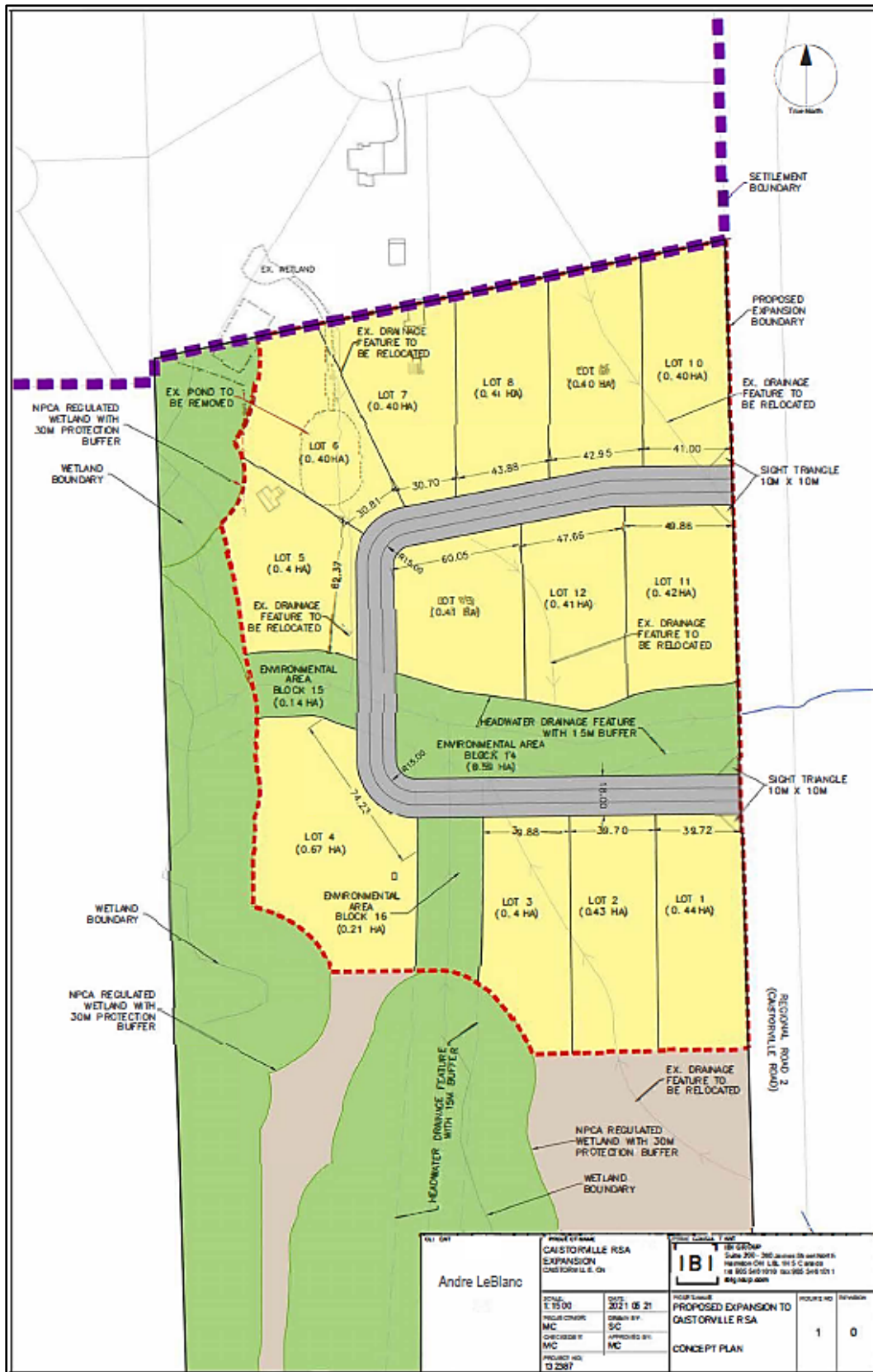


Figure 7 - Conceptual Development Plan Within Proposed RSA Expansion Area

## 4 Region of Niagara Municipal Comprehensive Review and Official Plan Project

At the time of writing this report, the Region of Niagara was progressing through its MCR process, which is to result in the creation of a New Official Plan. Most of the planning analysis for the proposed RSA Expansion is provided below in **Section 5**, including a review and provides justification for the proposed expansion against the Region's draft criteria for consideration of RSA expansions through the MCR. It is noted here that the process for accepting, considering and commenting on proposed RSA expansions by the Region is through the coordinated MCR and the sub-component SABR process. For clarity, this report is being submitted to the Region within the SABR sub-component process in accordance with the defined process and is not a full Planning Justification Report which would accompany a planning application.

## 5 Planning Framework Applicable to Rural Settlement Areas and Expansions

There are multiple policy documents and specific policies which guide and structure RSA expansion considerations.

### 5.1 Provincial Policy Statement 2020

To begin, the PPS defines **Settlement Areas** as:

**Settlement areas:** means urban areas and **rural settlement areas within municipalities** (such as cities, towns, villages and **hamlets**) that are:

- a) built-up areas where development is concentrated and which have a mix of land uses; and
- b) lands which have been designated in an official plan for development over the long-term planning horizon provided for in policy 1.1.2. In cases where land in designated growth areas is not available, the settlement area may be no larger than the area where development is concentrated (emphasis added in bold)

**Planning Comment:** Consistent with the definition and discussion in the Growth Plan Section below, the existing Caistorville Hamlet is a Rural Settlement Area ("RSA") within the above definition from the PPS. The following sections review and provide planning analysis in consideration of this definition and policies applicable to existing RSA areas and proposed expansions of same.

### 1.1 Managing and Directing Land Use to Achieve Efficient and Resilient Development and Land Use Patterns

1.1.1 Healthy, liveable and safe communities are sustained by:

- b) accommodating an appropriate affordable and market-based range and mix of residential types (including single-detached, additional residential units, multi-unit housing, affordable housing and housing for older persons), employment (including industrial and commercial), institutional (including places of worship, cemeteries and long-term care homes), recreation, park and open space, and other uses to meet long-term needs;

- c) avoiding development and land use patterns which may cause environmental or public health and safety concerns;
- d) avoiding development and land use patterns that would prevent the efficient expansion of settlement areas in those areas which are adjacent or close to settlement areas;

**Planning Comment:** The proposed RSA expansion will provide land for additional low-density, ground-oriented rural residential dwellings in the westerly area of the Region and the Township. This will assist in meeting forecasted population growth to the planning horizon established in the growth plan, as well as in meeting market-based demand for rural, low-density, ground-related dwellings. Further, the proposed RSA expansion would extend the existing boundary to the south but would not preclude future expansions in other locations, if and when warranted.

### 1.1.3 Settlement Areas

1.1.3.1 Settlement areas shall be the focus of growth and development.

1.1.3.2 Land use patterns within settlement areas shall be based on densities and a mix of land uses which:

- a) efficiently use land and resources;
- b) are appropriate for, and efficiently use, the infrastructure and public service facilities which are planned or available, and avoid the need for their unjustified and/or uneconomical expansion;

**Planning Comment:** Based on air photo analysis, there are limited if any vacant residential lots within the existing Caistorville Hamlet. There appears to be two vacant lots just west of Caistorville United Church, with one fronting directly on David Street and the other fronting on what appears to be an unopened road allowance. There are other lots which appear larger but unsuitable for further land division without land assembly, due to limited frontage or lot shape. Lastly, there appear numerous lots that would be too small for further land division to either comply with zoning standards or requirements for private servicing. The proposed RSA expansion is supported by a concept development plan which extends the rural character and provides lot sizes that would be generally considered to be the minimum area for rural residential development.

1.1.3.8 A planning authority may identify a settlement area or allow the expansion of a settlement area boundary only at the time of a comprehensive review and only where it has been demonstrated that:

- a) sufficient opportunities to accommodate growth and to satisfy market demand are not available through intensification, redevelopment and designated growth areas to accommodate the projected needs over the identified planning horizon;
- b) the infrastructure and public service facilities which are planned or available are suitable for the development over the long term, are financially viable over their life cycle, and protect public health and safety and the natural environment;
- c) in prime agricultural areas:
  - 1.the lands do not comprise specialty crop areas;
  - 2.alternative locations have been evaluated, and
    - i. there are no reasonable alternatives which avoid prime agricultural areas; and
    - ii. there are no reasonable alternatives on lower priority agricultural lands in prime agricultural areas;

- d) the new or expanding settlement area is in compliance with the minimum distance separation formulae; and
- e) impacts from new or expanding settlement areas on agricultural operations which are adjacent or close to the settlement area are mitigated to the extent feasible.

**Planning Comment:** At the time of writing this report, the Region is in the midst of it's MCR, and has produced a Draft Land Needs Assessment ("LNA") which identifies total land needs to the 2051 planning year horizon, indicating approximately 460 ha of community land need is required to accommodate forecasted growth. Further, a portion of this growth is to be allocated to rural areas, with West Lincoln and Wainfleet being identified as municipalities that will have a likely need for RSA expansions. There are no municipal water or wastewater servicing implications, but the existing Caistorville Hamlet contains the Caistorville Branch of the West Lincoln Public Library. With respect to Prime Agricultural lands, almost all of the West Lincoln Rural Area is designated as Good General Agriculture, which is a Prime Agricultural designation, and any RSA expansion would occur on Prime Agriculture lands. In the context of the Caistorville Hamlet, the boundary is surrounded by Class 3 and 4 soils, which are afforded lower priority protection. Further, the area with Class 4 soils appears to be within hazard lands and undevelopable. Lastly, MDS calculations have not been prepared for this submission, but distances to existing agricultural facilities based on air photo analysis have been provided (see sections below) It is anticipated that MDS calculations will be further considered through the MCR process.

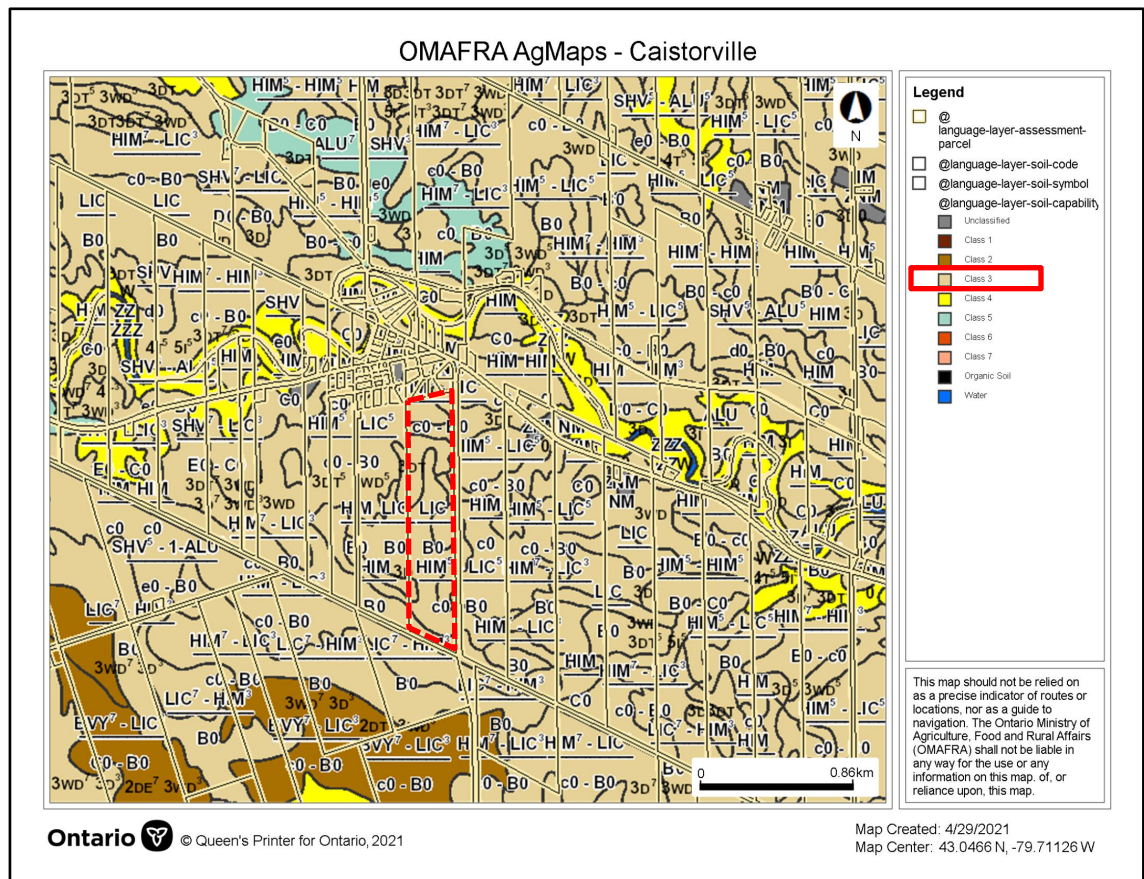


Figure 8 - Subject Lands and Soil Classification, Excerpt from Online OMAFRA AgMaps

### 1.1.4 Rural Areas in Municipalities

1.1.4.1 Healthy, integrated and viable rural areas should be supported by:

- a) building upon rural character, and leveraging rural amenities and assets;
- c) accommodating an appropriate range and mix of housing in rural settlement areas;
- e) using rural infrastructure and public service facilities efficiently;

**Planning Comment:** The proposed RSA expansion would extend the existing Caistorville Hamlet to the south in a controlled and scoped area. The accompanying concept development plan illustrates that 13 new rural residential lots of a minimum 0.4 ha in size can be created within this expansion area, and that the location, size and shape of these lots extend and are compatible with the Hamlet character. This would also contribute to the number, size and shape of rural residential lots within the Hamlet, and provide low-density, ground-related rural residential dwellings in the western part of the Region and the Township, to accommodate forecasted growth and respond to market demand for these dwelling types in this location.

1.1.4.2 In rural areas, rural settlement areas shall be the focus of growth and development and their vitality and regeneration shall be promoted.

1.1.4.3 When directing development in rural settlement areas in accordance with policy 1.1.3, planning authorities shall give consideration to rural characteristics, the scale of development and the provision of appropriate service levels.

**Planning Comment:** The existing Caistorville Hamlet is a RSA, and the proposed expansion would permit residential growth and development that would contribute to Hamlet vitality, such as through supporting the existing public library and place of worship. Further, the size and shape of the proposed expansion area afford a minor expansion in relation to the size of the existing Hamlet, being a total of approximately 7.5 ha and representing an approximately 17% increase in the size of the existing Hamlet. Further, the concept development plan provides lot sizes and shapes consistent with rural residential standards to accommodate individual lot-level private services, and completing the existing residential character of the Hamlet, particularly the lotting pattern and street design of Broman Court immediately to the north.

### 1.4 Housing

1.4.3 Planning authorities shall provide for an appropriate range and mix of housing options and densities to meet projected market-based and affordable housing needs of current and future residents of the regional market area by:

- b) permitting and facilitating:
  - 1. all housing options required to meet the social, health, economic and well-being requirements of current and future residents, including special needs requirements and needs arising from demographic changes and employment opportunities; and

**Planning Comment:** The proposed RSA expansion area will provide additional lands to accommodate low-density, ground-related rural residential dwellings to meet forecasted growth and market-based housing options to 2051, specifically the amount of dwelling unit growth within the Rural Area of both the Region and the Township. The size and number of potential lots provided in the concept development plan will provide housing for those looking for or requiring low-density, single-detached dwellings in a rural setting within the western area of the Region and Township.

### 1.6.6 Sewage, Water and Stormwater

1.6.6.4 Where municipal sewage services and municipal water services or private communal sewage services and private communal water services are not available, planned or feasible, individual on-site sewage services and individual on-site water services may be used provided that site conditions are suitable for the long-term provision of such services with no negative impacts. In settlement areas, individual on-site sewage services and individual on-site water services may be used for infilling and minor rounding out of existing development.

**Planning Comment:** This submission is based on a planning review and analysis of applicable policy but is not supported at this stage by other technical work, such as a hydrogeological study. However, in developing the proposed RSA expansion area and concept development plan, typical rural residential standards were applied, including minimum lot areas of 0.4 ha which would typically be sufficient for accommodating on-site private well and septic services. Further, in the context of the Township, the 0.4 ha lot area is the minimum standard for Rural Residential zones.

## 2.0 Wise Use and Management of Resources

### 2.1 Natural Heritage

- 2.1.1 Natural features and areas shall be protected for the long term.
- 2.1.2 The diversity and connectivity of natural features in an area, and the long-term ecological function and biodiversity of natural heritage systems, should be maintained, restored or, where possible, improved, recognizing linkages between and among natural heritage features and areas, surface water features and ground water features.
- 2.1.4 Development and site alteration shall not be permitted in:
  - a) significant wetlands in Ecoregions 5E, 6E and 7E1; and

**Planning Comment:** A preliminary assessment of the lands for natural heritage features has informed the proposed RSA expansion area map as well as the concept development plan. In both cases, existing wetlands have been delineated and required 30 m buffers have been used to separate the overall RSA and lot boundaries, so no development is proposed within the 30 m buffers. Further, existing drainage features of significance have been incorporated into the RSA expansion and development concept, such that the features are buffered and enhanced, and exterior connections maintained. Identified drainage features that are not critical are proposed to be relocated such that the functions would be incorporated into lot-level drainage.

### 2.2 Water

- 2.2.1 Planning authorities shall protect, improve or restore the quality and quantity of water by:
  - d) identifying water resource systems consisting of ground water features, hydrologic functions, natural heritage features and areas, and surface water features including shoreline areas, which are necessary for the ecological and hydrological integrity of the watershed;
  - e) maintaining linkages and related functions among ground water features, hydrologic functions, natural heritage features and areas, and surface water features including shoreline areas;

**Planning Comment:** As noted above, drainage features have been identified and either incorporated through preservation and associated buffers or through replication of function via relocated lot-level drainage. This approach will ensure features and functions are preserved and enhanced, including off-site connections.

## 2.3 Agriculture

2.3.1 Prime agricultural areas shall be protected for long-term use for agriculture.

Prime agricultural areas are areas where prime agricultural lands predominate. Specialty crop areas shall be given the highest priority for protection, followed by Canada Land Inventory Class 1, 2, and 3 lands, and any associated Class 4 through 7 lands within the prime agricultural area, in this order of priority.

**Planning Comment:** Based on the online soil mapping data from OMAFRA provided in **Figure 8**, the subject lands consist of Class 3 soils. Further, most of the area around the Caistorville Hamlet consists of Class 3 and 4 soils, but the areas of Class 4 appear undevelopable due to hazard area delineations. The proposed RSA expansion is approximately 7.3 ha, and thus no more than this amount of land would be removed from Prime Agricultural Lands, all consisting of Class 3 soils.

### 2.3.5 Removal of Land from Prime Agricultural Areas

2.3.5.1 Planning authorities may only exclude land from prime agricultural areas for expansions of or identification of settlement areas in accordance with policy 1.1.3.8.

**Planning Comment:** The proposed RSA expansion is being submitted for review during the Region's MCR and is coordinated with process and substantive policy issues as required by policy 1.1.3.8.

## 5.2 Greenbelt Plan 2017

The subject lands are not within the Greenbelt Plan, and thus no Greenbelt Plan policies apply. Further, no Growth Plan policies dealing with Hamlet and/or Rural Settlement expansions into the Greenbelt Plan Area apply. **Figure 9** below provides mapping confirming the lands are outside the Greenbelt Plan Area.



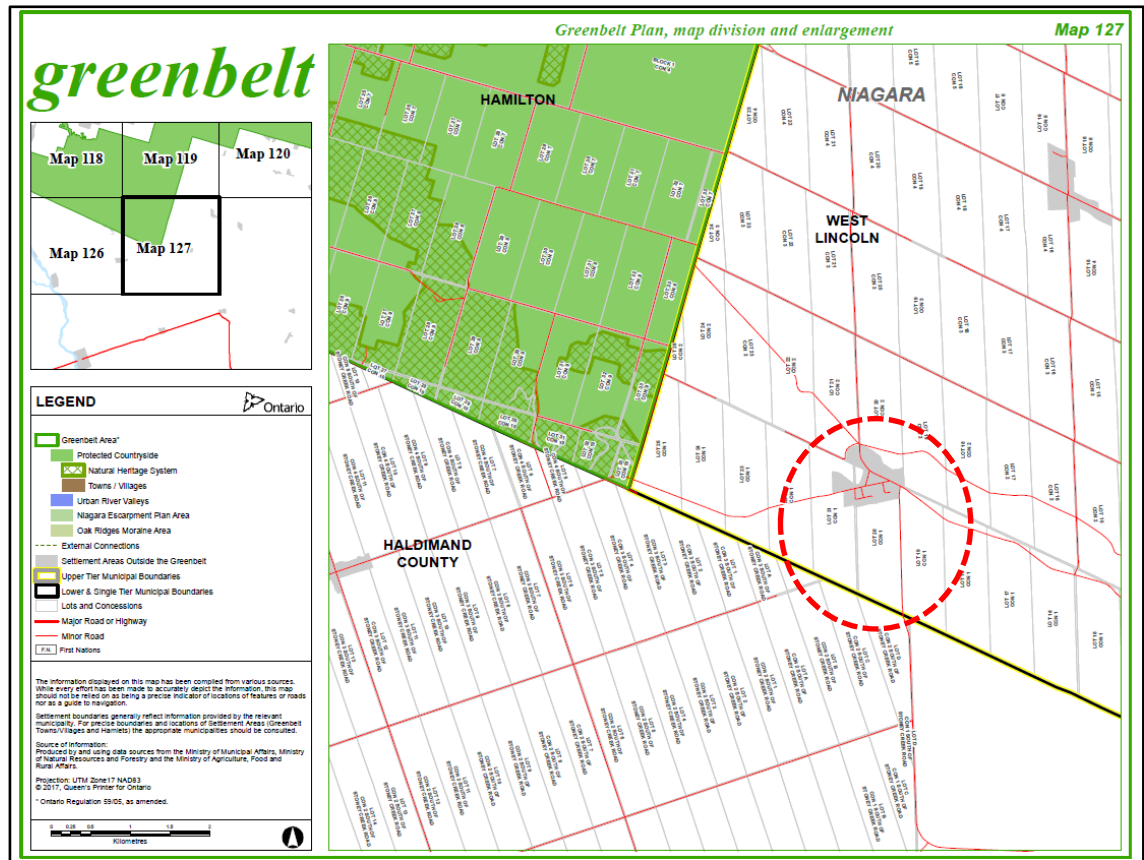


Figure 9 - Subject Lands in Context of Greenbelt Plan, Excerpt from Greenbelt Plan Map 127

### 5.3 Growth Plan 2019

To begin, Caistorville is identified within the Township of West Lincoln Official Plan (“TWLOP”) as one of the four original Hamlet areas.

The Growth Plan provides the following definition of a Rural Settlement:

#### Rural Settlements

Existing hamlets or similar existing small settlement areas that are long-established and identified in official plans. These communities are serviced by individual private on-site water and/or private wastewater systems, contain a limited amount of undeveloped lands that are designated for development and are subject to official plan policies that limit growth. All settlement areas that are identified as hamlets in the Greenbelt Plan, as rural settlements in the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan, or as minor urban centres in the Niagara Escarpment Plan are considered rural settlements for the purposes of this Plan, including those that would not otherwise meet this definition.

Further, Settlement Areas are defined in the Growth Plan as:

#### Settlement Areas

Urban areas and **rural settlements within municipalities (such as cities, towns, villages and hamlets)** that are:

- a) built up areas where development is concentrated and which have a mix of land uses; and;

- b) lands which have been designated in an official plan for development in accordance with the policies of this Plan. Where there are no lands that have been designated for development, the settlement area may be no larger than the area where development is concentrated.

(Based on PPS, 2020 and modified for this Plan) (**emphasis in bold added**)

**Planning Comment:** As per these definitions, the Caistorville Hamlet is considered a Rural Settlement Area within the Growth Plan, and applicable policies pertaining to RSAs provide the overarching framework for consideration of proposed RSA expansion requests.

### 1.2.1 Guiding Principles

- Support a range and mix of housing options, including additional residential units and affordable housing, to serve all sizes, incomes, and ages of households.
- Provide for different approaches to manage growth that recognize the diversity of communities in the GGH.
- Protect and enhance natural heritage, hydrologic, and landform systems, features, and functions.
- Support and enhance the long-term viability and productivity of agriculture by protecting prime agricultural areas and the agri-food network.

**Planning Comment:** The proposed RSA expansion shows how the lands can be utilized for rural residential development that extends from the southerly boundary of the existing RSA, providing a lotting pattern that is consistent with Hamlet character in terms of size and shape of lots as well as public ROW. Providing rural residential development on lots a minimum of 0.4 ha in area will add to the choice of housing within the Region and the Township. Further, this proposed expansion maintains identified drainage features with appropriate buffers, so that these hydrologic features are protected and enhanced. Based on available online provincial soils mapping, the proposed expansion lands are a lower priority class of soil, the removal of which would present an extremely minor quantum of overall agricultural lands in the Region and the Township.

## 2 Where and How to Grow

### 2.2 Policies for Where and How to Grow

#### 2.2.1 Managing Growth

1. Population and employment forecasts contained in Schedule 3 or such higher forecasts as established by the applicable upper-or single-tier municipality through its municipal comprehensive review will be used for planning and managing growth in the GGH to the horizon of this Plan in accordance with the policies in subsection 5.2.4.
2. Forecasted growth to the horizon of this Plan will be allocated based on the following:
  - b. growth will be limited in *settlement areas* that:
    - i. are *rural settlements*;
    - ii. are not serviced by existing or planned *municipal water and wastewater systems*; or
    - iii. are in the *Greenbelt Area*;

**Planning Comment:** As identified above, the existing Caistorville Hamlet is a RSA within the Growth Plan. This Hamlet is served by public roads, but all development is serviced by private water and wastewater systems. Further, the Region, through the MCR, is working through the

process of planning to accommodate forecasted growth to 2051, which includes a 2051 population of 674 000 people. The basis for this planning work for population growth includes the required LNA to identify community area land need. At the time of writing this report the LNA was released as a draft that identified a community area land need of approximately 460 ha. Our review of the supporting MCR material produced by staff indicates that RSA expansions considered through the SABR process will be guided by the results of the LNA, but also considered through the SABR sub-component specific to RSAs. The submitted concept expansion area map and plan show that the proposed RSA expansion is limited to approximately 7.3 ha and 13 lots, which are both extremely minor in the context of the Region and the Township.

- d. development will be directed to *settlement areas*, except where the policies of this Plan permit otherwise;
- f. the establishment of new *settlement areas* is prohibited.

**Planning Comment:** As indicated above, a limited amount of growth is to be directed to existing RSAs. The Caistorville Hamlet is an existing RSA, and no new RSA is proposed.

- 3. Upper-and single-tier municipalities will undertake integrated planning to manage forecasted growth to the horizon of this Plan, which will:
  - a. establish a hierarchy of *settlement areas*, and of areas within *settlement areas*, in accordance with policy 2.2.1.2;
  - d. support the environmental and agricultural protection and conservation objectives of this Plan; and
  - e. be implemented through a *municipal comprehensive review* and, where applicable, include direction to lower-tier municipalities.

**Planning Comment:** The existing Region and Township Official Plans provide a Regional and Township structure which includes a hierarchy of settlements areas, which include existing Hamlets. At the time of writing this report, the proposed NROP also proposes a Regional structure that includes existing Hamlets, including the existing Caistorville Area Hamlet. Potential RSA expansions are to be considered through the SABR sub-component of the MCR. The proposed RSA expansion area incorporates existing drainage features, which will be protected and enhanced via buffers, and will have a very minimum impact on agricultural resources of the Region and the Township. Should the proposed RSA expansion be adopted by Regional Council, it would be incorporated into the adopted NROP at the conclusion of the MCR process.

- 4. Applying the policies of this Plan will support the achievement of *complete communities* that:
  - a. feature a diverse mix of land uses, including residential and employment uses, and convenient access to local stores, services, and *public service facilities*;
  - b. improve social equity and overall quality of life, including human health, for people of all ages, abilities, and incomes;
  - c. provide a diverse range and mix of housing options, including additional residential units and *affordable* housing, to accommodate people at all stages of life, and to accommodate the needs of all household sizes and incomes;

**Planning Comment:** The proposed RSA expansion area can accommodate approximately 13 new rural residential lots of a minimum of 0.4 ha in area, arranged around a new public road, while maintaining buffers and incorporating drainage features. While the proposed lot sizes would have to be verified through subsequent technical work, mainly a hydrogeological

investigation to confirm recommended minimum lot sizes, there is sufficient size within the expansion area to accommodate rural residential dwellings that will contribute to a diversity of housing supply options. In the context of complete communities, the existing Caistorville Hamlet is served by the Caistorville Branch of the West Lincoln Public Library as well as Caistorville United Church. Both of these existing uses will be supported and enhanced by additional residents in close proximity.

5. The Minister will establish a methodology for assessing land needs to implement this Plan, including relevant assumptions and other direction as required. This methodology will be used by upper-and single-tier municipalities to assess the quantity of land required to accommodate forecasted growth to the horizon of this Plan.

**Planning Comment:** At the time of writing this report, the Region had released a Draft LNA which identified a community area land need of approximately 460 ha to accommodate a forecasted population of 674 000 persons by the year 2051. This report does not assess the validity of the Draft LNA but notes that in accordance with the above policy the Region is utilizing the prescribed methodology to support the NROP and planning to the year 2051 as required.

### 2.2.6 Housing

1. Upper-and single-tier municipalities, in consultation with lower-tier municipalities, the Province, and other appropriate stakeholders, will:
  - a. support housing choice through the achievement of the minimum intensification and density targets in this Plan, as well as the other policies of this Plan by:
    1. identifying a diverse range and mix of housing options and densities, including additional residential units and affordable housing to meet projected needs of current and future residents; and
2. Notwithstanding policy 1.4.1 of the PPS, 2020, in implementing policy 2.2.6.1, municipalities will support the achievement of complete communities by:
  - a. planning to accommodate forecasted growth to the horizon of this Plan;
  - c. considering the range and mix of housing options and densities of the existing housing stock; and
  - d. planning to diversify their overall housing stock across the municipality.

**Planning Comment:** While the Growth Plan directs that limited growth can occur within existing RSAs and, further, that RSAs may be expanded, new development within existing and expanded RSAs does not contribute to meeting intensification or Designated Greenfield Area (“DGA”) targets, as RSAs are outside of the defined urban boundary. However, our interpretation of the policy framework indicates that the direction to allow limited development and expansions of RSAs is balanced against the direction to plan for and accommodate minimum intensification and DGA targets, such that RSAs can not compete with intensification areas, DGAs and overall urban areas for growth. This report outlines that the proposed RSA is minor in scale at both the Regional and Township levels with respect to overall area and potential number of rural residential lots. The conceptual expansion area map and development plan illustrate the ability to accommodate additional residential development to provide choice in housing options to accommodate forecasted population growth. This minor expansion area and relatively small number of residential lots will not impact the Region’s ability to plan for and achieve required intensification or DGA targets but will allow for additional growth and development to support housing choice and existing facilities within the Caistorville Hamlet.

### 2.2.8 Settlement Area Boundary Expansions

1. Settlement area boundaries will be delineated in official plans.

2. A *settlement area* boundary expansion may only occur through a *municipal comprehensive review* where it is demonstrated that:
  - a. based on the minimum intensification and density targets in this Plan and a land needs assessment undertaken in accordance with policy 2.2.1.5, sufficient opportunities to accommodate forecasted growth to the horizon of this Plan are not available through intensification and in the designated greenfield area:
    - i. within the upper-or single-tier municipality, and
    - ii. within the applicable lower-tier municipality;
  - b. the proposed expansion will make available sufficient lands not exceeding the horizon of this Plan, based on the analysis provided for in policy 2.2.8.2 a), while minimizing land consumption; and
  - c. the timing of the proposed expansion and the phasing of development within the designated greenfield area will not adversely affect the achievement of the minimum intensification and density targets in this Plan, as well as the other policies of this Plan.

**Planning Comment:** The Region's ongoing MCR is the appropriate process for consideration of boundary expansions, including the proposed RSA expansion request. The MCR process includes a Draft LNA that indicates a community area land need of approximately 460 ha. In addition, the Region has indicated the following:

**Appendix 18.1:**

*The Region is working with municipalities that will likely have a need for rural settlement area boundary expansions: Wainfleet and West Lincoln. These municipalities have rural settlement areas outside of the Greenbelt Plan area.*

*For West Lincoln, the majority of its growth will be directed to Smithville as its only urban area. A small portion of growth will be directed to its rural settlement areas.*

**Appendix 18.3:**

*In West Lincoln, the majority of forecasted growth will be directed to the urban area of Smithville. A small percentage of growth will be allocated to the rural settlements/agricultural area.*

*The Region's Land Needs Assessment will determine the amount of growth to be directed to rural settlements*

At this stage, a need for consideration of an expansion to the Caistorville Hamlet has been identified based on a combination of forecasted growth to 2051 and a limited ability for other RSAs in the Region to expand due to prohibitions for such expansions in the Greenbelt Plan area.

The Executive overview of the Draft LNA provides the following:

*The remaining rural households and employment are directed to the Rural area. The Provincial LNAM does not provide detail on calculating need for additional Rural Settlement Area lands and, therefore, are not a component of the draft Land Needs Assessment. Additional consultation is underway with West Lincoln and Wainfleet to ensure Rural Settlement Areas also have a sufficient supply of developable land to support growth to 2051.*

In addition, the LNA technical memo prepared by Hemson Consulting also provides the following table:

**Table 9**

Household Growth by Policy Area Niagara Region by Local Municipality, 2021-2051				
Municipality	Built Up Area	DGA	Rural	Total
Fort Erie	3,680	3,640	40	7,360
Grimsby	4,500	70	20	4,590
Lincoln	3,680	900	20	4,600
Niagara Falls	10,110	10,010	100	20,220
Niagara-on the Lake	1,150	3,420	20	4,590
Pelham	1,030	3,080	20	4,130
Port Colborne	690	1,600	10	2,300
St. Catharines	18,770	890	100	19,760
Thorold	1,610	4,790	30	6,430
Wainfleet	0	0	460	460
Welland	5,240	3,450	40	8,730
<b>West Lincoln</b>	<b>1,130</b>	<b>7,550</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>8,720</b>
<b>Niagara Region</b>	<b>51,590</b>	<b>39,400</b>	<b>900</b>	<b>91,890</b>

Figure 10 - Table 9 Excerpt from April 5, 2020 LNA Technical Memo by Hemson Consulting Ltd.

Based on this analysis, West Lincoln may experience growth of about 40 households in the Rural Area to the year 2051. This is further augmented by the following:

*While the above shares of household growth apply to the total municipalities, the Growth Plan and the LNA also require an allocation to the policy areas. Those policy areas are the Built-Up Area, the Designated Greenfield Area and the Rural Area. Within each municipality, the Rural Area is allocated a minimal 0.5%. New rural residential development is not generally encouraged by the policies of the Growth Plan or the Region of Niagara. Though there are legacy approvals and lots of record where limited rural development will still occur. The exception is the Town of Wainfleet, which has no urban serviced residential communities. By definition, it is 100% rural development. During further work in the MCR, the rural shares can be adjusted, if necessary, to reflect a more precise expectation for rural unit growth. Any adjustment to rural allocation would simply add or deduct the units from the DGA to gain a better calculation of land need. Adjusting the rural share for LNA purposes, for example, would not affect any other matters contained in this memorandum respecting the population, housing mix or employment.*

The proposed RNA boundary expansion will provide additional rural residential lots to meet forecasted demand, which may still be increased based on policy choices and the preferred growth options selected through the MCR. Regardless, as noted above, this level of development will not compete with the achievement of the required intensification or DGA targets as required by the Growth Plan.

3. Where the need for a settlement area boundary expansion has been justified in accordance with policy 2.2.8.2, the feasibility of the proposed expansion will be determined and the most appropriate location for the proposed expansion will be identified based on the comprehensive application of all of the policies in this Plan, including the following:
  - a. there is sufficient capacity in existing or planned infrastructure and public service facilities;

- b. the infrastructure and public service facilities needed would be financially viable over the full life cycle of these assets;
- c. the proposed expansion would be informed by applicable water and wastewater master plans or equivalent and stormwater master plans or equivalent, as appropriate;

**Planning Comment:** The proposed development does not require new or extended municipal water or sewer services. The concept plan provides for the construction of a new public road, the initial cost of which would be borne by the developer through the subdivision review and approval process under the Planning Act, with future maintenance covered from a combination of municipal tax and development charge revenues. Given the low number of units proposed, no new external road works (i.e. widening, traffic signal, etc.) are anticipated to be required. Lastly, as noted earlier, the provision of new rural residential dwellings and the associated population increase will provide additional support to sustain the nearby library and place of worship.

- d. the proposed expansion, including the associated water, wastewater and stormwater servicing, would be planned and demonstrated to avoid, or if avoidance is not possible, minimize and mitigate any potential negative impacts on watershed conditions and the water resource system, including the quality and quantity of water;

**Planning Comment:** The proposed RSA expansion would be serviced by individual private water and wastewater services. At this time, technical work to characterize site conditions respecting such (i.e. hydrogeological investigation) have not been completed. However, the concept plan illustrates minimum lot areas of 0.4 ha, which is a generally accepted minimum standard to support private services without risks to public health and safety or negative environmental impacts. Further, the rural residential character results in minimum site coverage, such that stormwater infrastructure can be handled through typical rural measures (i.e. ditches and swales).

- e. key hydrologic areas and the Natural Heritage System for the Growth Plan should be avoided where possible;

**Planning Comment:** A preliminary assessment of natural heritage features on the subject lands has identified the locations, boundaries and buffers (where required) for existing features, including wetlands to the north, west and south and several drainage features traversing the lands. The proposed RSA expansion area provides a boundary based on the required 30 m buffer from the identified wetlands, while incorporating, preserving and enhancing two drainage features connecting off-site, in both the east-west and north south direction, as illustrated in the concept development plan. Other existing minor drainage features are proposed to be relocated such that the functions of these features can be replicated through lot-level drainage swales.

- f. prime agricultural areas should be avoided where possible. To support the Agricultural System, alternative locations across the upper-or single-tier municipality will be evaluated, prioritized and determined based on avoiding, minimizing and mitigating the impact on the Agricultural System and in accordance with the following:
  - i. expansion into specialty crop areas is prohibited;
  - ii. reasonable alternatives that avoid prime agricultural areas are evaluated; and
  - iii. where prime agricultural areas cannot be avoided, lower priority agricultural lands are used;

**Planning Comment:** In the context of the Caistorville Hamlet, based on online soils mapping provided by OMAFRA (**Figure 8**) the existing boundary is surrounded by Class 3 and 4 soils, where the Class 4 soils appear to be within defined hazard areas not suitable for development. Both the Region and Township Official Plans designate these lands as Good General Agriculture, which meet the criteria for Prime Agricultural Lands in accordance with the Provincial criteria and applicable definitions of the Growth Plan, as follows:

Prime Agricultural Lands

Specialty crop areas and/or Canada Land Inventory Class 1, 2, and 3 lands, as amended from time to time, in this order of priority for protection (PPS, 2020).

Given the subject lands consist of Class 3 soils, that the Caistorville Hamlet is surrounded by undevelopable Class 4 and otherwise Class 3 soils, and that Class 3 soils are to be given the lowest priority for protection, the proposed RSA expansion conforms to these policies. Further, as noted above, the Region has identified that most existing RSAs across the Region are within the Greenbelt Plan and are thus not eligible for expansion.

- g. the *settlement area* to be expanded is in compliance with the *minimum distance separation formulae*;

**Planning Comment:** A complete assessment using MDS guidelines has not been completed for this initial submission for RSA expansion request. However, online sources have been consulted to determine approximate distances from the proposed RSA expansion lands to nearby agricultural structures. Using Google Earth and Streetview imagery as this basis, there are no agricultural facilities immediately to the north, east, south or west.

The nearest identified barn to the east is located at 9438 South Chippawa Rd, and this structure measures approximately 445 m from the easterly boundary of the subject lands. Based on photo analysis, it does not appear that this structure is being used for livestock, but would have to be verified by on ground inspection.

The nearest identified facility that appears to be housing livestock (cows) is identified at 9427 South Chippawa Rd, and this structure measures approximately 620 m from the easterly boundary of the subject lands. Using air photo analysis, it appears there are multiple dwellings located within the intervening distance, closer to this existing facility.

The nearest identified barn to the west is located at 9714 York Rd, and this structure measures approximately 550 m to the westerly boundary of the subject lands. Based on photo analysis, it does not appear that this structure is being used for livestock but would have to be verified by on ground inspection. Nonetheless, there are numerous existing dwellings located in the intervening distance, closer to the existing facility.

It is anticipated that MDS calculations will be further considered by the Region through the MCR process.

- h. any adverse impacts on the agri-food network, including agricultural operations, from expanding settlement areas would be avoided, or if avoidance is not possible, minimized and mitigated as determined through an agricultural impact assessment;

**Planning Comment:** Based on the above, no negative impacts are expected to existing agricultural operations as a result of the proposed RSA boundary expansion. Given the relatively small scale of the proposed expansion and that the subject lands consist of lower priority soil classification for protection, an Agricultural Impact Assessment is not warranted at this time. During the review of the RSA expansion request, it is anticipated that the Region will consider MDS calculations.



- i. the policies of Sections 2 (Wise Use and Management of Resources) and 3 (Protecting Public Health and Safety) of the PPS are applied;

**Planning Comment:** It is our understanding that the subject lands currently contain a useable gas well. It is anticipated that this well would be decommissioned prior to any future development occurring. It appears that lands to the north and west of the subject lands are identified in the current ROP as part of the Welland Gas Field, as shown on Schedule D3 – Potential Resource Areas: Peat and Petroleum, but that the subject lands are not within this area.

With respect to agricultural resources, the preceding paragraphs have demonstrated that the subject lands consist of the lowest priority Prime Agricultural Lands, and in the context of Caistorville, the existing boundary is surrounded either by apparently undevelopable Class 4 lands or other Class 3 lands. In the context of the Township and the Region, the size and scale of the proposed RSA expansion is extremely minor and would have virtually no impact on agricultural resources.

In addition, an initial assessment of natural heritage features on the subject lands identified wetlands and drainage features for preservation. The proposed RSA expansion area maintains required 30 m buffers to identified wetlands while also incorporating several existing drainage features with a recommended 15 m buffer to ensure these features are preserved and enhanced. Other minor drainage features are proposed to be relocated and their functions replicated in future lot-level drainage areas (i.e. swales).

The subject lands do not contain any natural hazard areas.

- j. the proposed expansion would meet any applicable requirements of the Greenbelt, Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation, Niagara Escarpment, and Lake Simcoe Protection Plans and any applicable source protection plan; and

**Planning Comment:** The subject lands are not covered by any other plans noted above.

## 5.4 Current Region of Niagara Official Plan

The subject lands are currently designated as Good General Agriculture in the Region of Niagara OP (“RNOP”). This designation does not permit lot creation for residential uses. The lands are immediately adjacent to the existing boundary of the Caistorville Hamlet, in which residential development and lot creation is permitted. The purpose of the proposed RSA expansion is to bring a portion of the subject lands into the Hamlet boundary.

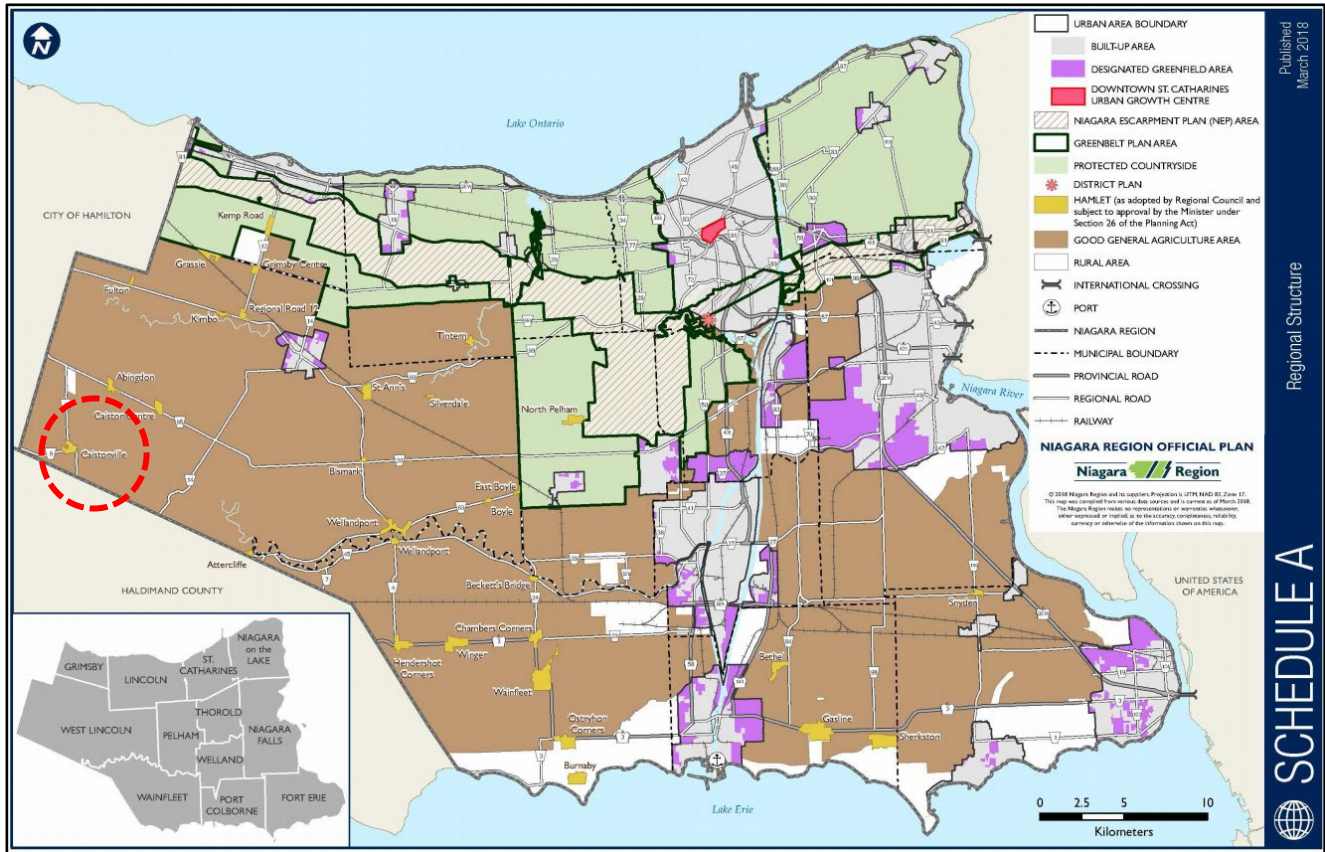


Figure 11 - Subject Lands and Caistorville Hamlet, Excerpt of Schedule A - Regional Structure

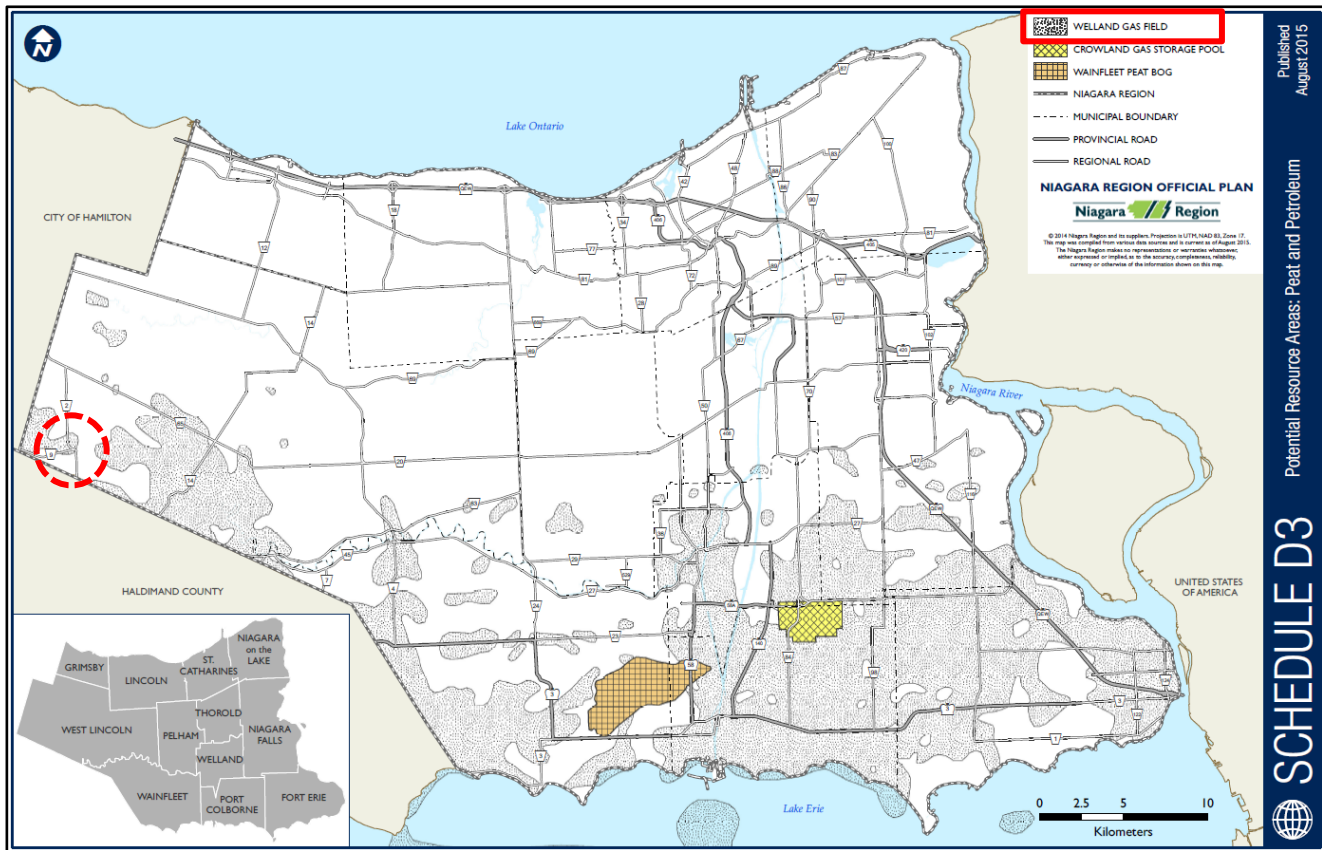


Figure 12 - Caistorville Hamlet and Subject Lands, Excerpt from Schedule D3 - Potential Resource Areas: Peat and Petroleum

## 5.5 Region of Niagara Municipal Comprehensive Review - SABR

The Region is considering boundary expansions within the ongoing MCR through various components including the LNA, which establishes the quantum of land need, and the SABR process, which will consider urban and rural Settlement Area expansions as part of a coordinated preferred growth approach. With respect to potential RSA expansions within the SABR process, staff have prepared Draft Criteria applicable to consideration of RSA expansion requests, outlined in Appendix 18.3 of Staff Report PDS-17-2021 – Niagara Official Plan Consolidated Policy Report. An assessment of the proposed Caistorville RSA expansion for conformity to these criteria follows.

1. **Contribution to the rural character:** rural settlements are generally lower density communities designed to support the surrounding agricultural and serve the historical development that has occurred in the community. Expansions for new development shall maintain and enhance the distinctive character, enhance the quality of life through appropriate design of commercial and public space areas, and promote greater economic vitality.

**Planning Comment:** The character of the existing Caistorville Hamlet is primarily rural residential, with the supporting library branch and place of worship included. **Figure 13** below provides a digital map of lotting pattern with air photo underlay. This image shows the diversity in lot shapes and sizes in the Hamlet and identifies the central location of the library and place of worship. Based on digital measurement, lot areas range from 0.10 ha to around 0.65 ha, as shown in **Figure 14**. Further, the existing Hamlet area is irregular in shape, arranged around

existing public roads and bound by hazard and natural heritage features to the north. In this context, the proposed RSA expansion would extend the Hamlet area to the south as shown in **Figure 6**. This area is proposed to be also bound by natural heritage features and public roads, while the concept development plan shows the lot sizes and shapes achieved based on minimum lot area of 0.4 ha, arranged around a new public road. The gross density (i.e. including road and natural heritage feature blocks) equates to approximately 1.73 units per hectare (UPH), which is consistent with typical rural residential development. Further, the existing Hamlet consists partly of rural residential dwellings arranged around Broman Court, and the proposed RSA expansion and concept development plan would extend this character of relatively newer dwellings to the south, away from the more established Hamlet center. **Figures 15-18** provide Google Streetview images illustrating the character of Broman Court, with which the proposed RSA expansion would be very similar.

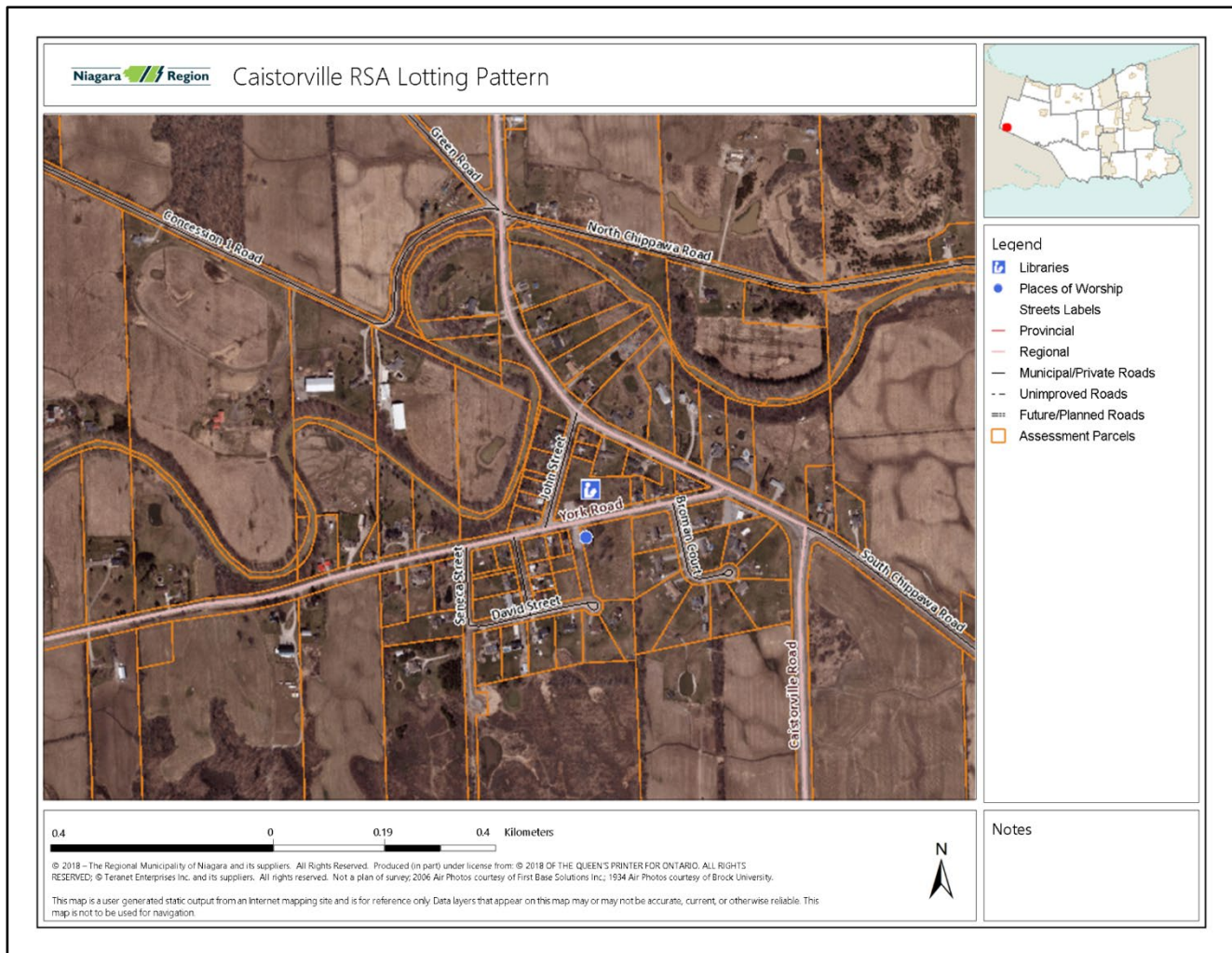


Figure 13 - Online Air Photo and Parcel Mapping from Region of Niagara Navigator, Caistorville Hamlet Lotting Pattern

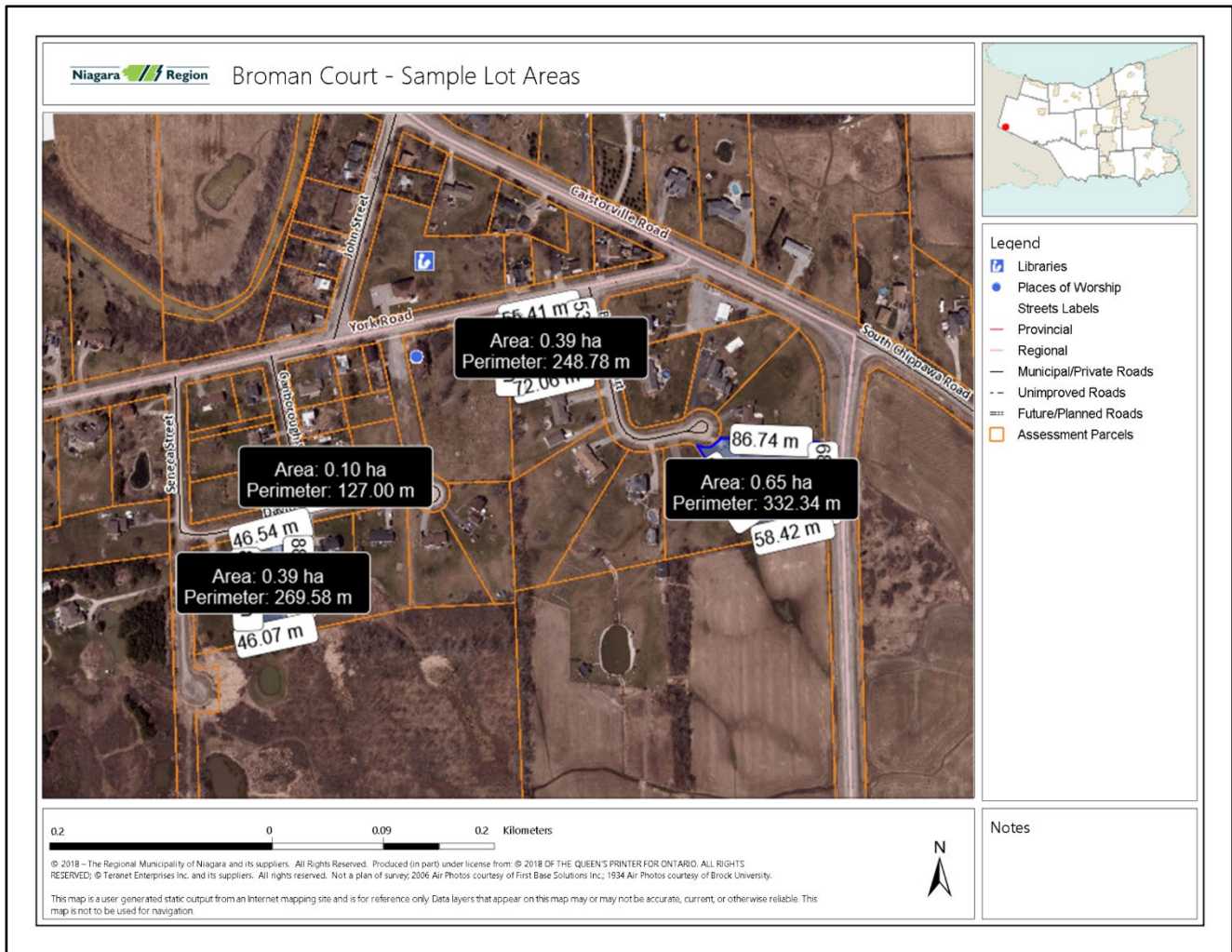


Figure 14 - Approximate Lot Areas for Existing Rural Residential Lots in Caistorville Hamlet



Figure 15 - Google Streetview Image of Broman Court



Figure 16 - Google Streetview Image of Broman Court



Figure 17 - Google Streetview Image of Broman Court



Figure 18 - Google Streetview Image of Broman Court

2. **Purpose of rural settlements to support the agricultural community:** the rural settlement should have sufficient capacity to accommodate supporting farm-related uses and commercial uses to support the nearby agricultural and rural communities.

**Planning Comment:** The existing Caistorville Hamlet consists mainly of rural residential uses. The Caistorville Branch of the West Lincoln Public Library is centrally located along with Caistorville United Church. The proposed RSA expansion would extend and complement the existing character, adding new residents to support the existing services. It is noted that the lands at 738 John St are zoned C3 – Service Commercial.

3. **Hydrogeological considerations:** whether the expansion is rounding out an undersized lot or where the expansion is proposed for new lot creation, the size of the expansion should result in the ability for viable lots that will ensure adequate water supply and suitable for private waste disposal systems, subject to applicable requirements.

**Planning Comment:** A hydrogeological investigation has not been conducted at this stage. It is anticipated that such an investigation would occur later, such as prior to application for subdivision approval. However, the concept development plan shows a potential for 13 rural residential lots based on a minimum lot size of 0.4 ha, generally consistent with rural residential standards for accommodating private services. The current Township Zoning By-law requires a 0.4 ha minimum lot area for the RUR – Rural Residential zone.

4. **Impacts to the Natural Environment System:** the proposed expansion does not result in negative impact on the natural environment system.

**Planning Comment:** As part of the initial review of the subject lands, a natural heritage constraints assessment was completed. This confirmed the locations and required 30 m buffers from existing wetlands, and these buffers were used in part to shape the size and extent of the proposed expansion area. Further, the assessment also examined existing drainage features, and identified several to be retained and enhanced with a 15 m buffer, and these features have been incorporated into the proposed expansion area and concept development plan. Additional drainage features were assessed, and it was determined that such features could be re-located such that the function is replicated in future lot-level drainage. No negative impacts to existing features will result from the proposed expansion and concept development plan.

5. **Impacts to the surrounding agricultural area:** expansions should be located so as to minimize and mitigate to the extent feasible the impacts on nearby agricultural operations. This review will include expansion size, adjacent soil class, access, residual access and nearest constraint. This criteria will consider impacts to agricultural infrastructure and livestock facilities. Minimum Distance Separation (MDS) constraints will be considered through this criteria.

**Planning Comment:** The proposed RSA expansion directly abuts the existing Caistorville Hamlet boundary and would be a southerly extension adjacent to existing rural residential development. For the purposes of this submission, MDS calculations have not been completed, but approximate distances to nearby agricultural facilities have been provided. In each case, it is noted that there are existing residential uses in closer proximity and/or in the intervening separation distances. Based on this level of review, no negative impacts to existing agricultural operations are expected.

6. **Site-specific context:** location considerations may be provided through supporting information or information provided through consultation with the local municipality.

**Planning Comment:** In the context of both the Region and the Township, the Caistorville Hamlet is located at the westerly edge of each municipal boundary. This is an important consideration as, while modest, the proposed RSA expansion will allow the Region and the Township to achieve spatially balanced growth amongst RSAs and provide housing choice to future residents who have a desire or need to locate in the Caistorville area.

Further, language in Appendix 18.1 states the following:



*The Region is working with municipalities that will likely have a need for rural settlement area boundary expansions: Wainfleet and West Lincoln. These municipalities have rural settlement areas outside of the Greenbelt Plan area.*

*For West Lincoln, the majority of its growth will be directed to Smithville as its only urban area. A small portion of growth will be directed to its rural settlement areas.*

In addition, language in Appendix 18.3 states the following:

*In West Lincoln, the majority of forecasted growth will be directed to the urban area of Smithville. A small percentage of growth will be allocated to the rural settlements/agricultural area.*

*The Region's Land Needs Assessment will determine the amount of growth to be directed to rural settlements.*

**Planning Comment:** The proposed RSA expansion will provide lands for up to 13 new rural residential dwellings, consistent with the above to direct a small portion of growth to RSAs in the Township, based in part on the LNA findings.

## 5.6 Town of West Lincoln Official Plan

The current Town of West Lincoln Official Plan ("TWLOP") is the local official plan applicable to the subject lands. In future, this plan must be updated to conform to the NROP within the legislated time frame. It is anticipated that the Town will undergo its own MCR and OP update process, which will result in a new or updated Plan that fully conforms to the NROP and applicable provincial policies. Any expansion of the Caistorville Hamlet in the NROP will be carried through to the TWLOP.

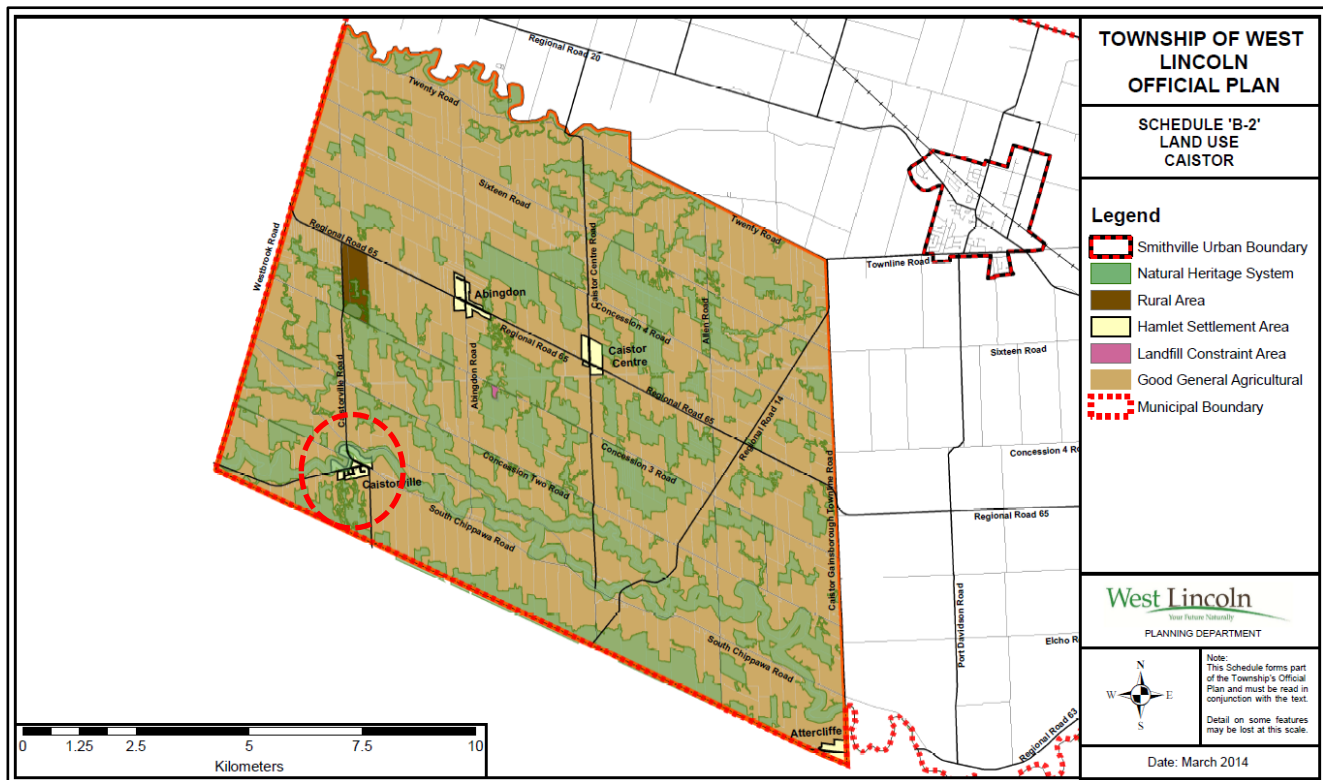


Figure 19 - Caistorville Hamlet and Subject Lands, Excerpt of Schedule B-2 - Land Use - Caistor

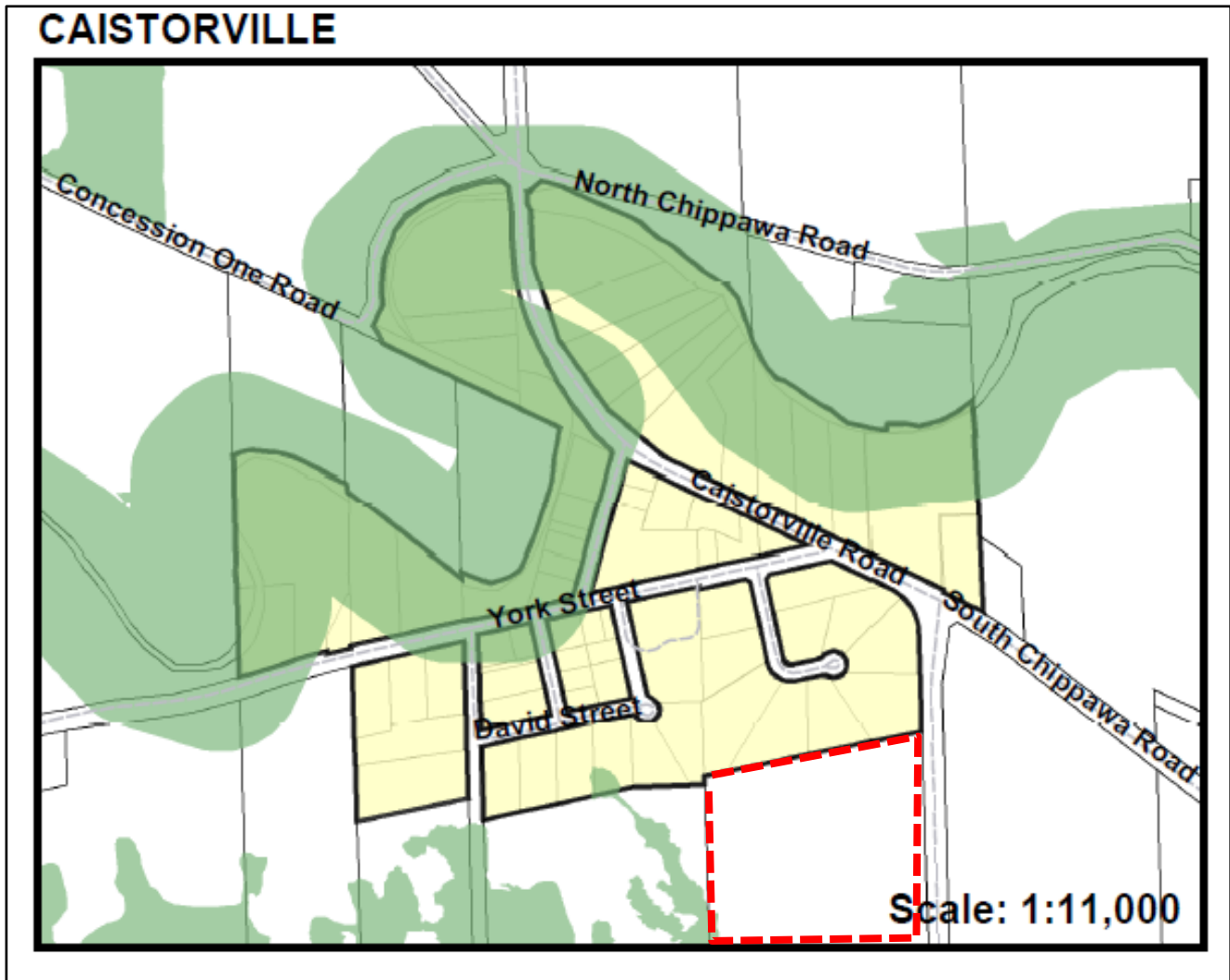


Figure 20 - Existing Caistorville Hamlet and Portion of Subject Lands, Excerpt of Schedule D-2 - Hamlet Boundaries

## 5.7 Town of West Lincoln Zoning By-law

The subject lands are Zoned A – Agricultural under Zoning By-law 2017-70 (“By-law”), shown in **Figure 21**. This Zone requires a minimum 40 ha lot area and permits one single detached dwelling per existing lot. It is anticipated that should the proposed RSA expansion be incorporated into both the NROP and the TWLOP, the By-law would subsequently be updated to conform, in accordance with the Planning Act and provincial policy. Within the current By-law Zones and permissions, the lands in the proposed RSA expansion area would be appropriately zoned as either RuR – Rural Residential or R1A – Low Density Residential – Type 1A, each of which permits one single detached dwelling on newly created lots. In the case of the RuR zone, the minimum lot area is 0.4 ha, while the R1A zone permits a minimum lot area of 800 m<sup>2</sup>. Given the proposed lot sizes and need for on-site private services, the RuR zone would likely be most appropriate, but as shown in Figure 21, most of the existing residential lots in the Caistorville Hamlet are Zoned R1A.

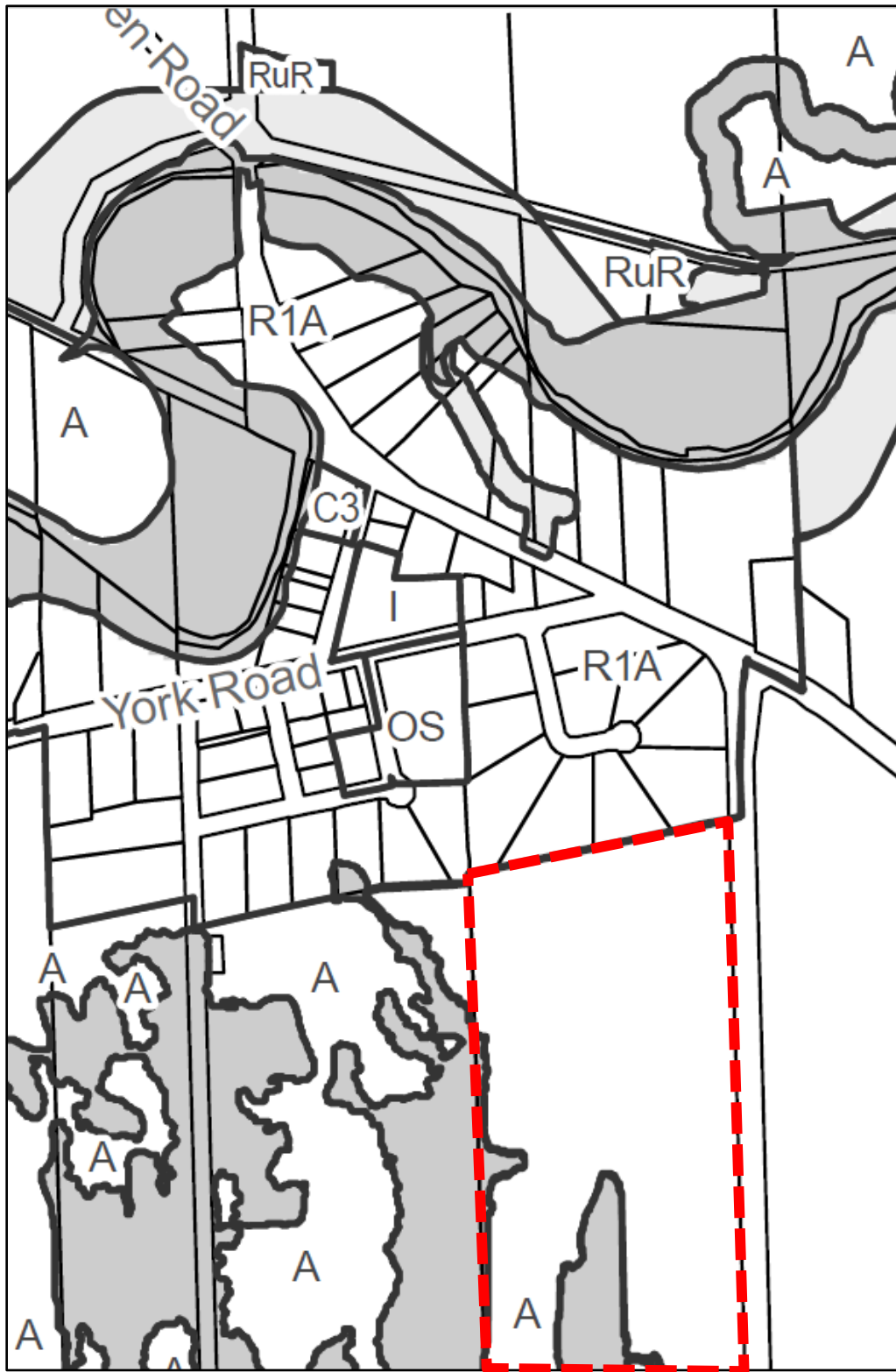


Figure 21 - Caistorville Hamlet and Portion of Subject Lands, Excerpt of Township Zoning By-law Schedule D-2

## 6 Conclusion and Recommendation

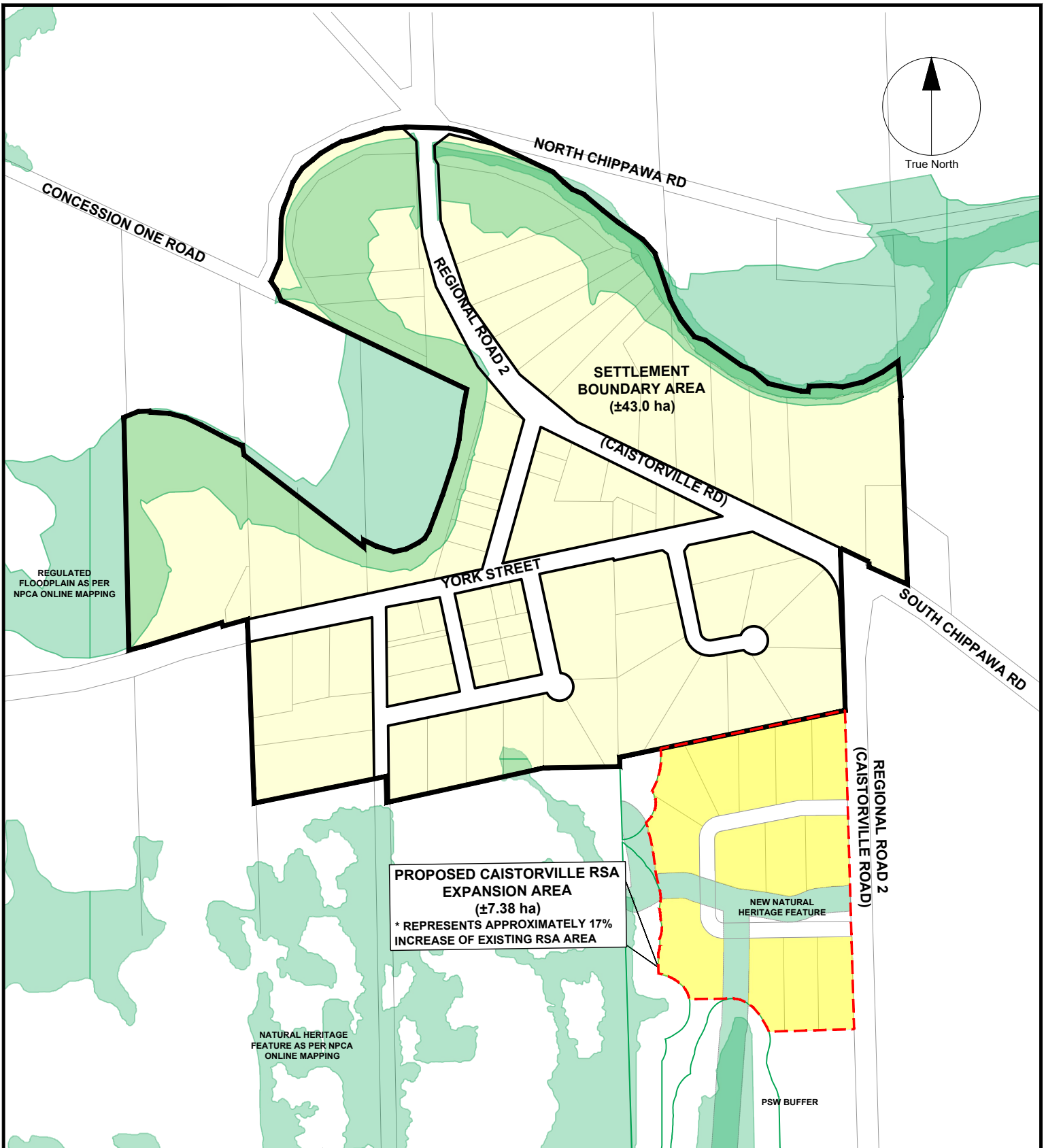
This Planning Justification Brief is submitted within the Region's MCR process, providing justification for a proposed RSA expansion on the subject lands from the southerly boundary of the existing Caistorville Hamlet area. The proposed expansion area is approximately 7.3 ha, the size and shape of which is based in part on identified wetland features and buffers on the subject lands, the incorporation of identified drainage features and buffers on and external to the subject lands, and the ability to provide a minor amount of new land for rural residential lots that are in keeping with the Hamlet character and can likely be serviced by individual on-site services. The concept development plan indicates that 13 new rural residential lots can be achieved, which would provide a modest but appropriate contribution to providing housing choice for low-density, ground-related rural residential dwellings at the westerly boundary of the Region and the Township. This small amount of new growth will support the ability to meet forecasted population growth and market demand for housing units to the year 2051, in a manner consistent with the principle of directing small amounts of growth to Rural Settlement Areas, allowing choice for low-density, ground-related housing in Rural Areas. It is recommended that the Region adopt the proposed expansion through the MCR, resulting in the delineation of the Hamlet area as proposed in this report in the appropriate Official Plan schedules with corresponding text policies to permit rural residential development of the scale and density proposed.



Mike Crough RPP MCIP  
Associate Director – Practice Lead, Planning

# Appendix A – Proposed RSA Expansion Map

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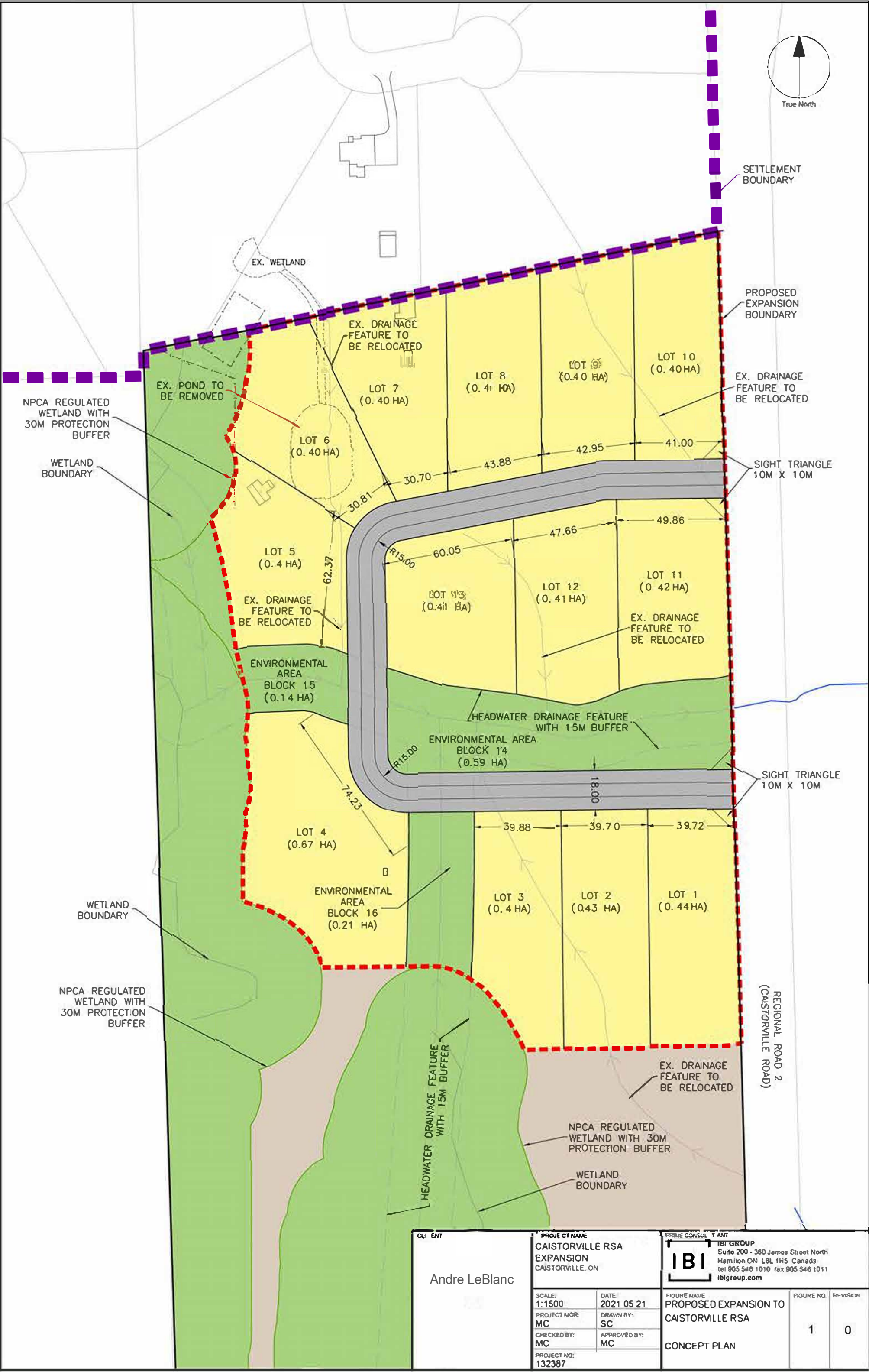



**PROPOSED CAISTORVILLE RSA  
EXPANSION AREA**  
(±7.38 ha)  
\* REPRESENTS APPROXIMATELY 17%  
INCREASE OF EXISTING RSA AREA

CLIENT <b>ANDRE LeBLANC</b>	PROJECT NAME <b>CAISTORVILLE RSA EXPANSION CAISTORVILLE, ON</b>		PRIME CONSULTANT <b>IBI GROUP</b> Suite 200 - 360 James Street North Hamilton ON L8L 1H5 Canada tel 905 546 1010 fax 905 546 1011 <a href="http://ibigroup.com">ibigroup.com</a>		
	SCALE: 1:6000	DATE: 2021 05 21	FIGURE NAME <b>PROPOSED EXPANSION TO CAISTORVILLE RSA</b>	FIGURE NO. <b>1</b>	REVISION <b>1</b>
	PROJECT MGR: MC	DRAWN BY: SC			
	CHECKED BY: MC	APPROVED BY: MC			
PROJECT NO: 132387					

# Appendix B – Concept Development Plan

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CLIENT  Andre LeBlanc	PROJECT NAME CAISTORVILLE RSA EXPANSION CAISTORVILLE, ON		PROJECT CONSULTANT  IBI GROUP Suite 200 - 360 James Street North Hamilton ON L8L 1H5 Canada tel: 905 546 1010 fax: 905 546 1011 ibigroup.com	
	SCALE: 1:1500	DATE: 2021 05 21	FIGURE NAME PROPOSED EXPANSION TO CAISTORVILLE RSA	FIGURE NO. 1
PROJECT MGR: MC	DRAWN BY: SC	CONCEPT PLAN		REVISION 0
CHECKED BY: MC	APPROVED BY: MC			
PROJECT NO: 132387				

Scale: 1:1500  
 Date: 2021 05 21  
 Project Mgr: MC  
 Drawn By: SC  
 Checked By: MC  
 Approved By: MC  
 Project No: 132387  
 File Location: J:\11-2021-Caistorville RSA Expansion\132387\_02\_Conceptual\_Design\17\_Plan\Conceptual\_Design\_02\_Conceptual\_Design\_17\_Plan\_Signed\_May 21, 2021 02 28.dwg  
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