

REQUEST TO REVIEW

PLANNING APPROACH TO INCLUSION OF SUBJECT PROPERTY IN THE BUILT-UP AREA OF WELLAND AND PORT COLBORNE

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1. EXECETIVE SUMMARY

G-force Urban Planners have been retained to prepare a Planning Brief, requesting the Niagara Region to review my clients request to include their lands within the expanded Settlement Expansion areas being proposed in the updated Official Plan review. The Client owns lands in Welland and Port Colborne located at the intersection of Elm Street and Fork Road in Welland. A larger portion of the lands are striding into Port Colborne

The initial discourse with the Region by my clients, revolved around talks regarding inclusion of their lands within the settlement area boundary expansion. On Dec 01, 2021, we received a preliminary feedback email from Mr. John Federici regarding “These sites reflect the most appropriate locations for expansion based on Provincial policy and previously-established Regional criteria”.

In a subsequent meeting with Mr. Chris Millar on Dec 15, 2021 it was conveyed that the Region will not be considering the subject land for potential settlement area boundary expansion. During the meeting the current zoning designation (A1 – Regular Agricultural) was discussed and the client was advised that the current regional process of settlement area expansion is not adequate for our development proposal and we need to contact local area municipality to apply for local OPA-ZBL amendment to develop these lands as rural houses on private services (well water and septic system).

Between Dec 15, 2021 and Jan 25, 2022, we have been made aware that during the Official Plan Review process, regional staff is now recommending the conversion of the subject lands from “A1 –Agricultural” to “Prime Agricultural”. We have also noted that the natural heritage boundaries have been expanded within entire the entire 118-acre lot. This in-itself is a very disconcerting turn of events and one that is without justification.

At this point of time the client would like to file an objection against staff recommendation for conversion to Prime Agricultural zone as well as expansion of natural heritage feature boundary.

We believe that the Provincial Policy Statement objectives regarding providing a mixed residential type of houses for every age and need of public is being ignored, as the mind set of regional staff, is more aligned to Single Detached homes being devoid of Estate Homes. Estate homes is entirely lacking in the Region and the Municipality of Welland. It is the need of the hour, as we are far into the Pandemic and the public prefers to live on homes and lots sizes best provided by these types of homes.

We also believe that the location of the lands within the Municipality of Welland are most suitable for inclusion in the recommendation by staff, for inclusion by Council, within the expanded settlement area of the Municipality of Welland.

In view of the above this study will seek to determine the following:

1. That the Client lands falling within the Municipality of Welland should be included in the Expanded Settlement Area and form part of the Built-up Boundary of the Municipality of Welland
2. Designate the entire 118 Acres lands owned by the client (falling in the Municipality of Welland and Port Colborne) as Rural Residential Zone. Such a designation will facilitate the provision of Estate homes on the said lands through the appropriate Planning Processes available under the Ontario Planning Act. The existing houses along Elm Street and Forks Road East are rural residences on private services. Such a designation of rural residential zone would best fit with the existing surrounding neighborhood in terms of the type of Services and urban design.

The brief, is not a complete study, but a simple attempt to bring into focus, reasons for inclusion of the said property into either the built-up area of the Municipality or designation of the said property as a Rural Residential Zone to permit, making available to the public, Estate Homes

This Planning opinion is intended for:

Niagara Region
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Phone: 905-980-6000, Toll-free: 1-800-263-7215

2. Introduction

The Region of Niagara is currently preparing the Consolidated Draft Niagara Official Plan which is currently open for consultation. The draft plan defines how Niagara will use its available land to shape the physical, economic and social development of the region over the next 30 years using objectives and policies that Identify how and where growth will happen, help protect Niagara's natural environment and address our changing climate, ensure Niagara has an adequate and diverse supply of attainable housing, plan for our future infrastructure needs and ensure they're properly funded and create the right conditions to attract and retain jobs in Niagara (Niagara Region, 2022)

The Draft Plan reflects where Niagara's community is today, and where it will be in 30 years. The plan includes land-use policies that cover topics like Niagara's natural environment, land needs, growth allocations, housing, transportation, urban design, employment lands and agriculture. These variables are all interconnected, and must be considered holistically to plan for communities that are sustainable, resilient, vibrant and thriving. The plan includes land-use policies that cover topics like Niagara's natural environment, land needs, growth allocations, housing, transportation, urban design, employment lands and agriculture. These variables are all interconnected, and must be considered holistically to plan for communities that are sustainable, resilient, vibrant and thriving. (Niagara Region, 2022)

The Region looks at the following in determining how growth will take place within various Municipalities under it.

1. **Attainable housing:** The Region looks to promote a diverse range of attainable housing options as being essential to grow Niagara's economy. The Official Plan (Draft) acknowledges that housing prices have climbed dramatically in recent years, are supportive of compact, efficient forms of development that includes intensification.

While the strategy is obviously derived from Provincial Policies, they fail to look at diversity of dwelling types in its entirety. Even though affordability is a worthy goal, there are other needs by sections of some people that are being ignored. Cities of Brampton and other larger Municipalities have realized that there is no financial, physical, social or spiritual equality amongst people. For some affordability is an issue, while for some the need is to find acreages for living. Estate Homes have therefore been fully incorporated in the local policies. Niagara has no such policies, even though they admit that densities for them are not like other Urban Areas and that their housing type is unique.

Under section 1.4.3 of the Provincial Policy Statement 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. It is our opinion that our proposal to have Estate Homes on the subject lands will meet the social, health, economic and well-being requirements of those that have the financial wherewithal to afford it. In pursuit of affordability and attainability the Region must accommodate this segment of people. (Provincial Policy Statement 2020, 2020)

More Homes, More choice: Ontario's Housing Supply Action Plan acknowledges that every town, city and community in Ontario is unique. But no matter where you go, one thing is the same – people are looking for housing that meets their needs and their budget. More Homes, More Choices is about unlocking the development of all kinds of housing. From ownership to rental housing, whether built by private developers or non-profits (Government of Ontario, 2020)

The Growth-Plan-Greater-Golden-Horseshoe support the achievement of *complete communities* that:

- a. improve social equity and overall quality of life, including human health, for people of all ages, abilities, and incomes;
- b. 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; (Places to Grow, n.d.).

The Client proposes to provide Rural Housing on the property if the lands are designated as Rural Residential. Alternatively, if the lands are included in the expanded Settlement area boundary in the Municipality of Welland, then, more housing types, could be considered in that portion of the Lands.

2. Growth

According to provincial growth forecasts, Niagara will gain more than 214,000 new residents by 2051. The objective of the Niagara Official Plan is to direct this growth to where it makes sense. Further down we shall see that, it makes perfect sense to include

the property falling in the Municipality of Welland within the expanded Settlement boundary of Welland.

3. Housing density

Housing density is a measure of how many people and jobs can be accommodated in a given area. The Region acknowledges that Niagara is not the same as in other, more urban communities. By including the subject land, we can still achieve a form of housing in keeping what makes Niagara unique.

4. Environmental protection

Niagara is taking a clear, streamlined, cooperative approach to conserving our natural features. The subject lands include Environmentally Sensitive lands in a part of the property, that falls in Port Colborne. These lands will be preserved under the strictest policies of the province, region and the municipality.

5. Economy

Niagara's admits that it is less competitive than other communities. While they look for solutions in providing employment lands that will help direct investment to those areas, attracting and retaining jobs, and growing Niagara's economy, they have no provisions providing adequate homes for that class of people who invest in those employment lands. While they look to accommodate the workers in attainable houses, they keep more luxurious and appropriately located home out of reach of the investors. This will force people with economic strength moving away to more appropriate locations to live. My client is offering to build estate homes on acreages that will suit the lifestyle of investors and help keep people in the region and municipality.

It makes perfect sense including my client's property within the;

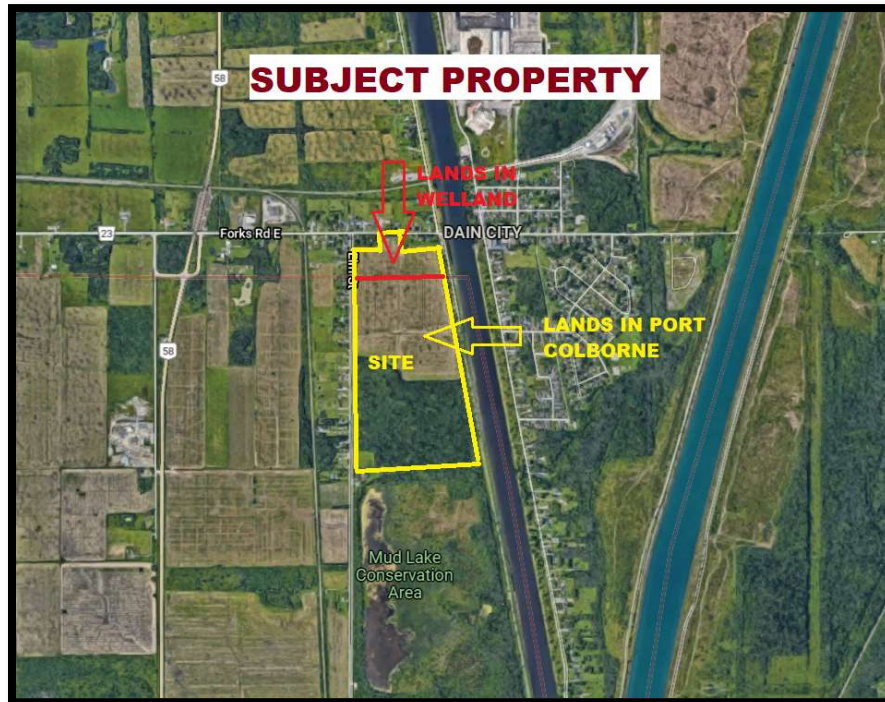
1. Expanded Settlement Boundary Area and;
2. Designating the entire 118 Acres (excluding the environmentally sensitive area) under a Rural Residential Zone in the Region Niagara Official Plan

In the later part of the brief, we will try to establish the factors that weigh heavily in favour of inclusion rather than exclusion of the property with the Settlement boundary of the Municipality of Welland.

3. Factors Promoting Inclusion Rather Than Exclusion.

3.1. Appropriateness of Location for Inclusion

The property is located in two municipalities, Welland and Port Colborne. It is 118 acres with frontage on Fork Road East and Elm Road. The lands are currently being farmed and the property is currently under lease for 5 years to conduct farm operations. A part of the property falls in



Photograph 1: Location of Subject property

the Municipality as shown in photograph 1. The portion of lands that fall within the

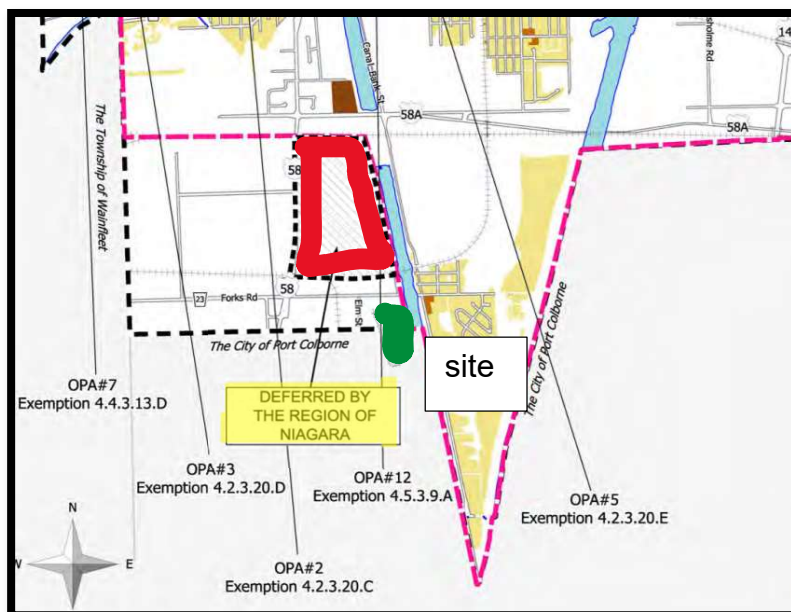


Figure 1: The area Deferred by Region is now included in the Built-up Boundary and Growth across the canal to the east

Port of Colborne is equally, under farm and woodlands. The location of the site close to existing Urban Settlements (Welland) to the east and the expanded Urban Settlement boundary to the north makes it a very likely candidate for inclusion into the settlement boundary.

The area marked red in Figure 1, is already proposed to be included in the settlement boundary. Between the included area (Proposed by the Municipality of Welland) and the Welland



Figure 2: Showing the site in Welland (Red) and the Area most desirable for inclusion in the expansion of the Built-up Areas

Municipal Limits, the area shown in Yellow in Figure 2, represents an ideal piece of property that should be included in the Welland expansion proposal by the Region.

4. Settlement Area Boundary Review by Region Niagara

The Niagara Region included the site in the initial review for expansion on the basis of my client request. (Figure 3). A total of 134 locations were considered. The initial test was based on the need for land by the municipality, provincial plans, speciality crop and contiguous boundary.

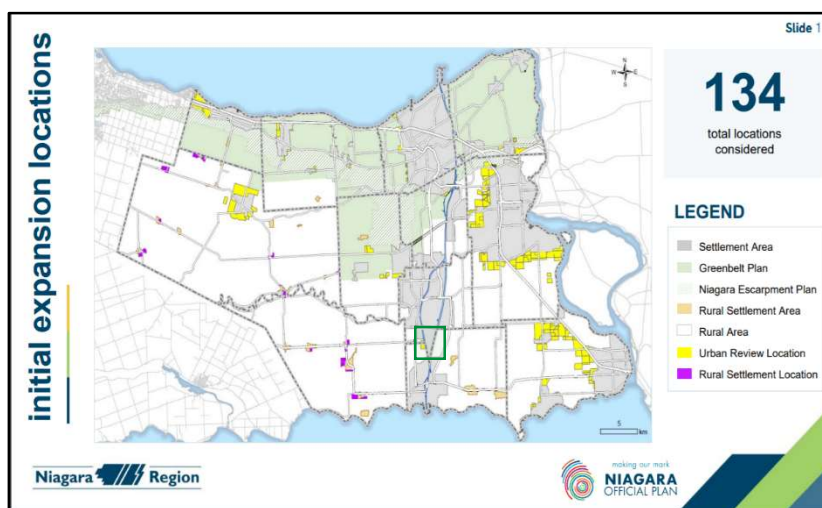


Figure 3: Inclusion of lands initially

The Subject lands cleared the initial test and was considered in the next level of review along with 100 other locations. Under step 2 of the review a number of evaluation

criteria were looked at which include both urban and rural settlement criteria. The Urban Area Evaluation criteria includes

1. Sanitary
2. Water Services
3. Transportation
4. Landuse
5. Environment
6. Aggregates
7. Agriculture

Unfortunately, the subject lands were not recommended. The entire exercise of the initial tests and step 2 tests were just an academic exercise based on the assumption that the Municipality of Welland had sufficient lands for infill development within the defined built-up boundary and did not warrant further inclusion of additional lands.

Growth Forecast Consultation A Place to Grow (2020) (“Growth Plan”) establishes a minimum population and employment forecasts for upper- and single-tier municipalities in the Greater Golden Horseshoe. The Made-in-Niagara Forecast of 694,000 people is slightly below the 700,000-population scenario identified by the province. The May 2021 Forecast identified a total population of 674,000 people. The additional 20,000 people above the May 2021 forecast have been allocated to Lincoln and **Welland**. Lincoln’s 2051 population has been revised from 35,660 to 45,660 in the current forecast. Welland’s 2051 population has been revised from 73,000 to 83,000. The allocation has been provided below:

Municipality	Population 2021	Population 2051	Households 2021	Households 2051	Employment 2021	Employment 2051
Fort Erie	33,930	48,050	14,150	21,510	10,530	17,430
Grimsby	30,300	37,000	11,470	16,070	10,690	14,670
Lincoln	26,860	45,660	9,590	19,405	11,390	15,960
Niagara Falls	97,220	141,650	38,520	58,740	37,780	58,110
Niagara-on-the-Lake	19,970	28,900	7,910	12,500	11,800	16,960
Pelham	19,320	28,830	7,150	11,280	4,810	7,140
Port Colborne	19,250	23,230	8,210	10,500	5,910	7,550
St. Catharines	140,250	171,890	58,550	78,320	61,780	81,010
Thorold	24,440	39,690	9,230	15,660	8,530	12,080
Wainfleet	7,000	7,730	2,580	3,040	1,400	1,830
Welland	56,210	83,000	23,610	37,540	18,030	28,790
West Lincoln	16,370	38,370	5,330	14,060	4,460	10,480
Niagara Region	491,120	694,000	196,300	298,645	187,110	272,000

Table 1: Population allocation to 2051

According to Region Niagara, forecasts for Lincoln and Welland were likely to be achieved earlier than set out.

In Welland, the additional growth proposed is within the existing urban, built-up areas through “intensification” growth. This kind of development supports more affordable housing mix of townhouses and apartment units. The Region seeks to accommodate the growth to ensure communities are more sustainable, better connected, healthy and safe.

However, the Region is focused on providing Attainable housing for a 10,000-person population growth with considering a mix of residential units that include Urban Residential Estates. Even without the need for supporting services (for which there is surplus capacity), my client still proposes to provide these units. Also, by restricting development to infill areas within the city, the Region is contributing to inflation and high prices for a finite number of lots. This will raise cost of lands and achieving affordability will likely be a lost battle.

According to the Region there is no need for addition land needs to accommodate future population and that as per the “intensification rate” Welland’s intensification rate has risen from 60% to 75%.

This is questionable, as reality often differs from statistics. While Welland’s share of housing growth is adjusted to 9.5% for the 2021 to 2051 period, its growth is being

Initial Allocation to Delineated Built Up Area by Housing Unit Type Using Market Based Demand Housing Unit Types				
Housing Mix by Census Housing Type				
2021-51	Single/Semi	Row	Apartment	Total
Fort Erie	41.3%	44.0%	14.6%	100.0%
Grimsby	2.5%	29.5%	68.0%	100.0%
Lincoln	40.5%	27.0%	32.5%	100.0%
Niagara Falls	42.5%	30.4%	27.1%	100.0%
Niagara-on-the-Lake	41.2%	33.3%	25.5%	100.0%
Pelham	34.3%	48.4%	17.3%	100.0%
Port Colborne	58.5%	18.6%	22.9%	100.0%
St. Catharines	21.5%	23.3%	55.3%	100.0%
Thorold	35.8%	55.6%	8.6%	100.0%
Wainfleet	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Welland	62.8%	20.7%	16.5%	100.0%
West Lincoln	66.6%	11.0%	22.4%	100.0%
Niagara Region	33.5%	28.1%	38.4%	100.0%

Table 2: Table showing Demand Based Allocations

attributed to a significant supply of intensification lands available now. Its growth is again based on projections and available data on applications under process. Given that these are good indicators, we cannot turn our eyes away from the need of the people. As mentioned, time and again, estate housing is in demand, mainly due to the Pandemic. People have realized that working from home in a possibility

Delineated Built Up Area Housing Mix of Growth, 2021 to 2051				
Preferred Growth Option to 2051				
2021 51	Single/Semi	Row	Apartment	Total
Fort Erie	41.3%	44.0%	14.6%	100.0%
Grimsby	2.5%	29.5%	68.0%	100.0%
Lincoln	39.0%	25.1%	35.9%	100.0%
Niagara Falls	41.8%	30.2%	28.0%	100.0%
Niagara-on the Lake	20.9%	30.4%	48.7%	100.0%
Pelham	34.3%	48.4%	17.2%	100.0%
Port Colborne	58.6%	18.6%	22.8%	100.0%
St. Catharines	13.2%	23.3%	63.5%	100.0%
Thorold	35.8%	55.6%	8.6%	100.0%
Wainfleet	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Welland	17.5%	33.0%	49.5%	100.0%
West Lincoln	67.2%	10.4%	22.4%	100.0%
Niagara Region	25.2%	29.1%	45.7%	100.0%

Table 3: Table showing Preferred housing type options

and has gained favor with office going staff. People would like to stay in larger homes with more space for themselves. The region is ignoring this segment of people in their focused approach to provide affordable homes.

Table 2 provided the demand for housing type, while table 3 shows the preferred growth options for housing. We notice that the Region’s approach can be very ambitious and therefore removed from reality.

Most of the new construction is directed towards apartments and Row homes whereas the market demand for this is 16.5% and 20.7% respectively. Singles and semis still are the largest group.

According to a report by Niagara Region, in the City of Welland, is very focussed on singles and semis and reduces the likelihood that there is reasonable development potential for Row Housing and Apartment units.

The shift in housing mix reducing the singles/semis and increasing the apartment is unlikely to make more room for demand in future. The City of Welland in their housing analysis have concluded that a housing mix for the city for 2016 to 2041 as per table 3 above is not

likely. A mix of 34% singles and semis and 33% each of rows and apartments was proposed which, in our opinion is, again ambitious.

Table 1 Housing stock by dwelling type, 2016

Dwelling Type	Number of Dwellings	Percentage of Total Stock
Single-detached	126,208	68%
Semi-detached	9,734	5%
Duplex Apartment	6,050	3%
Row house	13,701	7%
Apartment 5 stories or less	19,975	11%
Apartment over 5 stories	9,864	5%
Other	486	0%
Total	186,018	100%

Table 4: Historical Housing Stock

Historically, Welland has supported Single Detached homes and by clubbing semis with single detached dwellings, for an overall percentage of 62.8%, the Region, somehow wants to convey that semi-detached houses are in demand in Welland. Whereas the fact is that semi-detached have a small presence in Welland as well as the Region-only 5%. (Table 4) and it is unlikely that, the future demand for this is going to change. The GTA is an example of how people are finding their way to remote areas to live in Detached homes. Estate Homes represent a major housing demand.

In singles, a farm house type of estate living is completely missing, whereas we have, according to our own study, determined that this type of housing is in high demand, everywhere in Ontario.

This is a great opportunity for the Region to expand their vision and include the subject property (Below) into the proposed Built-up area of the City of Welland and also designate the property as Rural Residential in its entirety. This includes the property in Port Colborne and the City of Welland.



Figure 4: Residential proposal on 118 acres for Urban Estate Residential Housing

Having said this, we will take a look at the Urban Area Evaluation criteria that the Region is using to evaluate the inclusion of properties within an expanded Built-up boundary and relate that to the subject property:

1. Waste water (Sanitary)
2. Water Services
3. Transportation
4. Landuse
5. Environment
6. Aggregates
7. Agriculture

4.1. Waste Water

The Welland wastewater system services the City of Welland, Town of Pelham and the Port Robinson area of the City of Thorold to service 68,722 residents and 27,380 employees. The system is serviced by the Welland Wastewater treatment Plant with a current rated capacity of 54.6 MLD and a peak flow capacity of 136.2 MLD. This capacity is sufficient to meet the needs of resident till 2041. The subject property is likely to

Table 4.K.12 System Sewage Pumping Station Performance

Sewage Pumping Station	Contributing Catchments	Facility Operational Capacity (L/s)	Existing Design Peak Wet Weather Flow (L/s)	2041 Design Peak Wet Weather Flow (L/s)	2041 Surplus/Deficit (L/s)
Timmsdale Sewage Pumping Station (SPS)	Timmsdale SPS	5.0	3.1	3.2	1.8
Towpath Road SPS	Towpath Road SPS	141.7	111.7	199.3	-57.6
Hurricane Road SPS	Hurricane Road SPS	39.0	45.6	51.5	-12.5
Foss Road SPS	Foss Road SPS	26.6	43.3	67.3	-40.7
Feeder Road SPS	Feeder Road SPS	41.0	22.6	26.9	14.1
Seaway Heights SPS	Seaway Heights SPS	65.7	18.8	26.9	38.8
Ontario Road SPS	Ontario Road SPS	600.0	250.6	311.2	288.8
Dain City SPS	Dain City SPS	94.0	37.7	70.7	23.3
Kelly Street SPS	Kelly Street SPS	34.4	33.1	33.1	1.3
George Street SPS	George Street SPS	8.0	6.1	6.1	1.9
South Street SPS	South Street SPS	8.1	0.0	0.0	8.1
Park Lane SPS	Park Lane SPS	4.0	3.0	3.0	1.0
Dailmer Woods SPS	Dailmer Woods SPS	7.4	3.3	3.4	4.0

Figure 5: System Sewage Pumping Station Performance

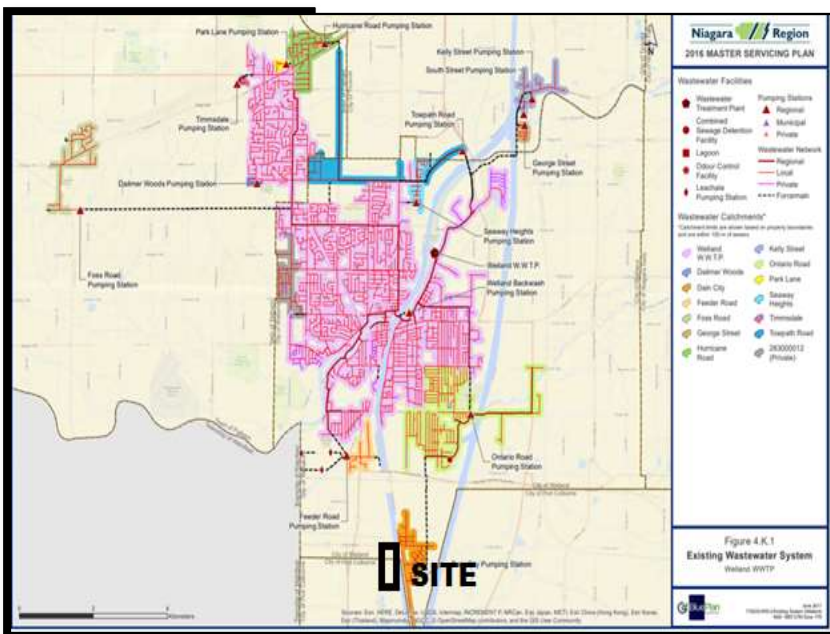


Figure 6: Existing Wastewater Systems with Regional, Local and Private systems

be within the catchment area of the Feeder Road SPS. The 2041 design of the peak wet weather flows indicate that this system has a surplus of 14.1 L/s surplus flows. This indicates that if the area mentioned in Figure 2, including the subject property, is included in the built-up area, it could have recourse

to municipal sewer services.
Likewise, the forcemain performance is also in surplus.

4.2. Water Services.

The water systems are available to the areas immediately north of the site through the Shoalt's Drive High Lift Pumping Station. The water system design has an effective capacity of 16.4 MLD whereas the maximum day demand is only daily

3.3 MLD. Keeping in mind population growth and targets fixed by the Region for growth, the expected day capacity in 2041 is 4.9 MLD. The system is therefore in

Table 4.K.13 Forcemain Performance

Sewage Pumping Station	Pump Station Operational Capacity (L/s)	Capacity @ 2.5 m/s (L/s)	Existing Design Peak Wet Weather Flow (L/s)	2041 Design Peak Wet Weather Flow (L/s)	2041 Surplus/Deficit (L/s)
Timmsdale Sewage Pumping Station (SPS)	5.0	19.6	3.1	3.2	16.4
Towpath Road SPS	141.7	1,021.0	111.7	199.3	821.7
Hurricane Road SPS	39.0	122.7	45.6	51.5	71.2
Foss Road SPS	26.6	78.5	43.3	67.3	11.2
Feeder Road SPS	41.0	122.7	22.6	26.9	95.8
Seaway Heights SPS	65.7	176.7	18.8	26.9	149.8
Ontario Road SPS	600.0	706.9	250.6	311.2	395.7
Dain City SPS	94.0	122.7	37.7	70.7	52.0
Kelly Street SPS	34.4	78.5	33.1	33.1	45.4
George Street SPS	8.0	19.6	6.1	6.1	13.5
South Street SPS	8.1	19.6	0.0	0.0	19.6
Park Lane SPS	4.0	19.6	3.0	3.0	16.6
Dailmer Woods SPS	7.4	19.6	3.3	3.4	16.2

Figure 7: Forcemain Performance

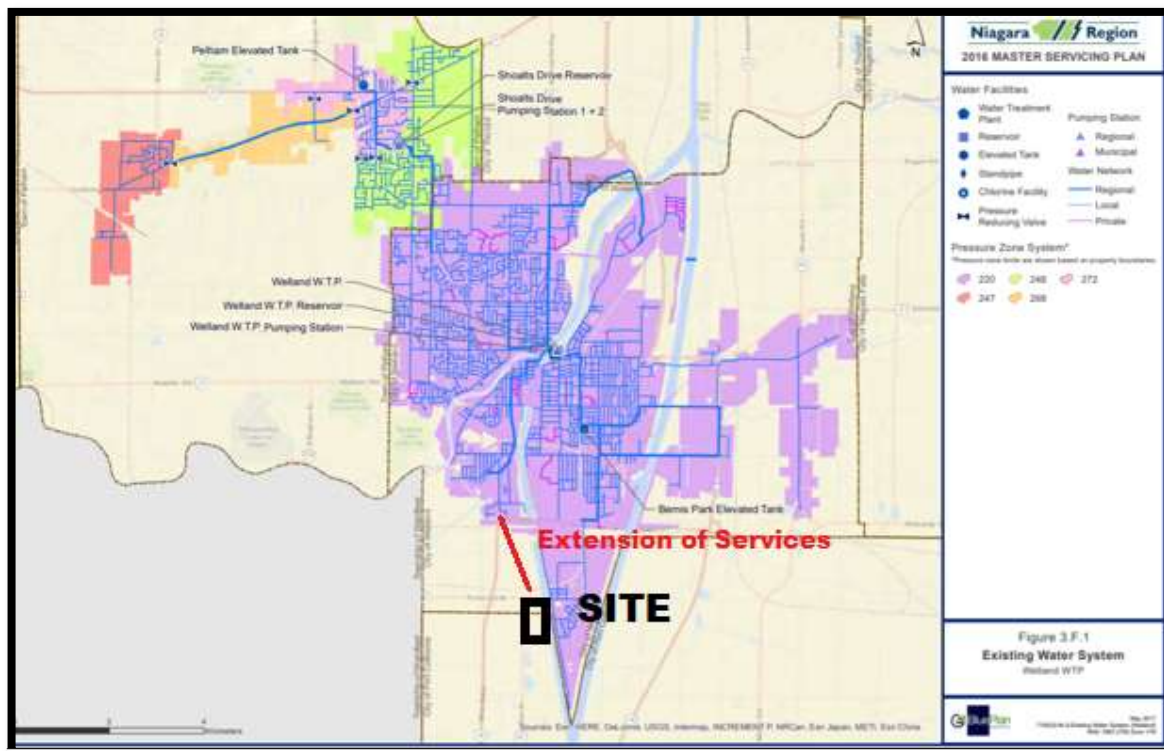


Figure 8: Existing Water Systems

surplus and could effectively accommodate any development taking place on the subject property.

4.3. Transportation

The Site is conveniently located on Elm Street and Fork Road (RR23). It is connected to Highway 406 through Hwy 58, 58A and 140. The property is also accessible from Colborne Street.

The site is also close to the existing Cycling Facility. The Bikeways Master Plan also proposes to extend bike along Elm Street in future and along Colborne Street. Bike lanes are also proposed along Fork Street. This activity goes very well with the Estate Residential proposal on the subject property.

Our opinion is that Welland needs to be an attractive place to live. With all the infrastructure surrounding the subject lands and its near perfect setting to the Bike Lanes and Highways, we believe that the Municipality of Welland must be given the opportunity to expand on the proposal for Estate Homes and, as a result, the Region must consider the Site for Designation as Rural Residential and include that portion of the Subject site into the expanded Built-up Boundary of Welland.

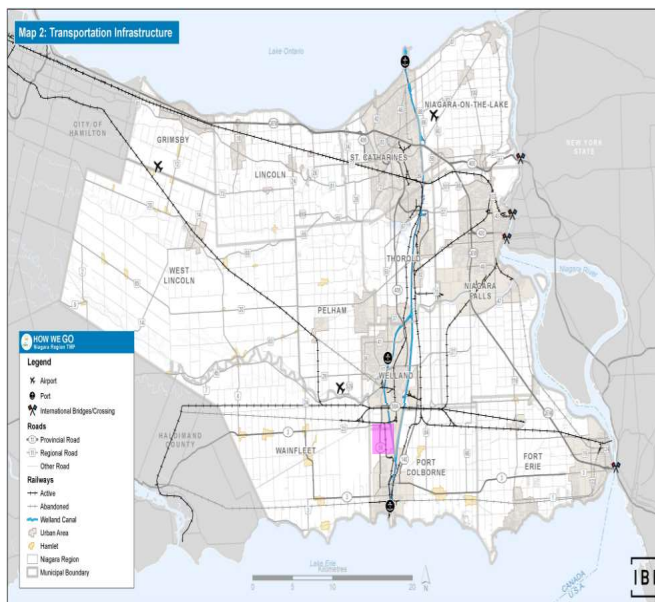


Figure 9: Site showing transportation linkages

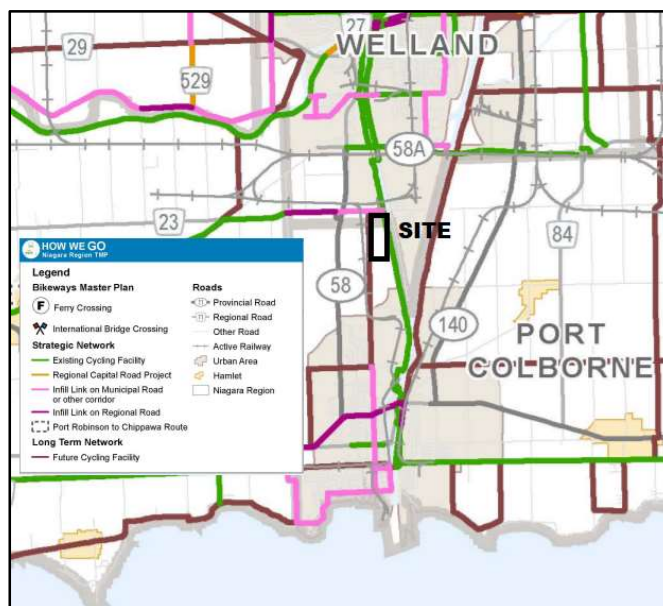


Figure 10: Bike Routes

Even when we consider the Conceptual Transit Network, the Region proposes to introduce Fixed-route Inter-municipal Transit that will further give access to the site. (Figure 11).

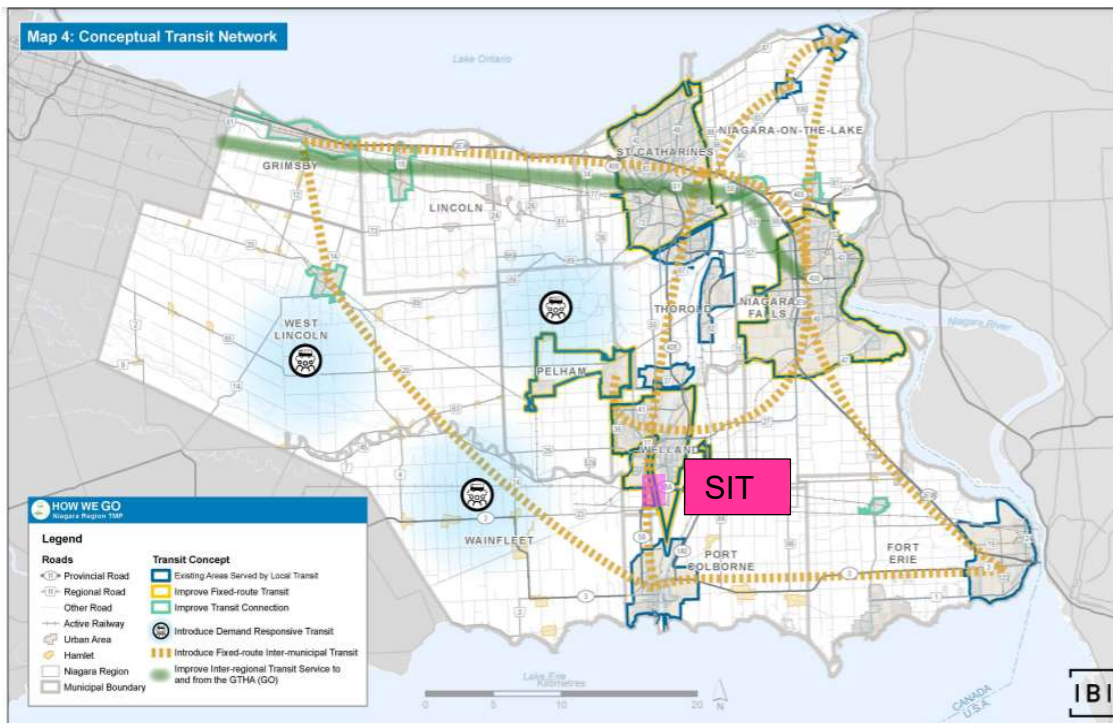


Figure 11: Fixed -route Inter-municipal Transit

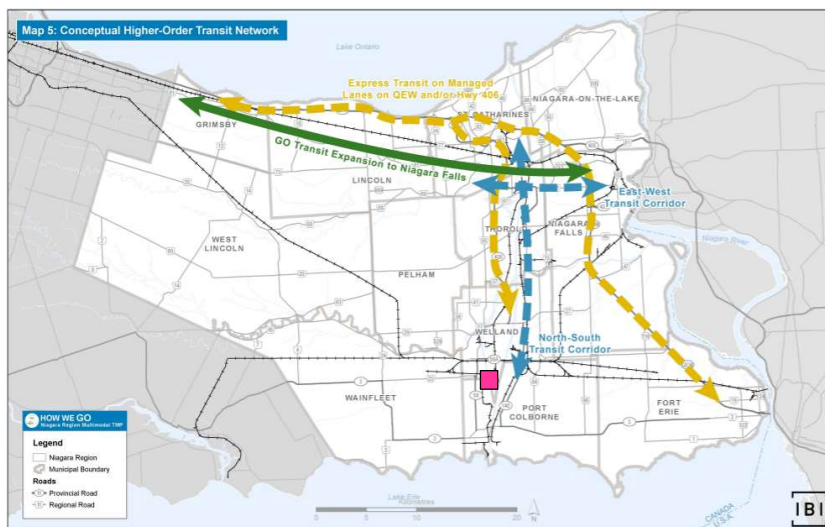


Figure 12: Higher Order Transit Network -Conceptual

The Subject Property will also benefit from the proposed Higher Order Transit network as shown in Figure 12.

Likewise, the Region has ‘Committed Projects’ that will link Highway 58A to Highway 406 and create a new corridor that will link Hamilton to the east and the QEW to the west. This corridor will have impact all

surrounding lands. The subject lands will have great accessibility and potential for

providing housing to meet provincial and regional targets.

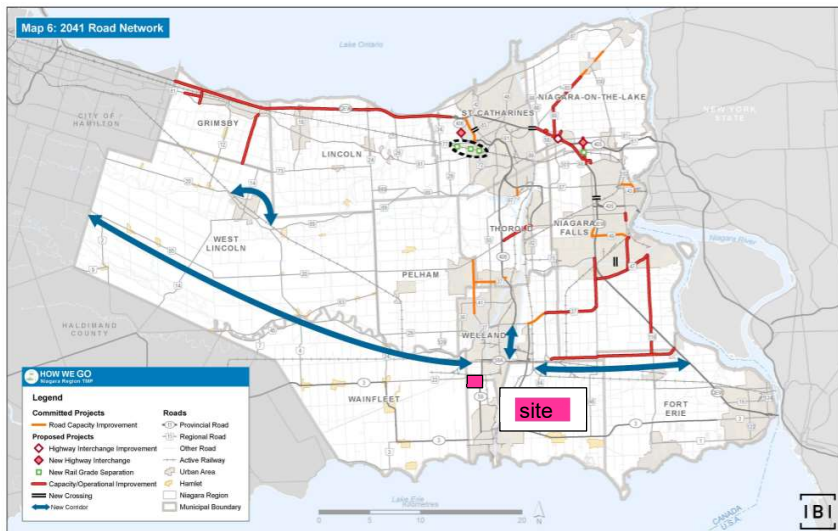


Figure 13: New Corridor proposed

In the interim Highway 23, 24, 20 and 58A will serve as Trade Corridor (See Figure 14).

From a transportation view point, the subject property is well connected and must pass all evaluation for inclusion on this basis alone.

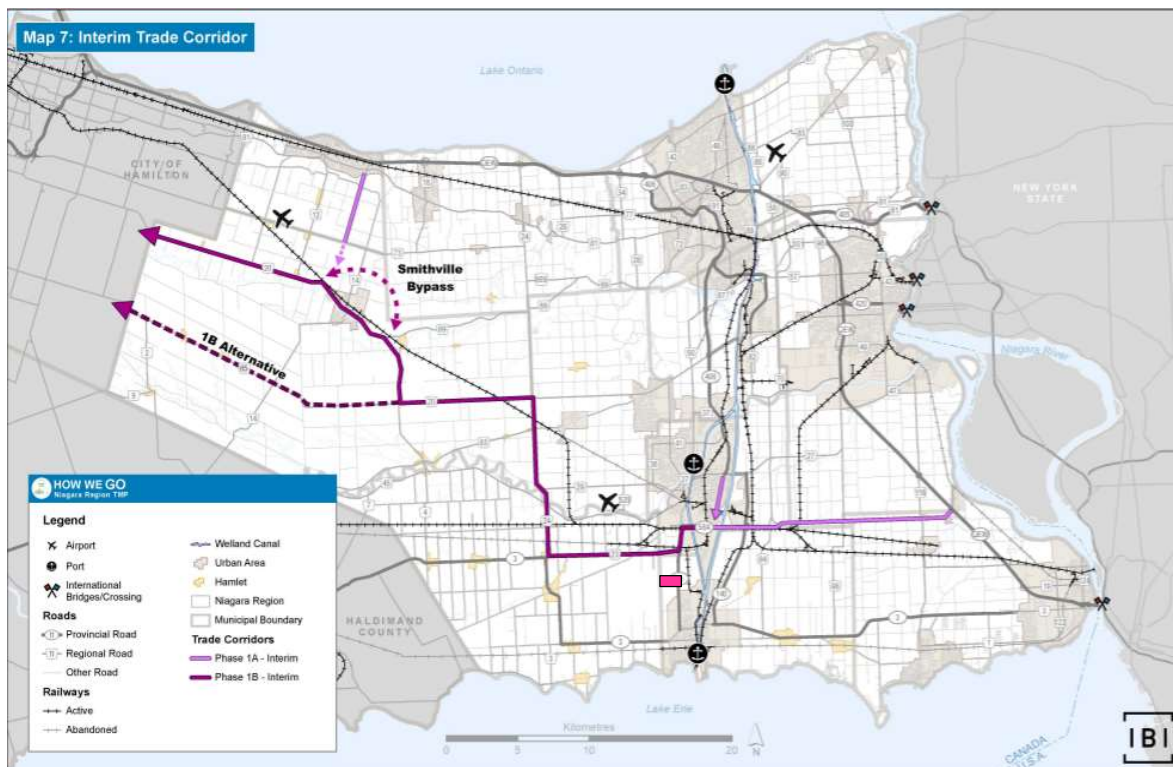


Figure 14: Interim Trade Corridors

4.4. Landuse

The subject lands are designated as Agriculture and Rural Areas. (Figure 15). In the Zoning Bylaw of Welland, the property is zoned Agriculture and Environment

Conservation Area (Partial). In Port Colborne it is zoned Agriculture and Environmental Protection. (Figure 15)

We are seeking change of designation to Rural and Environment Protection (Port Colborne) and inclusion of that portion of the lands that fall in Welland in the Expanded Built-up Boundary.

4.5. Environment, Aggregates and Agriculture

The Subject Property is designated and zoned Agriculture and Environmental Protection. Apart from that the site falls



Figure 16: Natural Heritage Systems

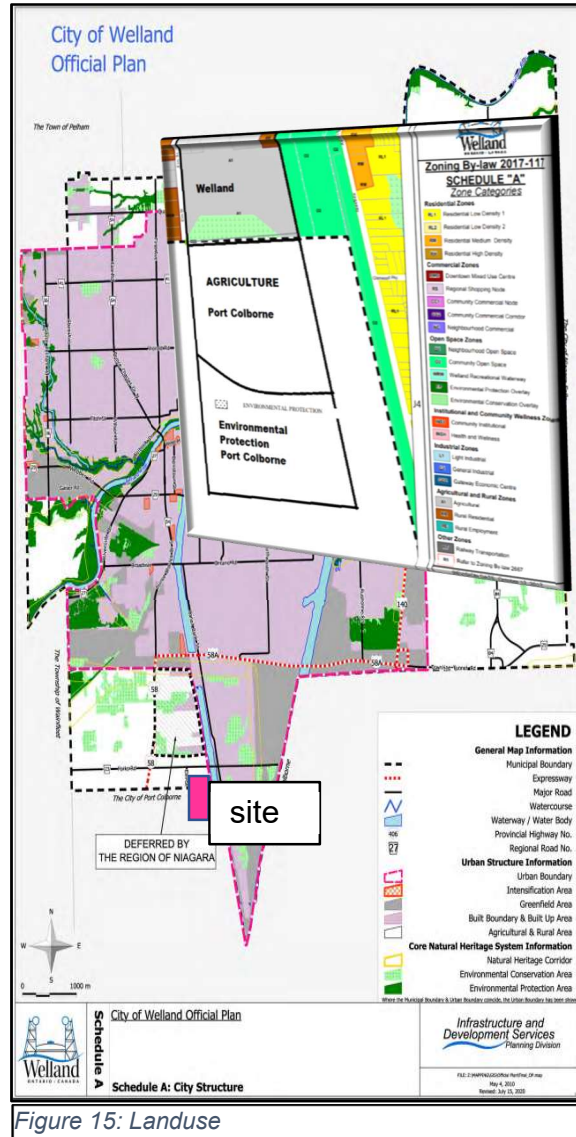


Figure 15: Landuse

partially in the Natural Heritage System. Most of the area under this system is due to the environmental area in Port Colborne and

along the canal. These areas will not be violated in any future residential estate proposal. The subject lands are free from any significant woodlands, provincially significant wetlands, lakes and waterbodies and areas of Highly Vulnerable Aquifers.

Resultantly, when we look at all the points of the evaluation criteria, we can safely conclude that the Site should be included within the Built-up area of Welland and the entire 118 Acres of the subject property be designated Rural in the Niagara Official Plan.



Figure 18: Significant Woodlands

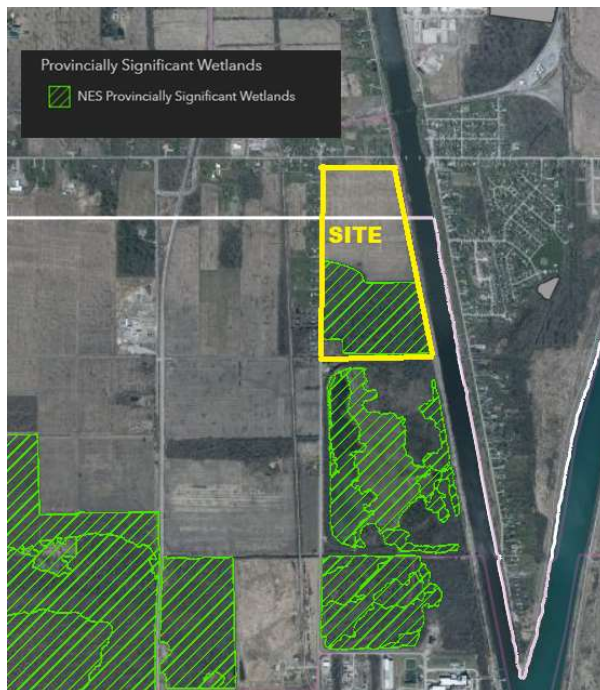


Figure 17: Provincially Significant Wetlands



Figure 19: Highly Vulnerable Aquifers

5. Conclusion

We have had a good look at the evaluation criteria for inclusion of the subject lands within the built-up settlement area boundary for that part that is within the City of Welland. We believe that the site passes all the major evaluation criteria, except that its current uses is Agriculture. A large part of Welland that was Greenfields have been included in the boundary. Also, it seems pointless to leave a small sliver of land wedged between the municipal boundary and the settlement area and not consider it for inclusion.



Figure 20: Small sliver of land between the Welland Municipal Boundary and the expanded Settlement Boundary

As pointed out the subject lands passed the 1st step of evaluation and despite having in place the 2nd step for evaluation, based on certain evaluation criteria, the subject lands were not included in the proposal to bring the lands within the built-up area. That evaluation, I believe did not happen because the Region based the land availability in the City of Welland, on the basis of a visualized 33% division of Singles/semis, Row Houses and Apartment buildings. Historic trends show that the City of Welland has 68% Singles and that the Regions analysis and directions are very optimistic and more aligned on enforcement than proper projections.

In our opinion, the City of Welland will face a shortage of land for housing and lands within the city will become unaffordable as will the resultant attainable housing. Though

the directions are correct in providing affordable housing, it should not be at the cost of reduced land requirements.

Also, the Region has focused on providing low end housing but ignored the higher end housing market. There is no mention of Estate Housing, but the region talks of being “Unique” as ‘Densities’ have a different meaning and connotation for it. This implies that Niagara Region has large lots and that is what makes Niagara, Niagara.

Throughout the report we have mentioned that Estate Homes are desired and in demand. Lifestyles have changed, due to the Pandemic in part, and so has the preferences of people. A large number of people have left the congestion of cities in Toronto and the GTA and are moving to places like Grimsby, Niagara Falls, Welland and other smaller towns in the Niagara Region. They are all looking for affordable larger lots and not apartments or row houses.

In conclusion, we are of the opinion that the subject lands be included in the Settlement area boundary and designated Rural, so that providing Estate Homes to the public becomes a reality.

We are hopeful that the Region of Niagara will review the request for such an inclusion, using well laid our evaluation criteria and not write of the request on the basis of an analysis that only supports row housing and Apartments. It is this analysis that has satisfied the Region that the City of Welland has sufficient lands for development till 2022-2041.

We believe that is not the case as past experience has shown, that historical housing trends do not change unless confronted with extremely high land prices. If we do not provide adequate land banks, we run the risk of creating just that scenario.

Hope the report will go a long way in understanding the issues related to the development of the site, its inclusion and redesignation.



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