

Town of Grimsby

- Proposal to Remove 31 Acres from Greenbelt -

In

Major Transit Station Area (MTSA) Lands

at

The Grimsby GO Train Station

Transit Oriented Community (TOC)

November 23, 2023

Version 1.0

- Proposal For 31-Acre Subject Lands - Aerial Map of West Grimsby

➤ View of the Subject Lands and surrounding area - the Livingston Avenue Extension in yellow line is 1.4 km



- Proposal For 31-Acre Subject Lands - Removal of Property from the Greenbelt in a MTSA

➤ **Required! – Mechanism to legislate removal of land in a MTSA from the Greenbelt**

The need to facilitate population growth and housing intensification around MTSA's are outlined in mandates by both the Provincial and Federal governments. The province must retain authority to permit Greenbelt Removal for MTSA lands where applicable - such as for the identified Subject Lands in west Grimsby – to foster TOCs where they belong.

1. The **Subject Lands** in west Grimsby (shown in red box in the aerial map above) are within the MTSA of the Planned High Order Transit GO Train Station Hub for Grimsby and must be considered for Greenbelt Removal. The Province's Growth Plan sets out minimum density targets of 150 people and jobs per hectare in the area of GO stations. Justification for the removal the Subject Lands from the Greenbelt to facilitate the government mandates are outlined in great detail within this document.

2. The **Subject Lands** in west Grimsby were never to have been included in the Greenbelt in the first place. They were included by mistake at the inception of the Greenbelt in 2005 which was to be corrected during the first scheduled 10-year Greenbelt Land Review in 2015. During the follow-up session in 2015 the correction was neglected by the Review Panel when the Town of Grimsby made a formal request for removal of the **Subject Lands** – shown in **Addendum 1** – Slide 20, **Addendum 2** - Slides 21 and 22 below. **Addendum 3** - Slide 23 shows an October 2023 Niagara Region news article that outlines this oversight. Most recent and further support for the Grimsby request to remove land from the Greenbelt is evident in the CBC News headline by Samantha Beattie from November 22, 2023 ***'Niagara town will push province to make Greenbelt land removal easier for municipalities. Grimsby council also voted to ask province to stick with decision to remove 2 sites from Greenbelt'***.

- Proposal For 31-Acre Subject Lands -

Land Use Review

➤ Why should the Subject Lands be removed from the Greenbelt? – re: Provincial Mandates

The Provincial Growth Plan stipulates that a Major Transit Station Area (MTSA):

- *Is generally defined as the area within an approximate 500 to 800 metre radius of a transit station, representing about a 10-minute walk.*
- *The boundary of the MTSA must be outlined in a transit-supportive manner which maximizes the size of the area and the number of potential transit users that are within walking distance of the station.*

The Subject Lands shown in red box in the aerial map above are within the MTSA of the Grimsby GO Train Station!

These **Subject Lands** will provide the Town of Grimsby and the Region of Niagara with the opportunity to fast-path housing starts in a Transit Oriented Community (TOC) to meet housing and growth needs as mandated by the provincial and federal governments. These lands must be considered for removal from the Greenbelt since they meet the criteria for MTSA designation – they should never have been included in the Greenbelt mapping as this presentation will demonstrate.

- Proposal For 31-Acre Subject Lands -

Land Use Review

➤ Why should the Subject Lands be removed from the Greenbelt? – re: Federal Mandates

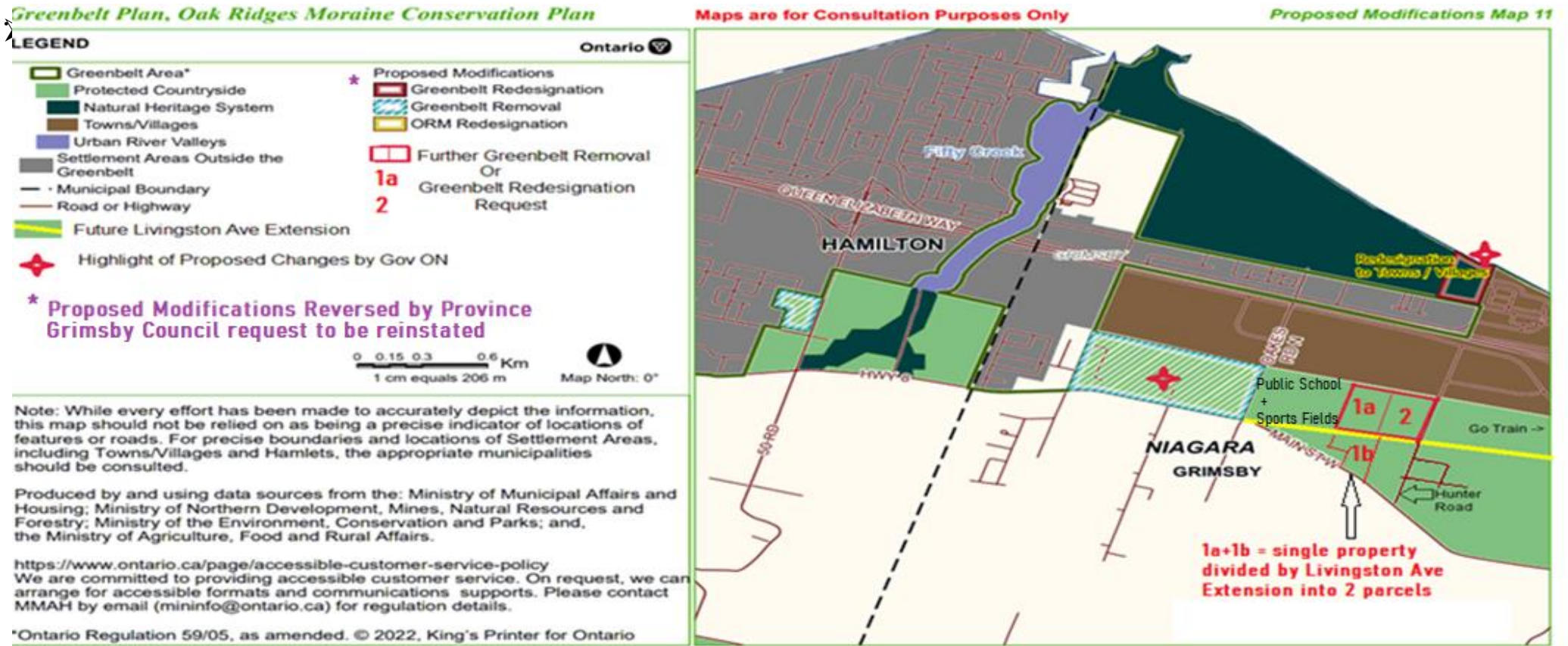
The Federal Government recently announced measures that will be implemented to boost the housing supply to better support the middle class with plans to build more rental housing:

- The Goods and Services Tax (GST) will be removed on the construction of new apartment buildings for renters.
- Provinces which currently apply provincial sales taxes, or the provincial portion of the Harmonized Sales Tax (HST), to rental housing, are being called on to also match the federal governments' rebate for new rental housing.
- All local governments will be required to **end exclusionary zoning** and encourage building apartments **near public transit**.

This will allow for the approval of (Federal) Housing Accelerator Fund applications, which provides incentive funding to local governments to encourage housing supply initiatives.

Again, the government spotlight has been focused on the building of housing **near public transit** (where the Subject Lands are located) to increase affordability and alleviate homelessness.

- Proposal For 31-Acre Subject Lands - Greenbelt Map from Gov ON – with Proposed Modifications



Note: Properties identified in the legend as Proposed Modifications as well as 1a, 1b and 2 are all privately owned.

Properties 1a and 2 were not included in the original Proposed Modifications by the province but are within the MTA to provide for TOC growth (these properties are actually most suitable for removal from the Greenbelt).

The ask is for properties 1a and 2 to be included for Greenbelt Removal. See Aerial Map in Slide 2 above.

- Proposal For 31-Acre Subject Lands - Map From the Region of Niagara Official Plan

Schedule B – Regional Structure

- We propose to expand the Urban Area Designation for **Protected Major Transit Station Area** to include the Subject Lands



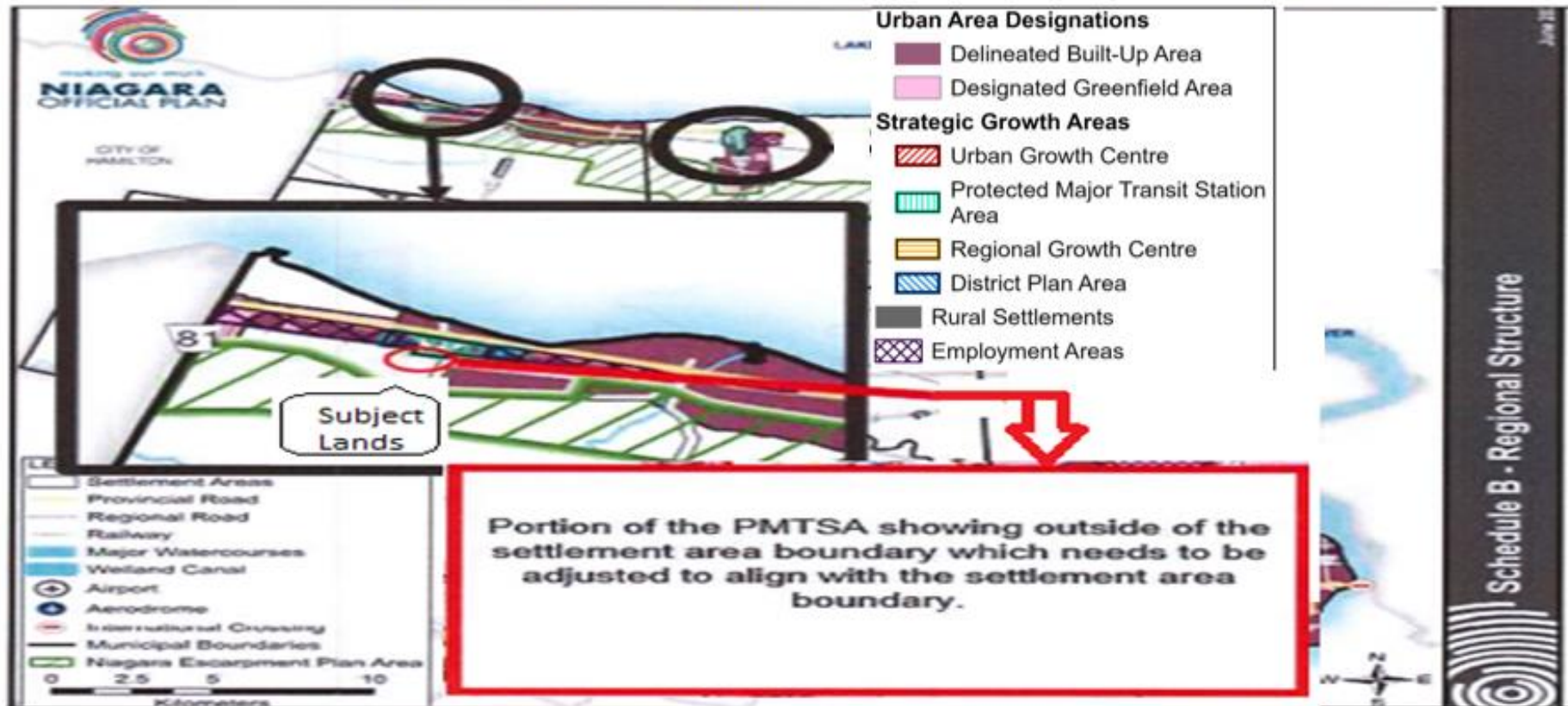
31-Acre Parcel Greenbelt Removal - Grimsby

- Proposal For 31-Acre Subject Lands -

Region of Niagara Official Plan

Schedule B – Regional Structure

ERO 019-5717 OP is Approved pending Appendix 4 Modification #42 request



- Proposal For 31-Acre Subject Lands - Region of Niagara Official Plan

Schedule B – Regional Structure

➤ Removal of Subject Lands from Greenbelt to facilitate expansion of the PMTSA in the Region of Niagara OP

- The Region of Niagara OP ‘**Schedule B - Regional Structure**’ (Slide 7 above) shows the area to the north of the **Subject Lands** mapped as:
 - ✓ **Urban Area Designation** - “Delineated Built-Up Area”AND
 - ✓ **Strategic Growth Area** - “Employment Area” + “PMTSA”.
- The provincial Growth Plan states *the boundary of a PMTSA must be outlined in a transit-supportive manner which maximizes the size of the area and the number of potential transit users within walking distance of the station.*
- Our proposal is to remove the **Subject Lands** from the Greenbelt and expand the **Urban Area Designation** and **Strategic Growth Area** zones. Then provide an update relative to the Province’s Pending Approval Modification #42 request for the Region of Niagara OP ‘**Schedule B – Regional Structure**’ to permit those lands to be included in the Grimsby PMTSA (which is currently very limited in size as it is restricted by the Greenbelt mapping).

- Proposal For 31-Acre Subject Lands -

Region of Niagara Official Plan

Schedule B – Regional Structure

➤ Removal of Subject Lands from Greenbelt to facilitate expansion of the PMTSA in the Region of Niagara OP continued...

- Should the **Subject Lands** be removed from the Greenbelt and included in an expanded PMTSA in the Official Plan, Grimsby would have the flexibility to update their zoning rules to meet mandated intensification targets in the GO Train Transit zone.
- The **Subject Land** provides a large-acreage vacant lot with existing infrastructure already built in that is situated in **an urban infill area**; it will provide Grimsby with the opportunity to proactively engage in the process to:
 - ✓ Enable Transit Oriented Development.
 - ✓ Facilitate a large scale area revitalization and infrastructure expansion.
 - ✓ Implement Inclusionary Zoning to meet the affordable housing needs outlined by the Federal and Provincial governments.
- Review the aerial map on Slide 2 for a visual of the residential, commercial and transportation areas currently built-up in the area of the **Subject Lands**.
 - ✓ It is in an infill area, is nearby to Grimsby City Hall, the QEW, the future Grimsby GO Train station, new Hospital and other amenities in and near the core of the Town of Grimsby.

- Proposal For 31-Acre Subject Lands -

Justification for Amendment

➤ **Studies on the soil quality have designated the Subject Lands as poor or as not suitable for Specialty Crop Area.**

The following is stated in the Agricultural Impact Assessment of March 25, 2022* provided by DBH Soils Inc for the nearby 502 Winston Rd development that was initially proposed for Greenbelt Redesignation by the Gov ON on November 2022:

- *The soils in the Secondary Study Area (**includes the Subject Lands**) comprise a mix of specialty crop ratings with much of the area identified as shallow soils with limited specialty crop suitability as shown by ratings of Poor, Poor to Very Poor and Unsuitable.*

Matching results on soil quality were concluded in the AgPlan Limited – Specialty Crop Greenbelt Study* report commissioned by the Town of Grimsby (Oct 28, 2016):

- *Specialty crop production is not predominant,*
- *Soil capability and soil potential in Grimsby is not the best found in Niagara and in some areas is diminished due to non-agricultural development.*
- *The Provincial Policy Statement (2014) is mute with respect to the application of tests needed to be met in order to be able to designate a specialty crop area and does not provide any guidance with respect to the relative importance (weighting) on characteristics. Additionally, there is no guidance with respect to a minimum size of area designated as specialty crop area.**

*See our Comment ID 88023 provided in [ERO 019-6813 - Review of proposed policies adapted from A Place to Grow and Provincial Policy Statement to form a new provincial planning policy instrument](#) for details on the description and a proposed update for the designation of Specialty Crop Areas.

Included are attachments for the Agricultural Impact Assessment document of March 25, 2022 and the AgPlan Limited – Specialty Crop Study Report.

- Proposal For 31-Acre Subject Lands -

Justification for Amendment

➤ **Factors to justify Greenbelt Removal for Subject Lands:**

- a. The property consists of 2 equal-sized parcels with both owners willing and onboard to Build More Homes Faster.
- b. The **Subject Lands** are within the boundary of the MTSA (800 meters of Grimsby GO Train Station) meeting the criteria to provide for development in a TOC (but is currently bound by the Greenbelt).
- c. Property does not encroach on Main St. W. or the Niagara Escarpment lands; is vacant and fallow and has no wooded areas.
- d. The area surrounding the **Subject Lands** have been fragmented and are now encircled by built-up and fully serviced residential neighbourhoods (the Geddes and Elmer Street subdivisions), institutional lands (Smith P.S.) and public recreational facilities (baseball and soccer fields).
- e. The **Subject Lands** and surrounding area are fallow and have been fragmented for other multi-use purposes, has poor soil conditions and currently lies within an urban setting.

- Proposal For 31-Acre Subject Lands - Justification for Amendment

➤ **Factors to justify Greenbelt Removal for Subject Lands:**

- f. Has existing infrastructure (Water, Natural Gas and Bell lines) already underground on the south boundary along the Livingston Avenue Extension.
- g. Infrastructure (Bell lines) are also implemented along the rail line on the north boundary of the property.
- h. Has existing storm water/sanitary sewers positioned directly adjacent on the east side of Hunter Rd that services an existing built-up housing area. This is shown on the map on Slide 19.

- Proposal For 31-Acre Subject Lands - Justification for Amendment

➤ Factors to justify Greenbelt Removal for Subject Lands:

- i. Has a west side border with a public school and sports soccer/baseball fields and residential parkland leisure area (ideally suited to a Transit Oriented Community).
- j. Is a sizable property readily available for development to provide justification for the Town of Grimsby and the Region of Niagara to forge an Initial Business Case with Metrolinx for the project to build the Grimsby GO Train Station.
- k. STRATEGIC IMPORTANCE OF SCHEDULED MAJOR ROAD PROJECTS IN THE MTSA

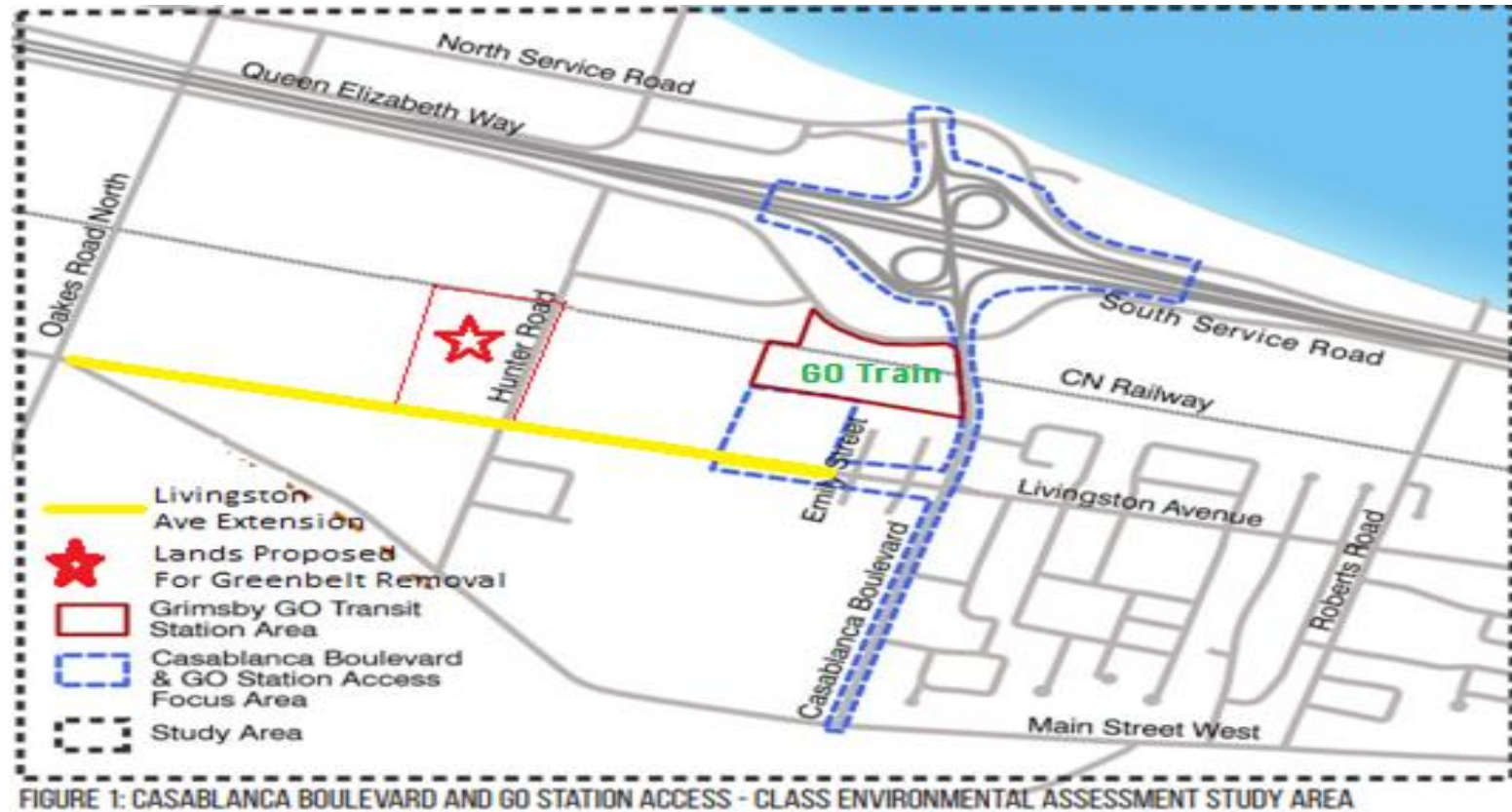
The Region of Niagara has completed an **EA approval** for 2 major road projects in Grimsby (i.e., Casablanca Blvd Improvement scheduled for build in Spring 2024 and the Livingston Avenue Extension build TBD). Note: The Livingston Ave Extension lands were acquired by the region and have been in plan for completion since the early 1970's. It will be a strategic east-west corridor for commuters to the future Grimsby GO Train Station and for traffic and emergency vehicles to the new \$224-million (Grimsby) West Lincoln Memorial Hospital currently under construction.

- Proposal For 31-Acre Subject Lands - Justification for Amendment

➤ Factors to justify Greenbelt Removal for Subject Lands:

k. STRATEGIC IMPORTANCE OF SCHEDULED MAJOR ROAD PROJECTS IN THE MTTSA continued...

- Casablanca Blvd Improvement EA document shows Study Area with **Subject Lands** highlighted with red star.

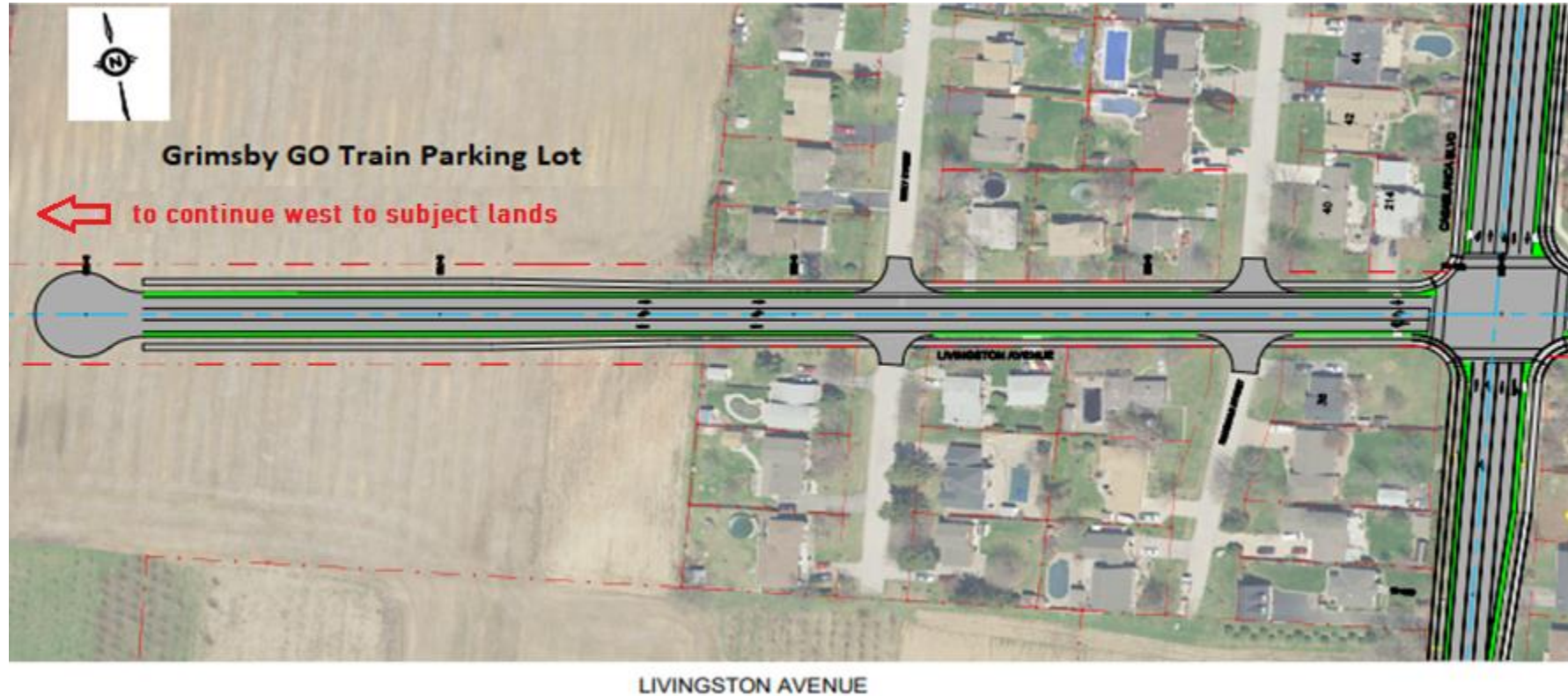


- Proposal For 31-Acre Subject Lands - Justification for Amendment

➤ Factors to justify Greenbelt Removal for Subject Lands:

k. STRATEGIC IMPORTANCE OF SCHEDULED MAJOR ROAD PROJECTS IN THE MTSA continued...

- Casablanca Blvd Improvement EA document shows Livingston Ave Extension to Grimsby GO Train Parking Lot which will continue further west through to the **Subject Lands** and Oakes Road. Project is scheduled for shovels in the ground in the Spring of 2024.



- Proposal For 31-Acre Subject Lands -

Justification for Amendment

➤ Factors to justify Greenbelt Removal for Subject Lands:

k. STRATEGIC IMPORTANCE OF SCHEDULED MAJOR ROAD PROJECTS IN THE MTSA continued...

- The map on the above Slide 16 shows construction for a partially extend Livingston Avenue from Emily Street to the west edge of the Grimsby GO Train Station parking lot. The partial extension of the Livingston Avenue is included in the Casablanca Blvd and GO Station Access Improvement Project.
- The Livingston Avenue Extension will be fully completed and will connect the GO Train Station Parking Lot to Main Street West at Oakes Road as outlined in the approved EA Map shown in Slide 15 of this presentation.
- The underground infrastructure for utilities, storm and sanitary waste water for the partial construction of the Livingston Ave Extension is already in place for the GO Train Station Area. Additionally this infrastructure extends westward to Hunter Rd where it services a subdivision on the south side of that roadway to Main St. W. as shown in the diagram on Slide 19 below.
- Construction for the partial completion of the Livingston Avenue will be the setup for the full build of Livingston Ave along with the accompanying infrastructure. The Livingston Avenue Extension does front on the south side of the **Subject Lands**.

- Proposal For 31-Acre Subject Lands -

Justification for Amendment

➤ **Factors to justify Greenbelt Removal for Subject Lands:**

- I. The strategic location of the **Subject Lands** provide flexible growth options for multi-use housing in the Town of Grimsby - leveraging the Gov ON, Region of Niagara and Town of Grimsby investments in the GO Train Station, major road projects as well as the new Grimsby Hospital that is currently under construction.
- m. Provides a strategically located property that allows for a co-ordinated design effort to service lots that need to connect and work together.
- n. Allows for the release of an open and clear parcel of land from the Greenbelt Area that would be suitable to fast-path residential development in a TOC.

- Proposal For 31-Acre Subject Lands -

Justification for Amendment

➤ **Factors to justify Greenbelt Removal for Subject Lands:**

- o. The map below shows the significant existing state for the Sanitary Pump Stations (SPS) and Wastewater Network for west Grimsby in the area of the **Subject Lands**:



- Proposal For 31-Acre Subject Lands -

Addendum 1: Grimsby Greenbelt Review 2015

Greenbelt Review Panel Decision 2015 – Eliminated Growth Opportunities for Grimsby

Letter to the Hon. David Crombie

2015 Co-ordinated Review
Town of Grimsby Submission

Agenda Item #a)
April 30, 2015

GREENBELT PLAN AREA		
PARCEL	6	Main Street West Rural
LOCATION	North side of Main Street West, West of Hunter to railway tracks	
EXISTING USES	Agricultural, Fallow, Residential	
GREENBELT PLAN	Tender Fruit and Grape Lands	
ESCARPMENT PLAN		
OFFICIAL PLAN	Specialty Crop – Tender Fruit and Grape, Parks and Open Space	
ZONING AREA	Specialty Crop, Institutional, Public Open Space	
SOILS	Miscellaneous Man Modified Land Units Mainly reddish hued silty clay loam over Queenston shale bedrock	
SERVICES	WATER:	SEWER
	Yes	No
ANALYSIS	Mostly fallow agricultural land and residential abutting main Street. Area has the potential for Employment Lands if removed from greenbelt plan area or redesignated. This is particularly true for the area between the railway tracks and the future Livingston Avenue Extension.	
RECOMMENDATION	<p>Remove from Greenbelt Plan Area or Change Designation to Town's and Villages. Particularly the area between the Railway track and the future Livingston Avenue Extension.</p> <p>If removed from Greenbelt should be Employment Lands only to facilitate establishment of a complete community, reduction of out-commuting.</p> <p>If maintained in greenbelt consider allowing public parkland in this area to promote a healthy community.</p>	



Livingston Ave Extension

★ 1a + 2 = Subject Lands for Greenbelt Removal

1a + 1b = Single property divided by Livingston Ave Extension into 2 parcels

- Proposal For 31-Acre Subject Lands -

Addendum 2: Grimsby Greenbelt Review 2015

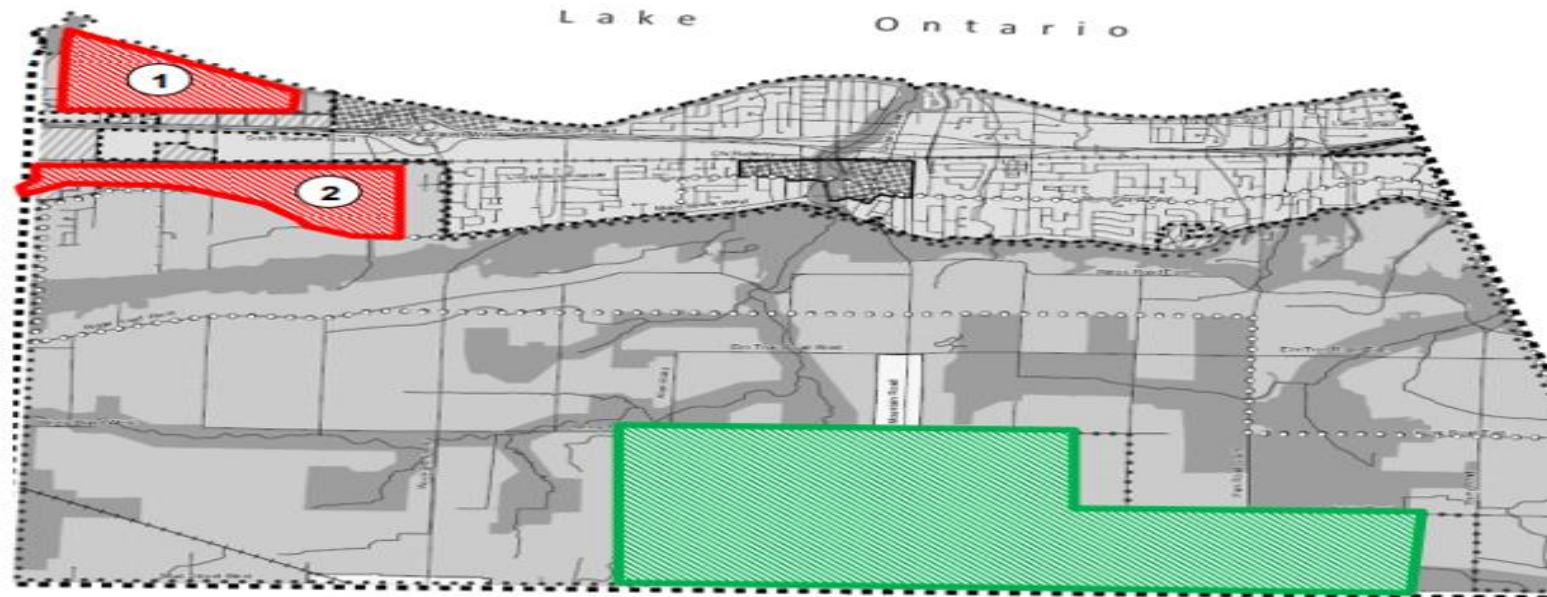
Greenbelt Review Panel Decision 2015 – Eliminated Growth Opportunities for Grimsby

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FIGURE 2



AREAS FOR CONSIDRATION OF ADJUSTMENTS TO GREENBELT PLAN BOUNDARY



= AREAS CONSIDERED FOR EXCLUSION FROM GREENBELT PLAN AREA OR REDESIGNATION AS TOWN'S AND VILLAGES (250 ha)

Area 1 - North of QEW = 100 ha
Area 2 - South of QEW = 150 ha



ha)

= AREAS CONSIDERED FOR INCLUSION IN THE GREENBELT PLAN AREA (923

- Proposal For 31-Acre Subject Lands -

Addendum 2: Grimsby Greenbelt Review 2015

Greenbelt Review Panel Decision 2015 – Eliminated Growth Opportunities Continued...

The Provincial Co-ordinated Review Panel's decision in 2015 for the Town of Grimsby's proposal was to:

1. Declined the swap out of the proposed 250 ha Greenbelt land, i.e., both Area 1 and Area 2 in red.
2. Then integrate or add, without consideration or negotiation, the offered 923 ha of non-Greenbelt land to effectively add 923 ha of new land to the Greenbelt (without releasing any lands from Grimsby).

This left Grimsby with virtually no room left for expansion of their urban boundary.

- Proposal For 31-Acre Subject Lands –

Addendum 3: Grimsby NewsNow Editorial October 19, 2023

newsnow 100% Niagara owned & operated

Time to pay the Grimsby piper

The Greenbelt is a good thing. Let's be clear there. However, changes to it can also be a good thing, as well.

The problem with the most recent proposed changes to the Greenbelt legislation by the provincial government was their process was too arbitrary and it lacked transparency - and I am being ultra kind here.

On Monday, the same provincial government announced its plan to reinstate subject lands which were to be developed back into the Greenbelt AND keep the 9,400 acres it suggested be added as a trade off in the protected area.

As one Grimsby councillor noted, "We just can't win."

For those who have not been playing along, let's review.

When the Greenbelt was first announced, there was surprise in the Town of Grimsby as two parcels of land were included in the draft which had been debated and agreed would not be part of the protected land package.

This was noted at the time and the Greenbelt legislation authors and the Liberal government of the day acknowledged the error but did not want to open an appeal can of worms and essentially said, "too bad Grimsby, you'll have to wait until the 10 year appeal window to get those two parcels out."

So Grimsby waited. The 10-year window opened. And the provin-



MIKE WILLISCRIFT

cial government of the day closed it on the Town's fingers saying, "too bad, we're standing pat and not freeing up any land even though we made a mistake where you are concerned."

It is important to note that Grimsby went to the negotiation table there offering an additional parcel above the escarpment as trade for what they thought they already had.

Not only did those two parcels stay in, but the government said, "thanks, we'll take those, too" and hosed Grimsby once again.

Now, fast forward nearly 10 more years and here we are - in a war with other municipalities to see who can serve the beast called Housing Density best.

For Grimsby, this matter is magnified even more with the pending GO Train extension slowly working its way past Stoney Creek and into Niagara.

Mass transit of that nature only works with super intense housing in the immediate area of its hubs. Taking GO needs to be

easier than hopping in a car and getting on our already congested roadways.

That is why the government pretty much waives all planning rationale where density is concerned within about 800m of a GO station. But the density shock waves do radiate beyond that.

Now, one of the parcels that was supposed to be open for development at the start of Greenbelt is the tract which was to be released - the land bordered by Oakes-Kelson and the rail tracks. It was always intended as such and the Liberal government of the day agreed to that.

That land should be developed. The parcel by the lake not so much, but given its proximity to the GO, it sure makes sense.

As part of Monday's announcement, a 30-day appeal window was opened for municipalities to make their case the lands proposed for development should remain extracted for housing purposes.

While there is a wave of public sentiment against it because of the poor process which started the consideration, Grimsby's situation is distinct and different. There are two small parcels, both close to a new GO and one wasn't supposed to be protected in the first place. On top of that, the Town already offered up land in trade, but did not get anything in return.

It's time for the Province to pay the piper in Grimsby.