
Subject: Statutory Public Meeting for Regional Official Plan Amendment (ROPA) 18 (Northwest Welland Urban Boundary Expansion)

Report to: Planning and Economic Development Committee

Report date: Wednesday, October 14, 2020

Recommendations

1. That Report PDS 23-2020 **BE RECEIVED** for information; and
2. That Report PDS 23-2020 **BE CIRCULATED** to the City of Welland.

Key Facts

- The purpose of this report is to provide information for the Statutory Public Meeting for Regional Official Plan Amendment No. 18 (ROPA 18), which is being held in accordance with prescribed requirements of Section 17 of the *Planning Act, 1990*, and to collect comments from the public. No recommendations or approvals are sought at this time.
- The City of Welland has submitted an application for a Regional Official Plan Amendment for the expansion of the City's urban boundary known as the Northwest Welland Expansion (NWE) area. This report also provides information on the local Official Plan Amendment 24 adopted by the City in relation to the same matter.
- The Region has directly supported Welland's work program to consider the NWE and secondary plan process since 2017, with the intent that the process would feed into the Region's new Official Plan per the requirements of the *Growth Plan, 2017*.
- As a result of changes to the *Growth Plan, 2019*, Welland has advanced its request to expand the City's urban boundary for the NWE area in advance of the completion of the Region's Official Plan, by submitting a Regional Official Plan Amendment (ROPA) application and adopting a Local Official Plan Amendment (OPA 24).
- The City is proceeding with this application pursuant to Section 2.2.8.5-2.2.8.6 of the Provincial Growth Plan and is seeking multiple, concurrent 40 ha expansion requests ahead of the completion of the Region's new Official Plan. The Region may consider multiple 40 ha expansions so long as the proposal meets the applicable policies of the Growth Plan.

- The Region deemed this application to be complete in July 2020. On September 24, 2020, the Region circulated information to prescribed agencies and advertised this public meeting in newspapers having general circulation surrounding the study area.

Financial Considerations

There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

The cost to process ROPA 18 have been accommodated within the Planning and Development Services Department 2020 Operating Budget.

The Region may incur costs as a result of the development of these lands in accordance with the NWE Secondary Plan. This information will be provided through a future report related to the recommendation on the NWE Secondary Plan.

Analysis

ROPA 18 has been initiated by the City of Welland to add approximately 190 hectares of land known as NWE into the urban settlement area as Designated Greenfield Area and Built-Up Area, as applicable.

The amendment study area affects land generally running along Quaker Road and bound by the Town of Pelham and City of Thorold to the north, the rear lot lines of properties along Niagara Street to the east, Niagara College Welland Campus to the south and Line Avenue and Clare Avenue on the west.

Appendix 1 shows the Study Area Map.

Background

The Region has directly supported Welland's work program to consider the NWE expansion and secondary plan process since 2017. Regional staff participated in establishing the Terms of Reference for the project, the selection of the successful consultant, participated on a steering committee and committed to provide financial assistance via the SNIP planning grant.

When the work plan started in 2017, the *Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (Growth Plan)* only permitted municipalities to consider urban boundary expansions as part of the Region's municipal comprehensive review (MCR). In Niagara's case, the MCR is the new Regional Official Plan (ROP) which is targeting a 2021 completion. The Region agreed to the City's NWE work program on the basis that the required supporting information to justify a boundary expansion and secondary plan would feed in to the Region's MCR/new ROP in 2021.

The *Growth Plan* was amended in May, 2019 to include new policies which allow for consideration of urban boundary expansions of 40 ha in advance of a municipal comprehensive review, subject to specific criteria. The Province later clarified through a November 12, 2019 letter that an upper-tier municipality may consider multiple 40 ha expansions so long as the proposal meets the applicable policies of the *Growth Plan*. The Province also confirmed that the Region is the approval authority for 40 ha boundary expansion applications in accordance with Section 17 of the *Planning Act, 1990*.

Process Timeline

The Region met with the City on several occasions in September and October, 2019 to discuss the ROPA requirements for the NWE area expansion under the new *Growth Plan, 2019* policies. The City submitted a partial application for a Regional Official Plan Amendment for the NWE in November, 2019. This application was deemed incomplete.

The City, Region and City's consultant met in January, 2020 to discuss the additional requirements to complete the application. The remaining information was submitted in July, 2020. The application was subsequently deemed complete in accordance with the Region's complete application policies.

Regional Official Plan Amendment

The City is proceeding with this application pursuant to Section 2.2.8.5-2.2.8.6 of the *Growth Plan* and is seeking multiple, concurrent 40 ha expansion requests ahead of the completion of the Region's new OP (i.e. pre-MCR).

The ROPA application includes the following technical reports:

- Planning Justification Report and Scoped Planning Justification Report
- Transportation Impact Study
- Functional Servicing Study
- Stormwater Management Report
- Natural Heritage Study/Environmental Impact Study
- Cultural Heritage Assessment
- Agricultural Impact Assessment
- Financial Impact Assessment

This technical information will be used to evaluate the NWE as well as the associated Northwest Welland Secondary Plan.

Of the total study area, approximately 31 hectares are protected environmental features within Natural Heritage System and 58 hectares of the area is currently occupied by existing uses and designated as Built-Up Area on Schedule A of the City's Official Plan

and the Province's Built Boundary Mapping. Therefore, approximately 102 hectares of the amendment area will contribute to future designated greenfield area for development.

The proposed amendment consists of mapping changes to re-designate the NWE study area to Urban Area and add a site specific policy area to recognize the expansion area.

A copy of draft ROPA 18 is included as Appendix 2.

Welland's Official Plan Amendment (OPA) 24

Welland adopted OPA 24 on December 17, 2019 and circulated the notice of adoption on December 26, 2019. This local amendment relates to the expansion of the urban boundary and amends the City's Official Plan policy related to boundary expansions.

OPA 24 relies on the approval of ROPA 18 in order to demonstrate conformity with Regional and Provincial policy. Therefore, the Region has retained approval authority for this OPA and will be modifying the amendment to be consistent with the ROPA. The Region will process the ROPA and OPA 24 concurrently and will bring both amendments forward for Council's consideration at the same time.

Next Steps

The Region is collecting comments from the public, prescribed agencies and other stakeholders. Any comments received prior to the authoring of this report are included in Appendix 3. Additional comments may be submitted at or following the public meeting. These comments will be reviewed and addressed prior to making a recommendation on this application.

The Region continues to work with the City on the Northwest Welland Secondary Plan.

Alternatives Reviewed

The *Planning Act, 1990* requires that public consultation be conducted as part of all amendments to municipal Official Plans. Notice has been provided for this Statutory Public Meeting as required by the legislation.

Relationship to Council Strategic Priorities

This proposal has the potential to support the following Council strategic priorities:

- Healthy and Vibrant Communities
- Responsible Growth and Infrastructure Planning

Other Pertinent Reports

PDS 6-2020 - City of Welland Application for Regional Official Plan Amendment

Prepared by:

Kirsten McCauley, MCIP, RPP
Senior Planner, Secondary Plans
Planning and Development Services

Recommended by:

Rino Mostacci, MCIP, RPP
Commissioner
Planning and Development Services

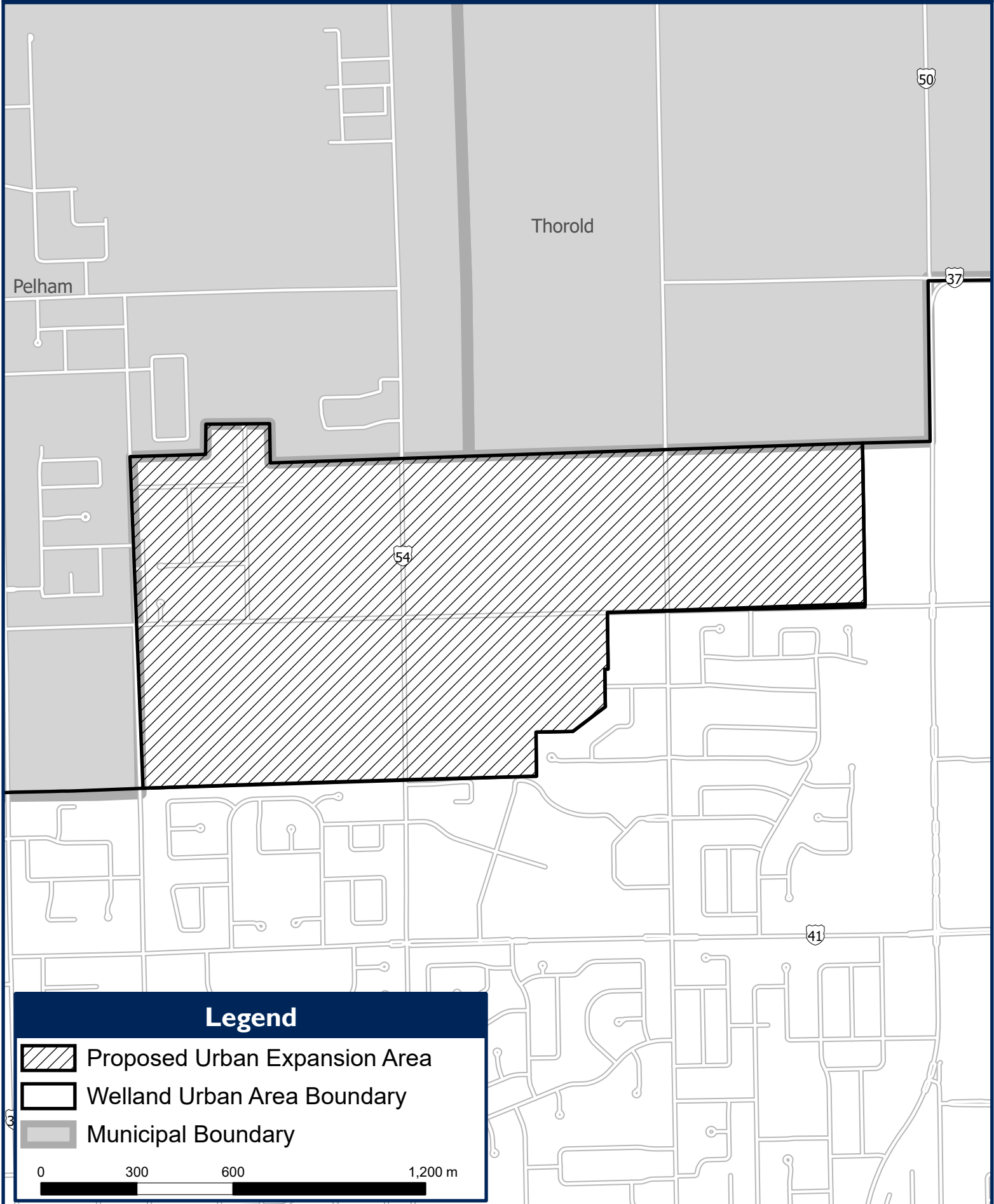
Submitted by:

Ron Tripp, P.Eng.
Acting Chief Administrative Officer

This report was prepared in consultation with Isaiah Banach, Manager of Long Range Planning, and reviewed by Doug Giles, Director of Community and Long Range Planning.

Appendices

Appendix 1	Study Area Map
Appendix 2	Draft ROPA 18
Appendix 3	Public and Agency Comments



DRAFT
Amendment No. 18
To The Official Plan
for the Niagara Planning Area

PART “A” – THE PREAMBLE

The preamble provides an explanation of the Amendment including the purpose, location, background, and basis of the policies and implementation, but does not form part of this Amendment.

- Title and Components
- Purpose of the Amendment
- Location of the Amendment
- Background
- Basis for the Amendment
- Implementation

PART “B” – THE AMENDMENT

The Amendment describes the modifications to the mapping of Official Plan for the Niagara Planning Area, which constitute Official Plan Amendment No. 18.

PART “C” – THE APPENDICES

The Appendices provide information regarding public participation and agency comments relevant to the Amendment, but do not form part of this Amendment.

PART “A” – THE PREAMBLE

TITLE AND COMPONENTS:

This document, when approved in accordance with Section 17 of the *Planning Act, 1990*, shall be known as Amendment 18 to the Official Plan of the Niagara Planning Area.

Part “A” – The Preamble, contains background information and does not constitute part of this Amendment.

Part “B” – The Amendment constitutes Amendment 18 to the Official Plan of the Niagara Planning Area.

Part “C” – The Appendices, does not constitute part of the Amendment. These Appendices contain information related to public involvement and agency comments associated with the Amendment.

PURPOSE OF THE AMENDMENT:

The purpose of this Amendment is to amend the urban boundary of the City of Welland to add approximately 190.3 hectares of lands known as the Northwest Welland and designate these lands as Designated Greenfield Area and Built-Up Area, as applicable.

LOCATION OF THE AMENDMENT:

The amendment affects land within the City of Welland, generally running along Quaker Road and bounded by the Town of Pelham and City of Thorold to the north, the rear lot lines of properties along Niagara Street to the east, Niagara College Welland Campus to the south and Line Avenue and Clare Avenue on the west.

BACKGROUND:

Welland’s urban settlement area boundary expansion process commenced in 2017, a two phase process involving justifying the boundary expansion and the creation of a Secondary Plan.

When the work plan started in 2017, the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (Growth Plan) only permitted municipalities to consider urban boundary expansions as part of the Region’s municipal comprehensive review (MCR). In Niagara’s case, the MCR is the new Regional Official Plan (ROP) which is targeting a 2021 completion. The Region agreed to the City’s work program on the basis that the required supporting information to justify a boundary expansion would feed into the Region’s new ROP in 2021.

The Growth Plan was amended in May, 2019 to include new policies which allow for consideration of urban boundary expansions of 40ha in advance of a municipal comprehensive review, subject to specific criteria. The Province later clarified through a November 12, 2019 letter that an upper-tier municipality may consider multiple 40 ha expansions so long as the proposal meets the applicable policies of the Growth Plan. The Province also confirmed that 40 ha boundary expansion applications would be considered by the Region as the approval authority in accordance with Section 17 of the Planning Act, 1990.

The application is supported by the following technical reports:

- Planning Justification Report
- Transportation Impact Study
- Functional Servicing Study
- Stormwater Management Report
- Subwatershed Study
- Cultural Heritage Assessment
- Agricultural Impact Assessment
- Financial Impact Assessment

The technical information has been used to evaluate the boundary expansion based on the preferred land use concept for the associated Secondary Plan.

In total, the amendment area comprises approximately 190.3 hectares, of which 31 hectares are protected environmental features within Natural Heritage System and approximately 58 hectares of the area is currently occupied by existing uses and designated as Built-Up Area on Schedule A of the City's Official Plan and the Province's Built Boundary Mapping. Therefore, approximately 102 hectares of the amendment area will contribute to future designated greenfield development.

BASIS FOR THE AMENDMENT:

- a) The Amendment was the subject of a Public Meeting held under the *Planning Act, 1990* on XXXXXXXXXXXX.
- b) Rationale (to be added following formal review and collection of comments)
- c) Based on the Region's review of the *Planning Act, 1990*, the Provincial Policy Statement, the Provincial plans, the Regional Official Plan, and public and agency consultation, Regional staff is of the opinion that the Amendment is XXXXXX.

IMPLEMENTATION:

Section 14, Implementation of the Official Plan for the Niagara Planning Area, shall continue to apply where applicable.

DRAFT

PART “B” – THE AMENDMENT

Amendment 18 To The Official Plan for the Niagara Planning Area

The Official Plan for the Niagara Planning area is amended as follows:

Map Changes (attached)

1. The following Regional Official Plan schedules are hereby amended to modify Niagara Region’s Urban Area Boundary for the City of Welland and redesignate the subject lands as shown on Schedule A to this amendment (attached) as follows:
 - a. Schedule A: Regional Structure is amended to extend the Urban Area Boundary to include the amendment area and to redesignate the Good General Agriculture Area to Built-Up Area and Designated Greenfield Area;
 - b. Schedule B: Agricultural Land Base is amended to redesignate the amendment area from Good General Agriculture Area to Urban Area;
 - c. Schedule C: Core Natural Heritage is amended to identify the amendment area as Urban Area;
 - d. Schedule E1: Transportation Infrastructure is amended to identify the amendment area as Urban Area;
 - e. Schedule E2: Strategic Cycle Network is amendment to identify the amendment area as Urban Area;
 - f. Schedule G1: Niagara Economic Gateway is amended to identify the amendment area as Gateway Economic Centre;
 - g. Schedule G2: Niagara Economic Gateway Employment Lands is amended to identify the amendment area as Urban Area; and
 - h. Schedule H: Source Water Protection is amended to identify the amendment area as Urban Area.

A key map of the subject lands will be provided for reference purposes and does not constitute part of the Amendment. (see Appendix 1)

Text Changes

Part II – New Policies

The following text is added as Policy 13.K.1.X:

Notwithstanding other policies of this Plan, the following applies to the lands generally located along Quaker Road and bounded by the Town of Pelham and City of Thorold to the north, the rear lot lines of properties along Niagara Street to the east, the former urban boundary and Niagara College campus to the south and Line Avenue and Clare Avenue on the west, and more specifically shown on the Key Map, as being within the urban boundary of the City of Welland:

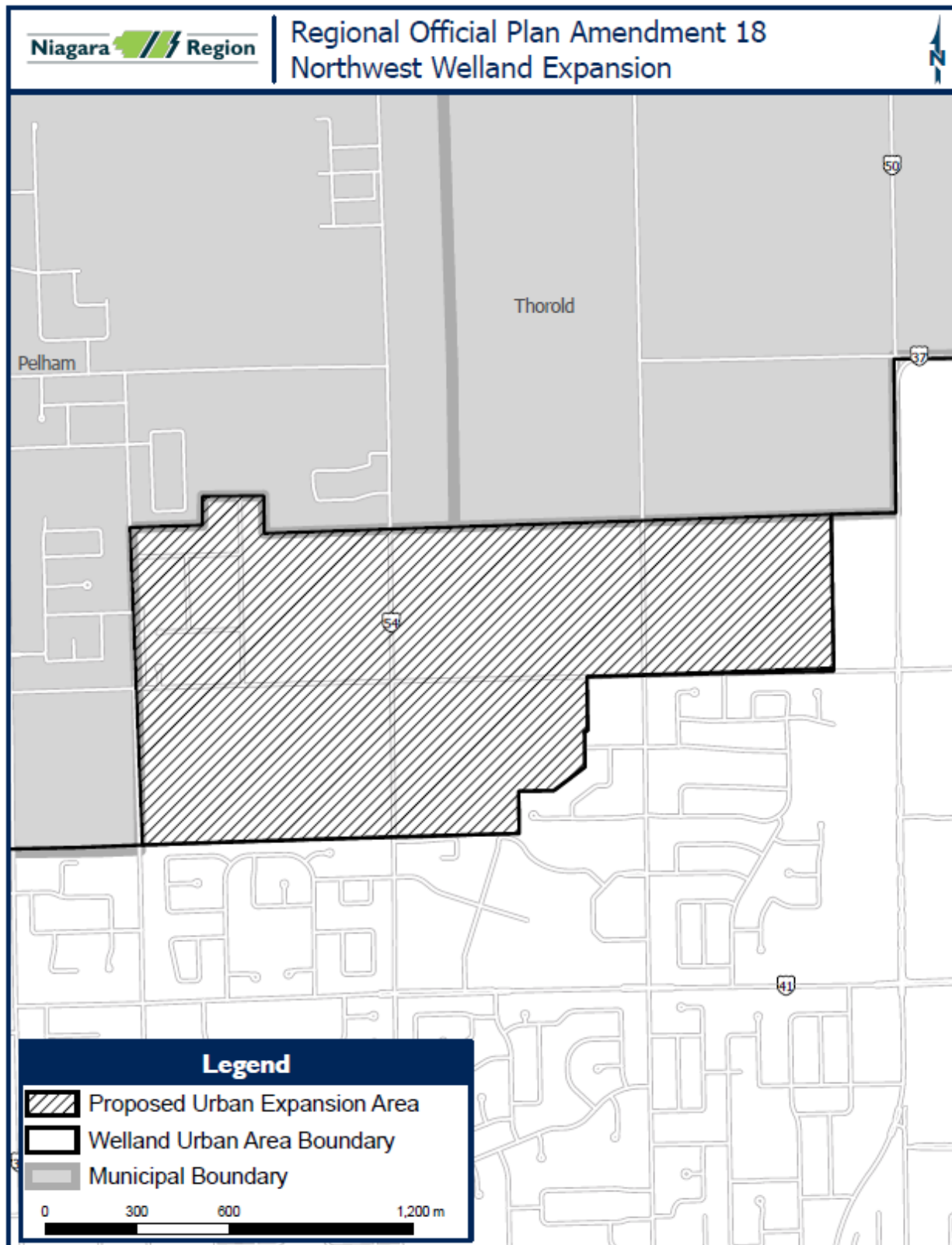
The land use permissions shall be in accordance with land use schedule and policies of the Northwest Welland Secondary Plan. No development shall occur prior to the approval of this Secondary Plan.

The boundaries of the Environmental Protection Area and Environmental Conservation Area shall reflect the approved Northwest Welland Secondary Plan, as informed by the Natural Heritage Review, and any other approval authority requirements.

The Northwest Welland lands and forecasted growth will be fully accounted for in the land needs assessment associated with the Region's new Official Plan (municipal comprehensive review).

Appendix 1:

The following is added to Section 13.K:



Appendix 3 – Public and Agency Comments

23Jan2020

To: Niagara Region Planning & Economic Development Committee
RE: Welland Urban Boundary Expansion Plan

I recently attended a round table session at the City of Welland 09Jan2020, where it was stated that further consideration for the urban boundary expansion plan was now with the Niagara Region Planning Committee for review.

As a resident of Welland whose property falls within the area of discussion, I wanted to express my full support of this expansion. Not only will it personally be of benefit for myself and my family, however also for the City of Welland. Opening up the area will allow for the city to grow and prosper.

As an interested party, I would appreciate to be informed of any decisions that will be made for the area.

With Regards,
Jack Passero

Dear Councillor Rino Mostacci,

We are writing to you as a land owner in the City of Welland that falls within the proposed North-West Urban Expansion (south side of Quaker Road, first property west of Quaker Road Public School) and a strong proponent of OPA #24 recently submitted by the Town of Welland for your consideration and approval.

With both population and job growth at our door step, it is hard to ignore the requirements that this explosion of economic growth will create. The time is now to move forward with a plan that makes sense for both the town and the region and we are confident that the one put forth on November 12th, 2019 is a strong one.

The plan submitted addresses many considerations and includes the following:

- Infrastructure and public service facilities needed would be financially viable over the full life cycle of these assets
- The subject area contains an elementary school and the NCDSB Headquarters, and abuts two other elementary schools and the Welland Niagara College Campus
- Is readily serviceable as no major extension or upgrading of water and sewer infrastructure is required
- The lands have been studied extensively for urban development purposes. It is time to move forward with adding the subject lands to the Welland urban area
- The subject lands are a logical extension of the existing urban area
- The City is experiencing growth pressures for development in the area

Thank you for your support and consideration and look forward to working with you and the team at Niagara Region on this exciting growth plan for the Golden Horseshoe.

Sincerely,
Josephine Martella and Mirella DiNardo

Dear Councillor,

My name is Roman Grocholsky, I represent several clients who own land in the proposed Welland Urban expansion and I am seeking your support to approve the City of Welland's application.

We would like to bring to the attention of Regional Council the history surrounding the City of Welland's urban area expansion request and the reasons for providing its support for the City's urban area expansion.

Over the years constraints on these lands, which negated them being included within the urban area boundary of the City, have been eliminated (servicing, location of the mid-peninsula corridor). As a result of the expansion of the Town of Pelham and related commitment on the part of the Region to service those lands, the northwest area of the City became economically feasible to service. The mid-peninsula corridor designation has been eliminated from this area.

Given the foregoing, the City, in 2017, initiated the preparation of a Secondary Plan so as to bring the lands in the northwest portion of the City within its urban area boundary. The Secondary Plan process is near completion resulting in the preparation of a Secondary Plan for the area as well as studies supporting the urban area expansion to include the northwest area of the City. This has further initiated a local Official Plan Amendment as well as a Regional Official Plan Amendment which must be undertaken and approved. To this end, City Council has approved the local Amendment and has directed that an Application to Amend the Regional Official Plan so as to align the City's urban area boundary with its municipal boundary in northwest Welland also be made.

The inclusion of lands in the City of Welland's northwest area to within its urban area boundary has a long history. Welland Council and Staff have, over the years, supported their inclusion for many reasons. This area has many characteristics of an urban area including water and sewer services and existing urban land uses. The services were put in as the result of a partnership between the Province, the Region and the City of Welland. Existing land uses within the subject lands include a mix of single-detached residential properties, institutional uses (3 elementary schools and a School Board

Headquarters), some fallow and active agricultural land, recreation/open space (former Welland Soccer Club), wooded areas and provincially significant wetlands.

Based on the above, we would request your support for, and approval of, the Application to Amend the Regional Official Plan to bring the northwest area of Welland to within its urban area boundary.

Roman Grocholsky
Sales Representative
Integrity | Experience | Results
Royal LePage NRC Realty, Brokerage

Hi Kirsten,

City Planning staff have reviewed Niagara Region's ROPA 18 and offer the following comments for your consideration.

The Welland Urban Area and the proposed Northwest urban expansion is not adjacent to and therefore does not impact the Niagara Falls Urban Area. Accordingly, the City of Niagara Falls has no objection to the proposed urban expansion.

Regards,

Brian Dick

Brian Dick, MCIP, RPP | Manager Policy Planning | Planning, Building & Development | City of Niagara Falls