
Subject: Statutory Public Meeting for Regional Official Plan Amendment 19 -
475-635 Canal Bank Street, Welland

Report to: Planning and Economic Development Committee

Report date: Wednesday, March 10, 2021

Recommendations

1. That Report PDS 15-2021 respecting Regional Official Plan Amendment No. 19 (ROPA 19) for the lands located at 475-635 Canal Bank Street, City of Welland **BE RECEIVED** for information; and
2. That Report PDS 15-2021 **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. 19 (ROPA 19), which is being held in accordance with the 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.
- On behalf of 555 Canal Bank Developments GP Inc., Armstrong Planning & Project Management submitted an application for a Regional Official Plan Amendment (ROPA) for lands located at 475-635 Canal Bank Street in the City of Welland. The ROPA proposes to remove the employment land designation from Schedule G2 to facilitate the redevelopment of the subject lands from vacant industrial (previously John Deere) to a residential and mixed-use subdivision.
- The redevelopment is processed as a land use change from employment lands to residential and mixed-use pursuant to new *Growth Plan* policies. Of importance to Regional staff, the applicant proposes to retain 285,000 square feet of space for non-residential uses.
- Since April 2019, the applicants have regularly consulted with Regional and City staff to scope the study requirements for their proposal and ensure a comprehensive and streamlined process for submission of their planning applications.

- In addition to the ROPA, the applicant has submitted concurrent planning applications to the City of Welland for a Local Official Plan Amendment (OPA 30), Zoning By-law Amendment and Draft Plan of Subdivision in relation to the same matter.
- Regional staff deemed the application complete on December 10, 2020. On January 23, 2021, the Region advertised this Statutory Public Meeting in newspapers that have general circulation surrounding the subject lands. The application was then circulated to prescribed agencies on January 25, 2021.
- The City and Region held a virtual joint Public Open House for both the City and Regional applications on February 11, 2021.

Financial Considerations

There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

The cost to process ROPA 19 is included in the review fee received for this application.

The Region may incur future costs as a result of the development of these lands in accordance with the Region's Brownfields Incentive Policies. More detailed information in this regard will be provided through a future report.

Analysis

The properties subject to this amendment are located at 475-635 Canal Bank Street in the City of Welland. The site was formerly occupied by John Deere (a farm equipment manufacturing operation from 1911 to 2009). The site has sat vacant for many years and is now considered a brownfield site.

ROPA 19 has been initiated by Armstrong Planning & Project Management on behalf of 555 Canal Bank Developments GP Inc. to remove the subject lands from the Employment Land designation on Schedule G2 – Niagara Economic Gateway Employment Lands. The proposed amendment is being requested to facilitate the redevelopment of the subject lands for residential and mixed use.

The proposed development consists of a mixed-use subdivision that would allow for a maximum development of 870 residential dwelling units consisting of a mix of detached, semi-detached and townhouse dwellings, a 4.0 hectare mixed-use employment block

containing 285,000 square feet of space, a stormwater management pond, an elementary school, parks and open space on approximately 74 hectares of land.

The location of the subject lands is shown in **Appendix 1**.

Background

The Region has been working on its Employment Strategy for several years. *A Place to Grow, Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe* (“*Growth Plan*”) requires the Region, in consultation with local partners, to identify Employment Areas for long term protection of clusters of employment lands and uses.

An Employment Area is defined in the *Growth Plan* as those areas designated in an official plan for clusters of business and economic activities including, but not limited to, manufacturing, warehousing, offices, and associated retail and ancillary facilities.

The term “employment lands” is used for parcels designated for employment uses within a local municipal official plan and/or zoning by-law. Employment lands may be located within or outside of an Employment Area. Employment lands located outside of Employment Areas typically have or are designated for employment uses that can be more easily integrated with other land uses.

Through the Region’s Employment Strategy work, City and Regional staff determined that the subject lands are not an Employment Area. Therefore, the ROPA application is not considered a conversion of employment area; rather, it is being processed as a land use change of employment land. Policy 2.2.5.14 of the *Growth Plan* is applicable:

“Outside of Employment Areas, development criteria should be established to ensure that the redevelopment of any employment lands will retain space for a similar number of jobs to remain accommodated on site.”

The above policy is critical in how the Region reviews and considers the proposed amendment. In this case, the Applicant proposes to retain 285,000 square feet of space to be accommodated on site.

After the initial local pre-consultation meeting on April 18, 2019, a working group comprised of Staff from the City and the Region along with the applicant and their consultants was formed to aid in the comprehensive master planning of this large-scale redevelopment. Regional staff actively participated in establishing the Terms of Reference (TOR) for the submission of required studies for the local and Regional

Official Plan Amendments, as well as the TOR for the Employment Area Market Review and Land Needs Study required to determine conformity with Provincial and Regional policy.

The ROPA application was deemed complete on December 10, 2020. Concurrent Local Official Plan and Zoning By-law Amendment and Draft Plan of Subdivision Applications have also been submitted to the City of Welland for this development.

The following documents and reports were submitted in support of the planning applications:

- Planning Justification
- Land Use Compatibility – Air Quality Assessment
- Environmental Impact Study
- Phase 1 – Environmental Site Assessment
- Phase 2 – Environmental Site Assessment
- Preliminary Functional Servicing Report
- Preliminary Functional Servicing Drawings
- Preliminary City Water and Wastewater Servicing Capacity Assessment
- Geotechnical Investigation Report
- Hydrogeological Investigation
- Employment Land Needs Study Update
- Employment Area Market Review and Land Needs Study
- Mixed-use Block & Dain City Economic Cluster Concept
- Noise and Vibration Feasibility Study
- Stormwater Management Report
- Traffic Impact Study
- Proposed Urban Design & Architectural Control Guidelines
- Pre and Post – Development Site Specific Water Balance

Copies of the supporting documents are available via the City's website under Planning Division at <https://www.welland.ca/reportsstudies.asp>. Information has been circulated to prescribed agencies and Regional staff for review. This technical information will be used to evaluate the ROPA application.

ROPA 19 consists of a mapping change to remove the lands from the Employment Land designation on Schedule G2 – Niagara Economic Gateway Employment Lands. It was also determined through staff's review of the technical studies that an additional amendment is required to refine/delineate the boundaries of the existing "Environmental

Conservation Area” and add “Environmental Protection Area” to the subject lands on Schedule C. These refinements are still under review and have not been shown on the draft ROPA schedule at this time. No text changes are proposed.

As noted above in *Growth Plan* policy 2.2.5.14, the proposed land use change must retain space for a similar number of jobs. A mixed use employment block is proposed to address this policy; as noted, the Applicant proposes to retain 285,000 square feet of space to be accommodated on site. The mixed use employment block will be designated as such in the local Official Plan and will include the space requirement within the amendment.

A copy of draft ROPA 19 is included as **Appendix 2**.

Next Steps

The Region participated in a joint Open House held by the City of Welland on February 11, 2021. The Open House included a presentation to provide information on the proposal and an opportunity to collect initial input. Four registered participants attended and provided their comments.

The Region is collecting comments from the public, prescribed agencies and other stakeholders. Comments received prior to the authoring of this report are included in **Appendix 3**. Additional comments will be reviewed and addressed prior to the future recommendation on this application.

The local Official Plan Amendment (OPA 30) relies on the approval of ROPA 19 in order to demonstrate conformity with Regional and Provincial policy. Therefore, the Region has retained approval authority for OPA 30. The local and Regional Official Plan Amendments will be processed concurrently and both amendments will be brought forward for Council’s consideration at the same time following Welland Council’s decision on OPA 30.

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 legislation.

Relationship to Council Strategic Priorities

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

- Supporting Businesses and Economic Growth
- Healthy and Vibrant Community
- Responsible Growth and Infrastructure Planning

Prepared by:

Lindsay Earl, MCIP, RPP
Senior Development Planner
Planning and Development Services

Recommended by:

Doug Giles, BES, MUP
Acting Commissioner
Planning and Development Services

Submitted by:

Ron Tripp, P.Eng.
Acting Chief Administrative Officer

This report was prepared in consultation with Lola Emberson, MCIP, RPP, Acting Manager, Development Planning and reviewed by Pat Busnello, MCIP, RPP, Acting Director Development Approvals

Appendices

Appendix 1	Location Map
Appendix 2	Draft ROPA 19
Appendix 3	Public and Agency Comments