
Subject: Recommendation Report- Regional Official Plan Amendment 19, 475-635 Canal Bank Street, Welland

Report to: Planning and Economic Development Committee

Report date: Wednesday, June 16, 2021

Recommendations

1. That Regional Official Plan Amendment No. 19 – 475-635 Canal Bank Street, Welland **BE APPROVED** (attached as Appendix 2 to Report PDS 27-2021);
2. That Local Official Plan Amendment No. 30 to the City of Welland Official Plan **BE APPROVED** (attached as Appendix 3 to Report PDS 27-2021);
3. That all parties **BE NOTIFIED** of Regional Council's decision in accordance with *Planning Act, 1990* requirements;
4. That staff **ISSUE** a declaration of final approval for Regional Official Plan Amendment No. 19 and Local Official Plan Amendment No. 30, 20 days after notice of Council's decision has been given, provided that no appeals have been filed against the decision, in accordance with *Planning Act, 1990* requirements; and
5. That Report PDS 27-2021 **BE CIRCULATED** to the City of Welland

Key Facts

- The purpose of this report is to provide Staff's recommendation for approval of Regional Official Plan Amendment No. 19 and Local Official Plan Amendment No. 30.
- 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 and to refine/delineate the boundaries of the existing "Environmental Conservation Area" and add "Environmental Protection Area" to the subject lands on Schedule C to facilitate the redevelopment of the subject lands from vacant industrial (previously John Deere) to a residential and mixed-use subdivision.

- The applications are being processed as a land use change from employment lands to residential and mixed-use pursuant to new *Growth Plan* policies which requires the development to retain 285,000 square feet of space for a similar number of jobs to remain accommodated on site.
- In addition to the ROPA, the applicant has submitted concurrent planning applications to the City of Welland for a Local Official Plan Amendment (LOPA 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. No comments were received from the public.
- A statutory public meeting for draft ROPA 19 was held March 10, 2021 and LOPA 30 on March 2, 2021 in accordance with *Planning Act*, 1990 requirements. No public delegations were made. All comments received on this matter have been reviewed and considered in staff's recommendation on ROPA 19 and LOPA 30.
- ROPA 19 and LOPA 30 conforms with and is consistent with Provincial policy.

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.

In the event Council's decision is appealed to the Local Planning Appeal Tribunal, additional resources would be needed. In such case, a further report on financial implications will be provided.

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.

Background

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

ROPA 19 has been initiated by Armstrong Planning & Project Management on behalf of 555 Canal Bank Developments GP Inc. The proposed amendment is being requested to facilitate the redevelopment of the subject lands for residential and mixed use consisting of a mixed-use subdivision (“Dain West”) 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 subject lands are located on the north side of Forks Road, east of the Welland Recreational Canal, west of the CN railway line, and south of the Townline Tunnel.

Regional Official Plan Amendment (ROPA) 19

ROPA 19 proposes to remove the subject lands from the Employment Land designation on Schedule G2 – Niagara Economic Gateway Employment Lands and to refine/delineate the boundaries of the existing “Environmental Conservation Area” and add “Environmental Protection Area” to the subject lands on Schedule C. No text changes are proposed.

A copy of ROPA 19 is included as Appendix 2.

Local Official Plan Amendment (LOPA) 30

Given the site specific nature of the ROPA (removing the Employment Land designation) which is a Regional interest, the Region has retained authority to approve LOPA 30.

The LOPA proposes to change the designation of the property in the City of Welland’s Official Plan from the existing Special Policy Area #4, General Industrial and Core Natural Heritage to Special Exception Area Low Density Residential, Community Commercial Corridor, Open Space and Recreation and Core Natural Heritage. The purpose of the Amendment in the Low Density Residential Special Exception

designation is to allow for a maximum density of 54 units per net hectare. The Community Commercial Corridor will allow, in addition to the uses permitted in this designation: supermarket, retail centre, retirement home, hotel, assembly hall, research and development establishment, art gallery, commercial parking lot, parking structure or garage, and street townhouses.

Regional staff submitted comprehensive review comments on the planning applications to the City in our letter dated April 26, 2021, including detailed conditions of draft plan approval for the subdivision.

LOPA 30 was adopted along with the concurrent draft plan of subdivision and zoning by-law amendment applications by the City of Welland on May 4, 2021 and circulated the notice of adoption on May 10, 2021. Regional staff worked with City staff and the applicant to ensure that the language incorporated into the LOPA satisfies and meets the intent of Regional and Provincial Policy. No modifications to the LOPA are required.

A copy of LOPA 30 is included as Appendix 3. City Staff's report P&B-2021-23 (as identified as Appendix IV in the LOPA) is found here <https://www.welland.ca/council/c2021/CA20210504.pdf>.

Analysis

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 LOPA and ROPA, 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 LOPA and Zoning By-law Amendment and Draft Plan of Subdivision Applications were also submitted to the City of Welland for this development which included the following supporting documents:

- Planning Rationale Report
- Land Use Compatibility – Air Quality Assessment
- Environmental Impact Study (EIS)
- 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

To address Regional comments (dated February 23, 2021) the applicant submitted the following additional documents and report addendums in support of the planning applications:

- Planning Rationale Report-Addendum
- Revised Final Report- Employment Area Market Review and Land Needs Study
- Revised Urban & Architectural Design Guidelines
- Environmental Impact Study (EIS) Addendum
- Response Matrix to Preliminary Regional Comments
- Revised Draft Plan of Subdivision

Copies of these reports/studies are available via the City's website under Planning Division at <https://www.welland.ca/reportsstudies.asp>.

The following is a summary of staff's detailed review and addresses comments and inquiries raised through the public meeting and agency circulation.

Provincial and Regional Policy

The subject lands are located within the Welland Urban Area, as designated in the Regional Official Plan (ROP). The Welland Urban Area is considered as a Settlement Area by the 2020 Provincial Policy Statement (PPS).

The ROP, PPS and A Place to Grow: Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (Growth Plan) together direct development to take place in urban areas and support intensified development where appropriate servicing and infrastructure exists. Both Regional and Provincial policy place an emphasis on intensification and infill as the

preferred form of development to help foster the development of complete communities that have a mix of land uses, employment opportunities, and are active-transportation and transit supportive.

The subject lands are located within the provincially designated Built-up Area of the City of Welland. Accordingly, the proposed residential growth will count towards the City's annual residential intensification target of 40% and therefore, generally conforms with and is consistent with Provincial and Regional growth management policy directions.

Employment Land Needs Assessment

In 2019-2020, City and Region staff met to discuss Welland's City-wide employment areas and lands and how that relates to the subject lands. City and Regional staff agreed that other lands in the City were "employment areas" (as that term is used in Provincial and Regional planning documents) and the subject lands were "employment lands" but not employment area.

The applicant made its submission on this basis: that it would be converting employment lands and not employment area. The Region refers to this as an employment "land use change" rather than an employment conversion which apply in other cases.

The agreement between the City and Region on the location of employment areas was critical to the processing of the current application. Since the City and Region have agreed on employment area locations, the City and Region were agreeable to processing this application as a land use change.

The applicant's materials, including the "*Employment Area Market Review and Land Needs Study*" (dated November 30, 2020) and "*Employment Land Needs Study Status Update*" (dated September 14, 2020) both prepared by IBI Group confirmed the sufficiency of employment areas in Welland to allow the land use change for the subject lands.

The key Growth Plan section for employment land use changes is policy 2.2.5.14, as follows:

"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 both ROPA 19 and LOPA 30. To address this policy, a 4.0 ha mixed-use employment block has been incorporated into the draft plan of subdivision in order to retain 285,000 square feet of space to be accommodated on site. This calculation is based on the premise that John Deere housed approximately 800 jobs during its peak operations. In order to justify this space requirement, Regional staff has reviewed and accepted the *Revised Final Report-Employment Area Market Review and Lands Needs Study* (dated February 24, 2021) prepared by IBI Group. Considering Welland's sufficient supply of Employment Area lands to support future growth, Regional Staff is satisfied that the removal of the subject lands from the Employment Land designation on Schedule G2 – Niagara Economic Gateway Employment Lands is appropriate and conforms with and is consistent with policies of the Growth Plan.

Regional staff notes that the Growth Plan policy requirement to retain space for a similar number of jobs has been adequately incorporated into LOPA 30 as well as the draft plan conditions to be incorporated through the future Subdivision Agreement.

Core Natural Heritage

Regional staff is satisfied that the *EIS* (dated September 2020) and *EIS Addendum* (dated April 2021) both by Terrastory Environmental Consulting Inc. demonstrates that the development can be accommodated without significant negative impact to the natural features on the subject property, provided that the mitigation measures outlined in the EIS and EIS Addendum are implemented, and that all required authorizations are received from applicable regulatory agencies. Both ROPA 19 and LOPA 30 have adequately addressed the features to be protected through the appropriate designations and delineation (through their respective schedules) identifying the significant woodland and natural heritage corridor as an Environmental Conservation Area (ECA) and the wetland areas and habitat of endangered species as an Environmental Protection Area (EPA).

Servicing

Regional staff note that servicing will be under the jurisdiction of the City of Welland and will require the construction of water, sanitary and storm services for the proposed development area. The Regional Dain City Sewage Pumping Station (SPS) and forcemain service the area for Dain City which includes these lands. The Dain City sanitary system is impacted by significant peak wet weather flows. The City has started a sanitary flow monitoring program to analyze where inflows are occurring and what measures are required to reduce inflow to help alleviate past flooding to the Dain City

Pumping Station. Reduction of these wet weather flows is essential in order to provide adequate servicing capacity for this development.

There is currently a construction project underway to replace the entire Dain City SPS forcemain which is being completed in five (5) phases. Phases 1 and 2 have been completed and Phase 3 is underway which will see the forcemain completed to the Canal Bank Bridge. The remaining two phases are currently scheduled to be completed in 2021, pending budget approvals. It is anticipated that the new forcemain will be able to service the ultimate build out of Dain City as currently proposed.

Additionally, a sustainability upgrade project for the Dain City SPS is currently underway in the design phase with construction forecasted for 2022 with an average dry weather flow of 5 L/s and a firm capacity of 115 L/s available. The sanitary flows at the Dain City SPS will be monitored on a continual basis and an upgrade to the capacity will be implemented in the future depending on actual flows received.

The applicant is aware that approval of this subdivision does not include a commitment of servicing allocation by Niagara Region and that verification of the available capacity in the Dain City Sewage Pumping Station and Ontario Street Sewage Pumping Station sewershed be completed prior to final registration of each phase of the development to the satisfaction of Niagara Region.

Land Use Compatibility –Air Quality

The existing industries surrounding the proposed development were evaluated with respect to air quality in accordance with the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks (MECP) D-6 Guidelines. The report identified that Verbio Diesel Canada is a renewable fuel facility located immediately to the west of the subject property, which is located within the recommended 300 metre area of influence from the Class II facility. Within their current Environmental Compliance Approval (ECA) the biodiesel facility is required to meet the MECP guidelines for air quality contaminants at their property line. While the introduction of the mixed-use employment block could trigger the facility to re-assess compliance at new receptor locations, the current proposal of low rise commercial buildings are not anticipated to trigger compliance issues for the facility. The location of the Open Space block within the design of the subdivision acts as a buffer between the development and the industrial uses. As such, the surrounding Class II industry is not anticipated to be of concern from an air quality perspective.

The adjacent industry was informed of the existing planning applications and given an opportunity to comment. Verbio provided a letter to the City that raised concerns that

the proposed residential uses could impact their operation and planned future expansions as well as the limit of the Class 4 Noise Designation on the adjacent property. To address this, City staff and the applicant met with Verbio, which resulted in their concerns being satisfied that the proposed residential construction would not impact the ability for Verbio to expand their facility.

Noise Impacts

The subject lands are situated adjacent to an industrial facility, operational railway lines to the east and south, and a Provincial Highway (#58A) to the north. As these uses represent significant sources of noise and vibration, a *Noise and Vibration Feasibility Study* prepared by HGC Engineering (dated August 31, 2020) was submitted in support of the applications.

Regional staff notes that the applicant has worked with the City prior to submission of this Study to evaluate the most appropriate solutions for noise mitigation to ensure that required mitigation would not compromise the layout/design of the proposed development. The City of Welland, as the approval authority for the Draft Plan of Subdivision, has applied the Class 4 designation in this instance, which provides increased sound thresholds for stationary source noise impacts. Only portions of the site are proposed to be designated as a Class 4 acoustical environment which includes the first row of dwellings at the far easterly lot line immediately adjacent to the rail line.

Based on the Consultants evaluation, sound level predictions for transportation based noise were made at the worst-case location. With no mitigation, future sound levels are expected to exceed MECP guideline limits at some of the dwellings within the development. To address stationary and transportation noise, an acoustic earth berm and noise barrier will provide beneficial acoustical shielding for future dwellings, in which the sound level predictions will be well within the MECP's sound level criteria. In addition, other mitigation measures (i.e. warning clauses) have been recommended to protect the proposed development from noise impacts. Overall, the results of the assessment indicate that it is feasible to achieve the MECP sound level guidelines at the proposed residential development provided the recommendations for noise control are implemented.

CN Rail was informed of the existing planning applications and given an opportunity to comment and provided comment and/or conditions of approval that will be incorporated into the draft plan of subdivision. Through this review, CN Rail has identified minimum requirements for setbacks and vibration limits allowed on lands adjacent to the railway; they have also requested that a number of different warning clauses be included in all

agreements of purchase and sale. In addition, CN Rail requires that an environmental easement be registered on title to lots adjacent to the rail line to act as a warning to all future purchasers. Safety on the rails is regulated by the Ministry of Transport. They set speed limits on rail lines based on type and location of rail and have recently issued an order to reduce speed limit restrictions in metropolitan areas; these restrictions, along with the warning clauses and setback limits imposed by CN Rail improve rail safety for new and existing developments in proximity of rail lines.

Environmental Site Assessment

The PPS requires that contaminated sites be remediated as necessary to ensure there will be no adverse effects to the proposed use. Regional staff are aware that previous Environmental Assessments were completed on the subject lands along with a Risk Assessment (RA) and Record of Site Condition (RSC) filed in 2004. However, as O.Reg. 153/04 has been amended since the filing of these reports, additional studies are underway to update and supplement the data from the previous reports as remediation is ongoing on the subject property. The filing of a RSC remains a requirement prior to building permits being issued for the proposed development.

Consultation Summary

Statutory Public Meeting

The *Planning Act, 1990*, requires that a statutory public meeting be held for all amendments to Official Plans. A public meeting was held on March 10, 2021 to present a draft of ROPA 19 to Planning and Economic Development Committee and receive comments from the public.

The Notice of Public Meeting was advertised on January 23, 2021 in newspapers having general circulation in and around the subject lands. Notice of the meeting was also provided to prescribed agencies and those that had already provided comments. Several written submissions were received pre and post public meeting from commenting agencies. No comments were received from the public at the Public Meeting for ROPA 19.

Applicant's Response to Committee's Inquiries Raised at the Public Meeting

The applicant submitted a *Planning Rational Report Addendum* by Armstrong Planning & Project Management (dated April 7, 2021) to address the inquiries raised by Committee Members at the ROPA 19 Public Meeting as outlined below.

Sustainability

There are a number of different opportunities to incorporate sustainable design when developing a new subdivision. These range from location (within the built boundary) to neighbourhood design (increased connections, low impact development design, etc.) and use of green infrastructure. The Dain West subdivision is strategically located within the existing built-up area of Welland. It adds significant density and makes good use of existing infrastructure (certain upgrades may be needed). The site is currently identified as a brownfield and through the proposed redevelopment will be remediated to residential standards (confirmed through filing of a record of site condition as regulated by the Province). This will eliminate potential impact that the contaminated lands may have otherwise had on the community (including the adjacent canal). The site will include a well-connected active transportation network. As part of the proposed trail network, the applicant is also proposing educational signage that provides users with information about their surroundings and the unique features present on site. New trees will be planted along street frontages providing shade and reducing the overall heat-island impact. Native species are being proposed along the street and in the stormwater management pond to ensure new trees work well with the existing woodlots (being protected and incorporated into the overall site). Engineering design may incorporate low impact development tools where possible, including the disconnection of downspouts, and use of extra deep topsoil on lots to encourage infiltration. The report states that the applicant (Empire Communities) builds homes that use resources (like energy and water) more efficiently than standard house construction.

Accessibility

The proposed subdivision is designed to incorporate sidewalks and rolled curbs to encourage accessibility throughout the site and facilitate access for people of all abilities to parks and other neighbourhood amenities. Any trails built through the significant woodlots are proposed as woodchip trails and not as a paved surface. This is a specific design requirement as it is meant to minimize impact of the trail on the natural features and function of and within the woodland.

In addition, the applicant offers certain upgrades to purchasers and can accommodate specific accessibility needs within new homes as requested (through upgrades) by any purchaser at time of sale.

Density & Affordability

The report states that the proposed subdivision proposes to maintain a density of over 69 people and jobs per hectare and provides for a variety of housing forms and lot sizes. Affordability is incorporated into the community design through the provision of offering a range in lot sizes and housing types. This includes townhouses 6.1m, small lot detached 8.2m, 9.1m, 10.1 m. 10.4 m and 11m lot sizes (and associated house size). This allows for a variety of price points throughout the subdivision.

Tax Revenues

The subject site is currently a vacant industrial site. These lands have been vacant for over 10 years (since 2009) and have been generating minimal tax revenue. For example, tax revenue collected on a vacant (large) industrial site valued at approximately \$4.5 million dollars, the annual tax payable is approximately \$176,000. If this site were to be occupied with another industrial use and the value became \$10 million dollars, the annual tax payable would be approximately \$500,000.

Although individual tax revenue from future residential units is not known (as it is based on the homes appraised value), the City of Welland has posted that the average residential property, with an assessment value of \$209,864, generates \$3,358.23 in annual taxes (2020) including \$1,661.57 for the City of Welland, \$1,375.57 for Niagara Region and \$321.09 for the Board of Education. It is likely, the new homes built on the subject lands will be assessed at a higher value (their value would be above the average assessment value for Welland) and therefore will pay higher taxes. However, assuming no change to average house cost the proposed site would generate just under \$3 million dollars in annual tax revenue. In addition, the commercial block designed to accommodate 280,000 sq ft of mixed-use employment will generate additional tax revenue (not included in \$3 million dollar tax revenue). Overall, if the proposed subdivision is built out it would generate more taxes than if the site remains vacant or is developed for industry.

Timing of Construction

The applicant has indicated that construction works could occur as early as summer 2021. One of the fundamental elements of the proposed subdivision is the realignment of Canal Bank Street. If the proposed applications are approved, the applicant will proceed with the realignment works before other subdivision works get underway. Doing this improves access to the site and community early on; it also allows for the creation of the new waterfront park. Timing for the build out of the park will depend on when

earthworks, servicing and home building can commence as it will be incorporated into subdivision works.

555 Canal Bank Developments GP Inc. also owns lands at 401 Canal Bank (with access from Forks Road known as “Dain East” Subdivision). These lands were recently approved for up to 1,405 residential units, new parks, an elementary school, open space and a stormwater management pond. Earthworks for this site is expected to start spring 2021; servicing is anticipated to start this fall with home building starting in September 2022. Through ROPA 19, development of the subject site will be phased in to compliment development of the proposed Dain East subdivision.

Brownfield Remediation & Financial Incentives

The applicant has identified that brownfield remediation costs for this site are expected to be approximately \$16-18.5 million dollars. In support of site remediation, the applicant is in discussion with the City and the Region to better understand how redevelopment of this brownfield site could benefit from the incentive programs offered by both governments. If applicable, this will be brought forward to Committee and Council through a future staff report.

Active Transportation & Parking

The applicant is working with the City of Welland to determine appropriate street cross sections throughout the proposed subdivision and has incorporated a variety of opportunities for active transportation which include; design to include a grid-like road network, sidewalks on one or both sides of the street to improve and facilitate movement, including pedestrian traffic. Pedestrian connections in the form of a small park and two walkways provide additional direct pedestrian (or bike) connections to Canal Bank Street encouraging the use of active transportation as an alternate method of getting around. The applicant has indicated that there is opportunity to build approximately 4km of new trails throughout the site making connections to existing environmental areas (to be protected) and to the existing waterfront trail network. Canal Bank Street will be widened to a 30m right of way adjacent to the site (it is currently approximately 20m wide). As part of this realignment, Canal Bank Street will be urbanized and there will be sidewalks on both sides. The 4.0-hectare mixed-use employment block will have provisions for bike parking and pedestrian movement. It is believed that through construction of the Dain East subdivision and the proposed Dain West subdivisions that this significant population base may be enough to support the extension of existing transit routes into Dain City. As such, the site represents a significant improvement to the active transportation network in Dain City.

The issue was raised as to how additional community parking would be incorporated on site. Users and visitors to the South Niagara Rowing Club were using the existing vacant parking lots on site during large events. These private parking lots are a remnant of the old manufacturing plant and although there is no intent to replace the significant amount of parking they offer; the addition of new public streets within the proposed subdivision and the widening of Canal Bank Street will create new, legal, opportunities for on-street parking in proximity to the South Niagara Rowing Club. Furthermore, as part of the detailed design for the proposed Canal Bank Street right-of-way, the applicant is also looking to formalize a layby for safe, drop-off and pick-ups along Canal Bank Street.

Public and Agency Comments

All comments received have been reviewed and considered in the Region's recommendation prior to finalizing ROPA 19. The comments received are attached as Appendix 4.

Correspondence received from prescribed agencies as part of the circulations for both ROPA 19 and LOPA 30 generally offered no comments/objections or to ensure that applicable guidelines be adhered to through the development approval process. Staff have taken the necessary steps to include appropriate conditions through the draft plan approval to be incorporated into the future Subdivision Agreement.

The City advised that other than Verbio, no public comments were received as a result of the circulation for LOPA 30.

Conclusion

In making this recommendation, the Region has relied on the justification of the supporting technical studies. Through our detailed review of these studies and associated development applications, which is the culmination of a collaborative process involving the proponent and City and Regional staff, Regional staff are supportive of the redevelopment of 475-635 Canal Bank Street as the proposed development will provide for the remediation and clean-up of this underutilized brownfield site.

The Growth Plan policy requirement has been adequately incorporated into LOPA 30 through the inclusion of a 4.0 ha mixed-use employment block in order to retain 285,000 square feet of space to be accommodated on site. Regional staff determined that City of Welland has an appropriate supply of Employment Area lands to support future growth.

As such, Regional Staff support ROPA 19 in the removal of the subject lands from the Employment Land designation on Schedule G2 – Niagara Economic Gateway Employment Lands as it conforms with and is consistent with policies of the Growth Plan.

Through staff's review of the technical studies regarding the Core Natural Heritage Features, ROPA 19 will also refine/delineate the boundaries of the existing "Environmental Conservation Area" and add "Environmental Protection Area" to the subject lands on Schedule C.

In conclusion, staff recommends that Regional Council approve ROPA 19 and LOPA 30 as the amendments represent good planning.

Alternatives Reviewed

Alternative Option:

Council could choose not to approve ROPA 19 and LOPA 30. This alternative is not recommended because Staff are satisfied that the applicant has met the Provincial policy requirements and have sufficient justification in its materials and planning opinion to support the land use change. The Region has worked with the applicant as well as City of Welland staff to ensure a streamlined approach to the complete submission and review of the development applications. Should Council choose not to approve ROPA 19 and LOPA 30, Council's decision could be appealed to the Local Planning Appeal Tribunal (LPAT), in which additional financial resources may be needed.

Relationship to Council Strategic Priorities

ROPA 19 and LOPA 30 has the potential to support the following Council strategic priorities:

- Supporting Businesses and Economic Growth- the Growth Plan policy requirement to retain space for a similar number of jobs has been adequately incorporated into the development through the inclusion of a 285,000 square feet mixed-use employment block to serve the community and future residents.
- Healthy and Vibrant Community- the proposed mixed-use subdivision will provide for future growth within the Urban Built Up area in the City of Welland. The subdivision has been proactively planned and supported through the various studies to encompass a complete community.

- Responsible Growth and Infrastructure Planning- there is infrastructure available to service the proposed mixed-use subdivision. It is anticipated that the new forcemain will be able to service the ultimate build out of Dain City as currently proposed. Therefore, the subdivision will allow for orderly growth to occur and to utilize this infrastructure in a fiscally responsible manner.

Other Pertinent Reports

- PDS 15-2021- Statutory Public Meeting for Regional Official Plan Amendment 19 - 475-635 Canal Bank Street, Welland

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Appendices

Appendix 1	Location Map
Appendix 2	ROPA 19
Appendix 3	LOPA 30
Appendix 4	Public and Agency Comments