



NIAGARA OFFICIAL PLAN

Appendix 4 - PDS 41-2021

Niagara Falls and Fort Erie Expansion Area-wide Context Review

Settlement Area Boundary Review

Niagara Region
December 2021

GROWING REGION



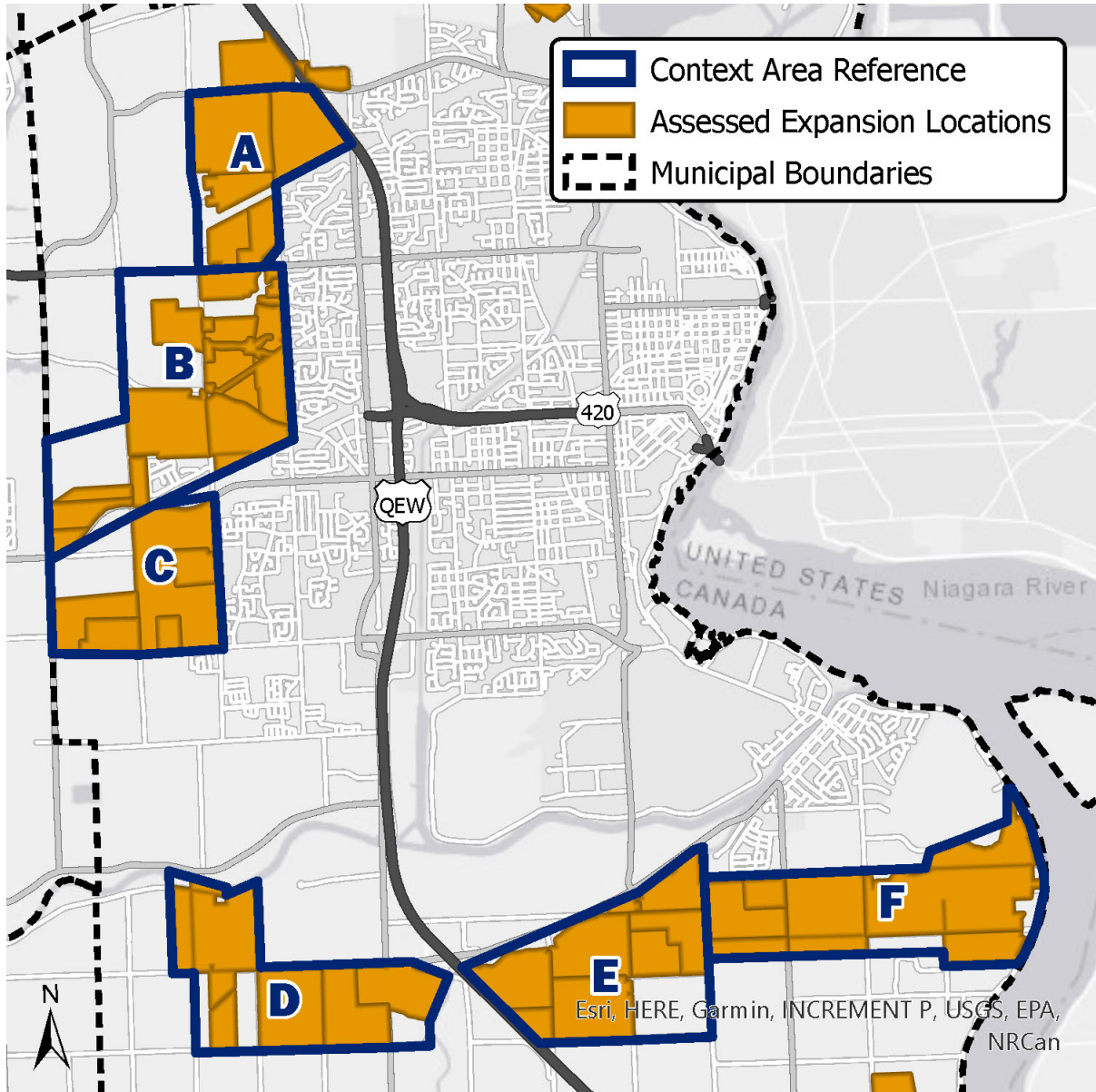
Contextual Commentary

The following offers planning commentary for areas around the Niagara Falls and Fort Erie urban settlement areas at a larger scale. This is intended to provide contextual insight for the broader areas and the challenges or opportunities that were reflected during the course of the SABR review conducted by Regional staff.

Context is offered that may otherwise help provide an understanding of areas chosen for expansion recommendation and is not intended to detract or promote other areas in a supplemental manner towards future considerations, having not been recommended.

The Growth Plan directs that expansions seek “the most appropriate location”. To this end, a number of considerations must be taken into account while planning for growth. The following characterizes the lands and location from an objective perspective of professional planning staff, informed by input from other disciplines as part of the Review Team work.

Area reference maps are included at the beginning of each municipal section to identify general areas being described.



Niagara Falls – Context for Area A

This area is bounded by Mountain Road to the north; Garner Road to the west; Thorold Stone Road to the south and returning east to the existing urban settlement area boundary.

The broader area described above is generally free of significant NES feature constraint, however does have some limited natural features present in the way of woodland and wetlands. Lands slope to the northwest away from the existing settlement area. There are no significant groundwater recharge areas and minimal identification of being within a highly vulnerability aquifer zone. The Greenbelt /

Niagara Escarpment Plans form a hard limit to expansion consideration on the north side of Mountain Road.

Soils are predominantly Class 2 and 3 which are the class soils on the north and west sides of the existing Niagara Falls settlement area. There are a couple small pockets of Class 1 (on hydro lands) and also Class 5 associated with the watercourse that transects the area. Open fields are generally in production of cash/feed cropping activity with very little lands in a fallow state.

The area is generally made up of larger parcels of land which has benefit during secondary planning and development phases in terms of landowner/developer cooperation. There are a series of rural residences clustered along Garner road close to the Hydro corridor. Commercial, institutional residential uses are present in the northwest close to the QEW, otherwise remaining lands are free of development.

Transportation connections are good with concession roads actively traveled. Access to the QEW is immediate. Integration with existing community lands would be by boundary / concession roads due to the physical assets (Highway and Hydro Corridor) in place.

Aggregate resources are mapped as being present for approximately half of this area and the active operations just west of this location are part of a larger extraction operation. Licensed lands abut in the northwest of this larger area impacting potential consideration for community expansion for a large portion.

Servicing the broader area is feasible and appropriate strategies and upgrades would be required.

For the portion of this larger area adjacent to the QEW, approximately 65 ha is recommended for inclusion into the settlement boundary. Influence of aggregates and operations on the broader area was a consideration for remainder of lands when other options are present elsewhere around the settlement boundary.

Additional commentary on the portion of lands recommended for inclusion can be found in Report PDS 41-2021.

Niagara Falls – Context for Area B

This area is generally bounded by Thorold Stone Road to the north; Beechwood Road to the west; south to Upper's Lane over to Townline Road; south to Lundy's Lane; easterly to Kalar Road; and returning north to Thorold Stone Road.

This broader area has more NES features than Area A, primarily associated with the Shriner's Creek and Beaverdams Creek watercourse tributaries that branch out within the larger area. Two areas of ownership are identified as NPCA Conservation Areas extending across the Kalar-Garner concession and limiting any potential for north-south community connection within.

There are a limited number of wetlands and woodlands dispersed throughout; some significant, some not. The entire area is free of any significant groundwater recharge identification and does have limited identification of being on a highly vulnerable aquifer zone. Topographically the general drainage is heading west towards the Welland Canal.

Soils are predominantly Class 2 and 3 which are the predominant class soils on the north and west sides of the existing Niagara Falls settlement area. Some Class 4 and 5 soils are present and associated along the watercourses mentioned. Most open fields are in production of cash/feed cropping activity with little lands in a fallow state. Some agricultural infrastructure is identifiable with one displaying active livestock activity while others show signs of being idle or in use of feed/hay or equipment storage.

Parcels in this area range in size with many being larger concession lot farms in the west and smaller when in proximity to the existing settlement area. Two hydro corridors and a rail corridor are present and transect the larger area at north, central and south.

Transportation in the area is generally good with concession roads being well traveled and linking some of the more heavily travelled east-west roads (Lundy's Lane RR20 and Thorold Stone Road RR57). Beaverdams Road acts to bisecting the larger area in a diagonal direction as well.

Aggregate resources are present in the westerly side of this area with a proposed quarry inside the westerly municipal boundary.

Servicing for the broader area is feasible and appropriate strategies and upgrades would be required.

From a community planning perspective, and although there are lands that would be suitable for development, none of the lands within this area have been recommended for expansion. One of the considerations is the contiguous requirement of expansion occurring off the existing settlement boundary.

A number of these properties are dependent on other lands being included before consideration can be extended. The location of the natural features and limits of the Conservation Areas lands fragment the area next to the settlement area. This combined with generally smaller parcels along the settlement boundary and the implications of a large quarry operation in the southern reach have been considered.

Niagara Falls – Context for Area C

This area is generally bounded by Lundy's Lane to the north; Townline Road to the west; McLeod Road along the south and Kalar along the east.

This area is one of the least constrained from a NES perspective with very limited natural features present. Channel drainage through the existing golf course and another tributary of Beaverdams Creek have some associated floodplain. The lands are not shown to have any significant groundwater recharge areas or falling within a high vulnerability aquifer. Topographically the lands are generally flat with a height of land located centrally, splitting the surface drainage direction into north and south directions.

Soils for the area are predominantly Class 2 and 3, with some Class 5 associated with the tributary drainage at the north end. This is not unlike all areas around the Niagara Falls settlement area where Class 2 and 3 are the predominant. There are no active livestock farming operations observed within the area with a single small hobby farm on the north side of Nichol's Lane.

Parcel fabric in this area are large in size, much of which is adjacent to the existing settlement boundary at east, south and portions north with limited number of small lots likely created from farm lot severances.

From a transportation perspective, concession roads are well travelled and provide plenty of access opportunities for local road networks. Lundy's Lane (RR20) at the north limit provides major east-west movement as does McLeod to the south. McLeod provides access to the QEW a short distance away to the east.

This area does not have aggregate resources identified as underlying with a small portion of lands at northwest potentially falling within an area of influence to the planned quarry northwest of this area.

Servicing this area is feasible with flows travelling to the new (planned) South Niagara Falls wastewater treatment plant on the east side of the QEW at the Welland River.

From a community planning perspective, this is a larger, rectangular area that can accommodate a comprehensive secondary plan. Approximately 160 ha of this area are recommended for inclusion. Additional commentary on the portion of lands recommended for inclusion can be found in Report PDS 41-2021.

Niagara Falls – Context for Area D

This area is generally described as being lands south of the Welland River; east of Morris Road; north of Carl Road; over to the QEW.

This area has more NES presence than some of the other areas reviewed and sees some larger natural feature identified in the way of significant woodland and provincially significant wetlands. The Provincial Natural Heritage System (“PNHS”) identification is shown around the outer perimeter of this area being described with some identification shown along the Welland River and Lyons Creek within.

There are other woodlands and other wetlands noted as present as well. A small portion of the area is identified as falling within a significant groundwater recharge area, however the area does not show any mapped zones of high vulnerability aquifer presence. Topographically, the area is very gently sloped to the tributaries that transect the broader area that ultimately flow east before joining the Welland River and Lyons Creek respectively. The height of land is located south of the existing settlement area along Biggar Road.

Soils for the area are almost entirely Class 3 with small amounts of Class 4 and 5 associated with watercourses. There are no active livestock farming operations observed within the area described and calculation for those are not impacting the area. All open fields within the area appear to be actively cash/feed cropping where accessible.

Parcel fabric includes a number of large concession lot sized properties with some smaller rural residential lots focused in one location west of Montrose Road at Carl Road.

Transportation connection is good with the QEW immediately adjacent and accessible to this area. North-south crossings of the Welland River will rely on Montrose and the QEW with alternate crossing being Stanley Avenue farther east and Moyer Road just inside the Welland boundary. Primary access into and out of the area will be via QEW as the new Hospital is completed and the destination traffic associated with this major institutional use will draw inter-municipally and even from out of Region.

There are no aggregate resources identified along the southern limits of the Niagara Falls settlement area and the closest active operation is located in the northern end of the municipality.

This area will be serviced by the new South Niagara Falls wastewater treatment plant planned for Grassy Brook, just on the east side of the QEW and very close in terms of proximity. It could be anticipated that servicing to this location would be made available together with the hospital construction, so not too long from present day.

From a community planning perspective this area is of higher interest as it will host a major destination (hospital), providing opportunities for additional growth and development to support the hospital and increase residential, mixed use and community employment. Not all lands described in this area are suitable for inclusion. The natural features present primarily in the westerly and southerly portions are more constrained than areas in the north and east. It can also be noted that much of the westerly portion south of the Welland River, are within an area of influence from Cytex Industries, which has challenged and constrained development within proximity to their operations.

While some of these constraints exist in the area and present potential challenges, the PNHS is used for guidance on where more consideration is being given. In this instance there remains a considerable portion of lands directly south of the new hospital site that are outside of the PNHS and can be supported for inclusion into the urban area. More detailed study will be required to ensure features and function of any natural features are appropriately mitigated or protected. Approximately 85 ha are recommended for inclusion in this location.

Additional commentary on the portion of lands being recommended can be found in Report PDS 41-2021.

Niagara Falls – Context for Area E

This area is generally bounded by the QEW on the west; Lyons Creek to the North; Ort Rd on the east and Marshall Road to the south.

For this area on the south side of Lyons Creek the NES identifies a number of significant features in terms of wetlands and woodlots. The PNHS is present within the area and captures some of the larger significant features with some of these same features appearing in more isolated instances outside of the PNHS. To a lesser degree features classified as other wetland and woodlots are present but not to the same extent as significant.

There are a couple tributaries traversing the area that ultimately flow into Lyons Creek. The easterly edge of the area being described identifies a broad swath of PNHS and serves as the only direct PNHS system link to Lyons Creek between the Niagara River and the QEW with system linkage to PNHS further south and along Ushers Creek and the Niagara River.

Soils for the area are almost entirely Class 3 with small amounts of Class 5 associated closely with watercourses. There are two locations in the southern part close to Marshall Road hosting poultry operations but there are no other livestock farming operations observed within this rather large area. Almost all open fields are in production for cash/feed cropping but there are some fields in a fallow or idle state.

Much of the parcel fabric is comprised of large agricultural properties with few farm lot severances. Rural residential clusters are present just south of Lyons Creek where the crossings (Beck and Stanley Roads) are located to access the area.

Transportation networks exist in the area by way of concession roads. While exposure to the QEW is good and would be of interest for employment, the practical nature of gaining appropriate crossing of Lyons Creek for industrial traffic would present challenges to remain close to the interchange. Existing bridge improvement or additional/relocated bridge crossings may be needed to improve conditions. The bridge crossings may require improvement or reconstruction to accommodate growth.

There are no aggregate resources identified along the southern limits of the Niagara Falls settlement area and the closest active operation is located in the northern end of the municipality.

This area could be serviced by the new South Niagara Falls wastewater treatment plant planned for Grassy Brook, however strategies and studies for having flow reach the plant would be required. There are no truck services presently existing or planned for the area and should any consideration be given, a much broader area should be studied and include the Chippawa community downstream for redirect to the new plant.

From a community planning perspective, accessing this area for any major development will require transportation network upgrade in terms of crossings for Lyons Creek. Locations for bridge crossings should also be a consideration if lands along the QEW were to be a consideration for employment use.

With no sanitary trunk services in this area, strategies for collection that would include Chippawa downstream and then return upstream on the north side of Lyons Creek to the new wastewater treatment plant would need to be studied and while feasible, has not been a consideration in prior MSP work of the Region.

Niagara Falls – Context for Area F

This area is generally bounded at the north by the existing settlement area of Niagara Falls between the Niagara River and Ort Road with Weaver Road generally being the southerly limit.

The NES mapping shows presence of significant features in the way of provincially significant wetlands and significant woodlands. Some of these features are captured within the PNHS with a many sizable features represented outside (this does not reduce their significance or protection). Notably, there are larger tracts of woodlands both significant and other that extend along the Weaver Road corridor towards the Niagara River for the area being described.

The Usher's Creek tributary is also captured within the PNHS that lead into the NPC Legends Golf Course where PNHS is most prominent. Pockets of other wetlands and woodlands are also present in locations that generally follow surface drainage or hedgerows on other lands not within PNHS that currently fragment unconstrained

lands, however would be subjected to further detailed studies if consideration given to this area for inclusion.

Soils for the area are almost entirely Class 3 with small amounts of Class 5 associated closely with the Usher's Creek and Hunters Drain watercourses. There are no active livestock farming operations in the area accepting two potential hobby farms that may be boarding a single horse or two. Most open fields are in production for cash/feed cropping but there are some areas in a fallow or idle state most notably along the southern edge of the existing settlement boundary, south of Chippawa.

Much of the parcels fabric are still sizable agricultural parcels with few farm lot severances apparent. Rural residential clusters are present in the vicinity of Willoughby Drive and Weaver Road and generally all being west of Willoughby Drive.

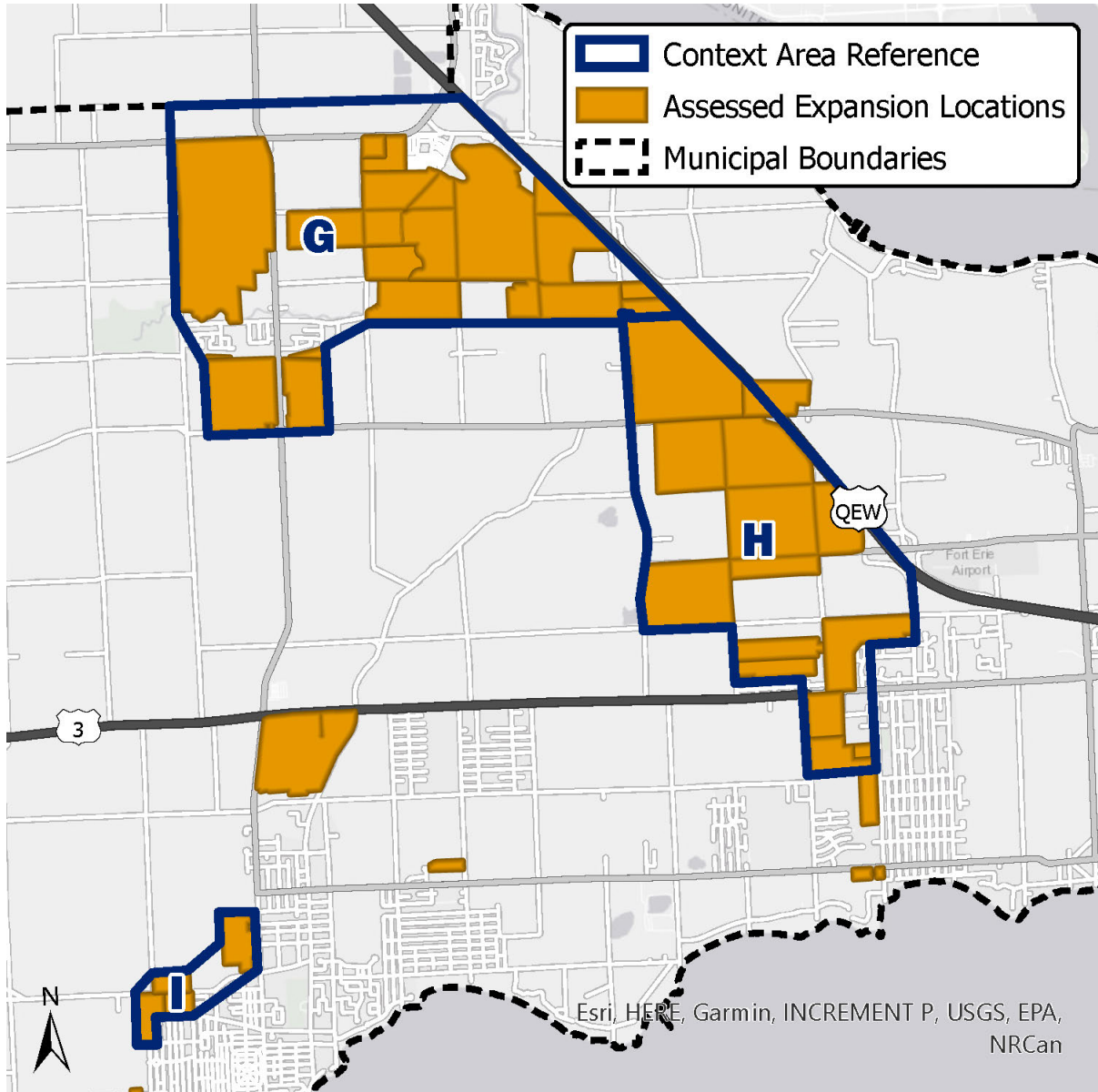
Transportation networks are in the form of concession roads with Sodom Road (RR116) being the primary corridor leading into the urban settlement area to the north. Willoughby is also supplying connection into the settlement area however Sodom as a Regional road provides connection between Lyons Creek Road and the QEW much further south. Connections between local road networks and the concessions roads would appear feasible in most instances.

There are no aggregate resources identified along the southern limits of the Niagara Falls settlement area and the closest active operation is located in the northern end of the municipality.

With respect to servicing, if additional development was to be considered south of Chippawa Creek, a strategy to have sanitary flows directed to the new South Niagara Falls wastewater treatment facility (upstream on Welland River) should be studied as the preferred long term solution.

From a community planning perspective, accessing this area for any major development is less problematic than areas further west on the south side of Lyons Creek. The Lyons Creek Road bridge crossing of the creek is equipped with pedestrian and cycling facilities and serves as the primary route into the Chippawa community from the west. Sodom Road would provide the primary link to access lands to the south along this network.

Lacking a long term solution for servicing both the existing and any potential expansion would need to be undertaken and appropriately captured in any future MSP study undertakings together with other master planning work..



Fort Erie – Context for Area G

This area is generally described as being the lands between Stevensville and Douglastown in the northern area of the municipality. Area would include lands between Ott Road at west, Municipal boundary to the north, QEW to the east, down to the CNR line along the south. Some lands on either side of Stevensville Road down to Bowen Road are also considered within this commentary.

Area G includes considerable natural features including PSW and Significant woodlands, as well as other wetland and woodlands.

A number of tributaries traverse the larger area with Black Creek and Beaver Creek being the most prominent and flowing east towards the Niagara River. Both have PNHS identification shown as it relates to their function and corridor support. Both also have regulated floodplain that is taken into account with significant floodplain noted in the north-easterly are around the golf course and confluence of the tributaries mentioned. Lands north of the Stevensville settlement area are less encumbered than areas east and southeast.

Soils for the area are almost exclusively Class 3 with Class 5 closely associated and aligned with the primary tributaries mentioned earlier. Most open fields are in production for cash/feed cropping with few locations either being idle or fallow. A large commercial zoo operation is adjacent to the north of the Stevensville settlement area and a public golf course occupies lands in the east close to the QEW.

The transportation network is less established for the concession roads than other parts of the municipality due to environmental constraints or not having need within the agricultural areas. Large parcels for the most part have access from other boundary roads (Winger Road, House Road, Eagle Street and Ridgemount Road). Primary roads servicing the area are Regional and include Bowen Road, Stevensville Road and Netherby Road.

All three Roads mentioned do have access via interchange with the QEW. Additionally, planning this area is challenged because of the identified provincial highway corridor. Phase 1 Environmental Assessment (“EA”) work was completed and Phase 2 EA work has not been advanced; however, the corridor remains of interest to the Province for protection.

Aggregate resources are absent in the area described but are shown for most lands south of Bowen to Lake Erie.

Servicing for the area is reliant on existing lagoons just inside the Niagara Falls boundary with Fort Erie, north of Netherby Road. Capacity issues for the lagoons presents an issue for additional growth beyond current planning approvals of the Douglastown-Black Creek and Stevensville Secondary Plans. A longer term servicing solution is needed in this area. With respect to water supply, Rosehill WTP would provide service to the area but additional upgrades for the system would also be required.

From a community planning perspective, this particular area holds future potential to accommodate community and employment growth, but until such time the future highway and servicing constraints are advanced with more certainty, the other areas proposed better satisfy the criteria to accommodate the forecasted growth. It is for these reasons that expansion is not being recommended as part of this Municipal Comprehensive Review.

Fort Erie – Context for Area H

This area is generally bounded at the north by the Eagle Street road allowance where it meets the QEW. The westerly limit is Ridgemount Road all the way south to Garrison Road. Garrison generally forms the southerly limit save and except lands around the Town Hall location that are part of considerations. The remainder of this area meets up with the existing settlement area boundary and runs north generally along Pettit Road back to the QEW.

Area H is quite large; the NES mapping shows presence of natural features that include PSW and Significant woodlands, as well as other wetland and woodlands.

Two tributaries pass through the area flowing west to east towards the Niagara River. These include Miller's Creek towards the north end and Frenchman's Creek more centrally located. Both have PNHS identification shown as it relates to their function and corridor support. Both also have regulated floodplain that is taken into account. Some modifications had been made to the Miller's Creek tributary to re-align the drainage for a partially-approved racetrack and related uses. Most of Fort Erie is identified as a significant groundwater recharge area including these lands and the same is true for being identified as being within a high vulnerability aquifer zone, which is the case for just about all lands in the southern half of the municipality.

Soils for the area are mostly Class 3 with some Class 2 located in the southern area where development has occurred (golf course, contractors yard, Town Hall). A small area of Class 4 soil is found around the intersection of Bowen and Ridgemount Roads. Soil Class throughout southern Niagara including Fort Erie and Niagara Falls are predominantly Class 3.

Most open fields are in production for cash/feed cropping with few locations either being idle or fallow. There is a small equestrian stable on the east side of Sunset Drive and farm on lands north of Bowen Road next to the QEW and rail line that is

not showing signs of active livestock. A number of hobby farms are observed along Ridgemount Road.

The transportation network is well established with concession roads (Ridgemount Road, Sunset Drive, Pettit Road, Bertie Street, Gilmore Road, Garrison Road and Bowen Road) all used continuously for routes to and from the QEW. Garrison Road is the most significant in terms of local/regional corridor, which changes into Kings Highway 3 just west of the settlement boundary and used as a primary route through to Port Colborne.

The QEW is the prime transportation asset that is highly accessible to the area described. Interchanges at both Bowen Road and Gilmore Road provides high degree of access. These interchanges are heavily used for industrial traffic presently and Bowen Road overpass was just replaced within the last few years. Employment is presently established and close to fully occupied on the east side of the QEW.

Aggregate resources are present throughout most of the southern half of Fort Erie including this area. Active quarrying is occurring west of Ridgemount Road and a licensed property is found east of Ridgemount, south of Bowen. Existing and future aggregate operations have been considered as part of the review process. In addition to stones, several very small sand and gravel deposits are also shown within the area but are located in or adjacent to residential communities in the south close to Garrison Road.

Prior approvals on a large portion of these same lands were part of a servicing strategy prepared by the municipality together with other areas that would be connected to the servicing schematic. These servicing strategies may serve as a basis for future updating to adapt to future land uses in the area. Water supply would come from the Rosehill water treatment plant and sanitary would be treated at Anger Avenue wastewater treatment plant.

From a community planning perspective, this area is of higher interest for both Employment Area use in the northern portion close to the QEW and Community use in the southerly portion close to Garrison Road. Large parcels form much of the area described and are advantageous to both employment and community planning.

These are the best lands in Fort Erie for Employment expansion in the short and mid-term. These lands have QEW frontage and multiple interchange connections.

With respect to community use, there are a considerable amount of existing community facilities and services locating in the southern portion of the area that could be leveraged in supporting additional community growth. Some of the primary community assets include the high school and theatre, arenas and community centre, Boy and Girls Club (former YMCA), Town Hall, existing hotel and conferences centre and Garrison Road commercial corridor. All being facilities that can provide immediate services to new community population and growth. There is a higher interest in community use in this southern area for these reasons.

Part of the natural features discussed earlier form a natural separation between employment and community lands and when viewed as a single large expansion area, planning for servicing, transportation and other core services can be considered as one overall strategy. Secondary Planning, Master Servicing and Transportation Plans, Sub-watershed plans can all be sharing geography to assist in capital and development charge planning that will be needed to plan for growth.

Portions of the area described in this summary are recommended for settlement expansion. Generally lands east of Laur Road, north of Bertie Street totaling 175 ha for Employment Area use and lands south of Bertie Street totaling 93 ha for Community Area.

Additional commentary on the portion of lands recommended for inclusion can be found in Report PDS 41-2021.

Fort Erie – Context for Area I

This area is generally irregular to encompass lands north and south of Michener Road at the northwesterly corner of the Crystal Beach Neighbourhood and moving to encompass lands on the southwesterly edge of the Ridgeway Neighbourhood as defined by local official plan identification.

The contextual area being described is smaller than the other areas outlined in Fort Erie and as a result has less NES feature identification. The PNHS is shown on most of the described area however the NES mapping has few natural features identified. The PNHS would be fulfilling identification as a large corridor connection in function as it reaches south towards Lake Erie and the PSW's closer to the lake, and joining a larger significant woodland and tributary north of the Friendship Trail between Cherry Hill Boulevard and Ridgeway Road.

Most of the lands have underlying Significant Groundwater Recharge identification as well as minor incursion of high vulnerability aquifer; both of which are common in much of the southern part of the municipality.

Soils for the area are typical of much of Fort Erie and comprise Class 2 and 3. Agricultural activity includes open fields in cash/feed crop production. An equestrian facility is immediately adjacent to the existing settlement area in a location requested for inclusion between Michener Road and Rebstock Road. Other livestock operations west and northwest do not have MDS impacts on the area described.

Transportation network is established through local networks with the area around Michener Road having access to either Michener or the subdivision roads at the southerly end of the area identified. Access to the area west of Ridgeway has limited points of access off Ridgeway Road and Michener Road also.

The area described is generally free of aggregate resource identification except for a small band of sand and gravel along Rebstock Road and an area occupied by an existing cemetery at Michener and Ridgeway Road. These small resource areas would not be feasible for extraction.

Servicing can be accommodated at the Crystal Beach WWTP. Existing wet weather flows can be addressed locally to reduce infiltration to further improve conditions. Water supply is available from the Rosehill WTP which provides water for the entire municipality. No capacity issues were identified through the assessment review.

From a planning perspective, this location displays potential for growth. Expansion in the location along Michener Road would present itself as more readily accessible and feasible for connection to the existing transportation and servicing networks over lands west of Ridgeway in the short and mid-term.

A portion of the lands within this contextual area totaling 12 ha are recommended for inclusion in the settlement boundary..

One smaller area outside of the contextual area described, along Dominion Road at Bernard Avenue was also a consideration and is recommended. It is a small 1 ha addition to the settlement to complete the urban expansion need for Fort Erie.

Additional commentary on the portion of lands recommended for inclusion can be found in Report PDS 41-2021.