
Subject: Niagara Official Plan: Settlement Area Boundary Review – Rural Recommendations

Report to: Planning and Economic Development Committee

Report date: Wednesday, December 8, 2021

Recommendations

1. That Report PDS 42-2021, **BE RECEIVED** for information regarding the Settlement Area Boundary Review – Rural Recommendations.

Key Facts

- This report provides information on proposed changes to rural settlement area boundaries. No decisions are sought from Council at this time.
- Changes to settlement boundaries can only be made by the Region at the time of a Municipal Comprehensive Review (“MCR”). The Region’s MCR is occurring as part of the new Niagara Official Plan (“NOP”).
- Using the Provincial Land Needs Methodology, the Region prepared a land needs assessment (“LNA”) to determine the amount of expansion area required to meet its growth needs.
- A need for 115 hectares is identified for rural settlement area expansions in Wainfleet (75 hectares) and West Lincoln (40 hectares).
- Potential expansion locations were provided for public review in summer 2021. All identified areas were reviewed using evaluation criteria based on Provincial policies and direction.
- In addition to boundary expansions, technical adjustments are being considered where boundary alignment either incorrectly reflected the parcel boundary, did not align with zoning or to provide appropriate width to access a parcel.
- Comments on the proposed changes to the settlement area boundaries are requested by February 18, 2022, to provide sufficient time for review and input in to the next draft.

Financial Considerations

There are no financial considerations directly related to this report. Council approved the resources to complete the Niagara Official Plan (“NOP”) over a five year period as part of the 2017 Budget Process.

Analysis

The Region can adopt changes to rural boundaries at the time it passes the NOP. Consideration must be given to both requests for expansion, as well as the review of the entire boundary, to determine the best location for expansion.

Expansions can only happen if there is a “need” for the expansion. The need is determined through a land needs assessment (“LNA”), a process set out by the Province.

This report relates to rural settlement area boundary expansions recommendations only. Urban area recommendations may be found in PDS 41-2021.

Rural Settlement Areas (sometimes referred to as “Hamlets”) in the Greenbelt Plan area cannot expand. Therefore, the Rural LNA is focused mainly on West Lincoln and Wainfleet, where need was identified and Rural Settlement Areas currently exist outside of the Greenbelt Plan Area. Further details on the LNA can be found in Appendix 2.

Based on the land need assessment, an additional 75 hectares is needed within Wainfleet and 40 hectares within West Lincoln.

Port Colborne and Fort Erie were reviewed as part of this work. It was determined that the existing land supply was adequate. No additional lands were required.

Rural Settlement Area Boundary Review

A smaller portion of population and employment growth is planned to be accommodated in rural areas, primarily within Hamlet boundaries.

Wainfleet does not have an urban settlement area and therefore the entirety of its growth is to be accommodated in its rural areas. Half of residential growth and approximately 60% of rural employment growth allocation is directed to its Hamlets.

A significant majority of new population growth for West Lincoln is forecasted to go to the Smithville urban area; only a small percentage is planned for Hamlets. All residential land need directed to the rural area is to be accommodated within Hamlets. Approximately 60% of rural employment growth will be directed to West Lincoln's hamlets.

Maps showing expansion locations are included below and also found in Appendix 1.

Rural Settlement Review Criteria

To review potential areas for expansion, the Region prepared rural settlement review criteria to assess locations. This criteria was released for review and comment as Appendix 18.3 to Report PDS 17-2021. The assessment criteria was developed to be consistent with and conform to Provincial policy.

No feedback was provided on the criteria. As a result, no changes to the criteria were made and it was used to consider expansion locations and requests.

The rural criteria is based on five categories: contribution to rural character, support for agricultural community, impacts to agricultural operations, environmental constraints, and hydrogeological considerations. The review also looked at site specific context considerations (e.g. proximity to an airfield or landfill site).

The Region, in consultation with the applicable local municipalities, reviewed all identified and requested locations in the rural settlements to determine the most appropriate and feasible location to accommodate growth.

Appendix 3 provides additional discussion on the Rural assessment results for each of the expansions and other areas that were considered through the Region's Rural Settlement Area Boundary Review ("SABR") review.

Through the Rural SABR process, the Region considered the need for both community lands (residential and commercial) and rural employment (dry industrial) lands. The following is a summary of community area and employment area recommendations for rural settlement expansions.

Consultation

The Region consulted and engaged with the local municipalities through the Rural SABR process. In addition, consideration was given to local municipal staff reports and any information submitted as part of a request.

The Region also received comments from the public through the SABR mapping tool. Comments and responses are included in Appendix 8 to associated Report PDS 41-2021.

West Lincoln

A total of 13 sites were reviewed under the Rural Expansion Criteria. The Rural LNA sets out a need for 40 hectares of developable area for Hamlet expansion in the Township.

Four Hamlets have been recommended for expansion. Expansion areas are described below with summary details for each area being recommended.



West Lincoln – Community Lands

Recommendation #1 - Abingdon

Current Rural Settlement area = 35 hectares

Expansion Area = 11 hectares

The expansion is located behind existing rural residential lots north of Bismark Road and east of Abingdon Road. The expansion will round out the Hamlet boundary and does not extend the boundary any further north on Abingdon Road or east along Regional Road 65.

This location is in close proximity to an existing park and would reflect other current development proposals on the west side of Abingdon Road.

Defunct livestock barns are present on the southerly expansion lands. There are no other agricultural related constraints present and the expansion would not have significant impact on the surrounding agricultural area.

There are some minor other wetland features located on both properties. These features are farm ponds and drainage channels that meet the minimum requirement to be mapped.

Recommendation #2 - Caistorville

Current Rural Settlement area = 43 hectares

Expansion Area = 7 hectares

The proposed expansion would add a modest amount of land to the boundary to facilitate a rural lot subdivision on a local road. The expansion maintains the rural character of Caistorville.

The easterly boundary would continue south to encompass these lands. There is no further opportunity to expand southerly due to environmental constraints.

The lands are relatively clear of environmental features. Environmental features surround the expansion area and will be studied through future applications to ensure protection.

There are no barns in the area and the inclusion of these lands for rural residential would have limited agricultural impact.

Recommendation #3 – Wellandport

Current Rural Settlement area = 80 hectares
Expansion Area = 3 hectares

This expansion is relatively small in size and would not alter the character of Wellandport. The property includes lands that are partially within the boundary.

There are no significant environmental features on the expansion lands. A small drainage channel runs through the property. Future study work should review this feature.

Operating chicken barns are located north of the property. Based on review and correspondence with Township staff, a number of rural residential lots already exist within the MDS area of influence and the existing Hamlet boundary is closer to the operation. On this basis, Staff determined the barns did not pose a constraint for inclusion into the boundary.

West Lincoln – Rural Employment Lands

The Rural LNA includes provision for rural employment land need to the rural area. In West Lincoln's case approximately 40% of this growth is generally directed to typical agricultural employment growth (i.e. greenhouses, farming operations). The remaining portion is directed to rural hamlets where some uses are more appropriately located.

In order to inform location and need for rural employment lands to accommodate growth, the Township retained a consultant to prepare a Rural Employment Lands Hamlet Expansion Study (the "RES"). In addition to where future rural employment growth should be allocated, the study also addressed concerns with existing employment uses establishing in agricultural areas that were not suitable or operating illegally.

The results of the RES utilized the Region's Rural SABR criteria as a first step to determine the Hamlets with the highest probability of accommodating rural employment. As well, the Region provided approximate land need for rural employment based on the Rural LNA.

The Region was involved throughout the preparation of the RES and has reviewed the results in its independent assessment.

Regional Recommendation – Fulton

Current Rural Settlement area = 11 hectares

Expansion Area = 20 hectares

Fulton is located in the north-west part of the Township and currently has residential lots, commercial and rural employment uses (including a gas station, Minor Bros., and a veterinarian clinic).

The proposed expansion includes some environment features; these features will offer a natural buffer between the future rural employment and the existing residential lands located along South Grimsby Road 18.

In terms of agricultural impacts, there is one livestock operation south of Regional Road 20. The minimum distance separation arc places the expansion outside of the area of influence.

Fulton is the preferred location because it is well connected via Regional Road 20 to the Township, as well as beyond. It is conveniently located along the Highway 20 corridor that connects to the City of Hamilton with access to the Red Hill Parkway and QEW.

This location also provides an opportunity for West Lincoln to comprehensively plan the rural employment uses and provides space for businesses to relocate, as well as attract new ones.

Wainfleet

A total of 11 sites were reviewed under the Rural Expansion Criteria. The Rural LNA sets out a 75 hectares land need for Hamlet expansion.

Four Hamlets in Wainfleet have been recommended for expansion. Expansion areas are described below with summary details for each area.



Wainfleet – Community Area

Recommendation #1 - Wainfleet Village

Current Rural Settlement area = 157 hectares

Expansion Area = 47 hectares

The Wainfleet Village is the largest Hamlet in Wainfleet and has a number of services and facilities that support the Hamlet and surrounding agricultural area. Wainfleet's Official Plan identifies this area as the focus for growth and development. More than half of the population and employment growth directed to Wainfleet is allocated to this Hamlet.

Two locations are recommended for the Village of Wainfleet.

North/South of Bell Road

The Region recommends the entirety of the parcel between Bell Road and Clarendon Street West to the unopened road allowance be added to the Wainfleet boundary. In addition, the frontage of Bell Road to the north should also be included in the boundary for a total area of 29 hectares.

The primary focus of these lands will be residential, with some employment uses such as commercial, restaurants and personal services to support the population growth. Adding lands on both sides of Bell Road will allow for more comprehensive planning.

These lands are generally unencumbered by environmental features.

There are also no significant agricultural impacts. One livestock operation was identified to the south; however, with the Feeder Canal, road and buffering, it does not preclude the Region's boundary recommendation.

South Village Boundary

Approximately 18 hectares is recommended for inclusion in the Wainfleet boundary along the southern edge of the Hamlet to the east and west of Side Road 20.

The westerly side of the road would see a small expansion for the purpose of adding land to facilitate the development of lands to the north already in the boundary.

The easterly side of the road adds land just south of the Village's park. Adding residential lands in close proximity to the park and recreation area will add population in close proximity to facilitate its use.

There are no environmental features identified on the expansion lands.

Agricultural activity is generally feed/cash cropping. A poultry operation exists approximately 300 metres to the south. Calculations for MDS indicate the arc would impact a small portion of the property.

The Region supports this location, but requires that the Township zone the property to restrict residential development within the arc until the MDS can be resolved. Options are available to address this impact through subdivision design or review of land use.

Recommendation #2 – Wellandport

Current Rural Settlement area = 19 hectares
Expansion Area = 3 hectares

Consideration of this expansion area was done in conjunction the West Lincoln side of Wellandport. Wellandport has commercial establishments and a library available to

serve the community as it grows. This expansion area would contribute modest growth to help build the character of the Hamlet.

The boundary proposes to follow the buffer limit of the environmental feature to the south. Since the expansion area excludes the natural feature and its buffer, no environmental concerns remain.

This expansion would not have any MDS impacts. A livestock operation is located to the east of the proposed expansion, outside the MDS area of influence. In addition, the existing Hamlet boundary is located closer to the livestock facility.

Wainfleet – Rural Employment

Recommendation #1 - Chambers Corners

Current Rural Settlement area = 52 hectares
Expansion Area = 17 hectares

There are two expansion areas identified in Chambers Corners.

Chambers Corners has a number of existing businesses; the addition of two areas in this Hamlet for rural employment would be in keeping with the character of the area. Future consideration for buffering and compatibility could be considered at the time of local conformity through land use permissions and zoning.

North East Parcel

The Township has identified a need for more rural employment lands in a centralized area. Chambers Corners offers an opportunity for synergy with existing employment related uses existing in this Hamlet.

Chambers Corners is also well connected, with direct access to Forks Road and Regional Road 24.

An environmental feature is located along the north edge of the property. A significant amount of developable land is available outside of the environmental feature and buffers. The environmental feature would be studied and appropriately buffered through future environmental study work.

Rural employment lots are on average 2 hectares. At this size, the developable land would allow for a rural lot subdivision for several businesses.

Poultry barns are present east of the north east parcel. In reviewing the MDS guidance material, as well as a report provided by the Township, it was determined that an expansion for rural employment is considered a less sensitive use (Type A) and therefore would not pose a conflict for minimum distance separation to the barns.

The Region will require the Township designate and zone this expansion for rural employment to ensure there is no conflict with MDS.

South West Parcel

To the support the parcel above, the south parcel is recommended for rural employment. It will provide opportunity for additional rural employment to support and enhance the other operations in the area.

The lands are adjacent to a rural employment operation and would allow for its expansion. Through this expansion, the property could utilize the existing access.

These lands have no environmental constraints present. Further, no agricultural operations were identified in proximity to the expansion.

The expansion may require one additional access to Highway 3 for a future rural employment lot.

Recommendation #2 - Ostryhon Corners

Current Rural Settlement area = 75 hectares

Expansion Area = 5 hectares

The Region recommends adding 5 hectares to the southerly limit of this Hamlet, following the existing boundary line and extending it south.

The lands are recommended for rural employment due to compatibility with adjacent contractor's yard and the proximity to the Burnaby airfield.

There are no immediate concerns related to agricultural operations or environmental features. MDS was reviewed through a previous boundary review which determined

there were a number of non-farm uses in or adjacent to the existing boundary that already restricted the livestock operation and there would be no MDS conflict.

Rural Settlement Technical Adjustments

Through the Rural Settlement SABR process the boundaries of each hamlet were also examined to determine if any minor adjustments were needed (e.g. to align a Hamlet boundary with a property boundary).

Through this process, one technical adjustment is supported in West Lincoln (Bismark) and three technical adjustments are supported in Wainfleet (Winger, Wellandport and Chambers Corners).

Details related to these adjustments can be found in Appendix 4.

Provincial Policy Review

The *Planning Act, 1990* requires all municipal Council decisions to be consistent with, conform to, or not conflict with the applicable Provincial policy. Regional and local planning staff must provide planning advice and make recommendations under the same requirements. The recommendations in this report conform to, are consistent with, and do not conflict with applicable Provincial policy and plans.

Policy review is included in Appendix 5.

Alternatives Reviewed

This Report is prepared for information only; therefore, no alternatives are provided.

Consultation on these recommendations is planned for late 2021 and early 2022. The Region seeks comments by February 18, 2022.

Relationship to Council Strategic Priorities

Settlement Area Boundary Expansion, as part of the Region's MCR and NOP, is supported by the following Council Strategic Priorities:

- **Supporting Business and Economic Growth:** Through long range planning to accommodate growth for rural community and employment lands and offer opportunities to attract and support economic wellbeing;

- **Healthy and Vibrant Community:** Through planning for safe, healthy neighbourhoods that are attractive, inclusive and connected;
- **Responsible Growth and Infrastructure Planning:** Through coordinated, efficient use of rural infrastructure and responsibly directing growth to rural settlements; and
- **Sustainable and Engaging Government:** Through planned growth that is fiscally sustainable and fosters strong, successful relationships between all levels of government in the supply of services.

Other Pertinent Reports

PDS 4-2021 Niagara Official Plan–Steps and Directions Moving Forward (information)

PDS 17-2021 Niagara Official Plan Consolidated Policy Report (endorsement)

PDS 33-2021 Niagara Official Plan: Land Needs Assessment and Settlement Area Boundary Review Update (endorsement)

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This report was prepared in conjunction with PDS 41-2021.

Appendices

Due to size, some of the following [appendices](#) are available on the NOP website only:
<https://www.niagararegion.ca/official-plan/>

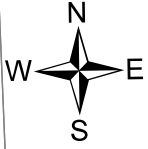
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| Appendix 1 | Map of Recommended Rural (Hamlet) Settlement Area Expansions |
| Appendix 2 | 2051 Rural Land Needs Assessment (December 2021) |
| Appendix 3 | Rural (Hamlet) Settlement Area Assessment Review (website only) |
| Appendix 4 | Boundary Changes from Technical Adjustments to Rural (Hamlet) Settlement Areas |
| Appendix 5 | Provincial Policy and Plan Review |

From PDS 41-2021:

- | | |
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| Appendix 8 | Public Comments (website only) |
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RURAL SETTLEMENT EXPANSION RECOMMENDATION DECEMBER 2021

Appendix 1
PDS 42-2021
December 8, 2021



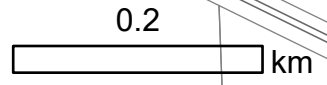
LEGEND

- RURAL SETTLEMENT AREA EXPANSION
- RURAL SETTLEMENT AREA
- NIAGARA ESCARPMENT PLAN AREA
- GREENBELT PLAN AREA

Abingdon

West Lincoln

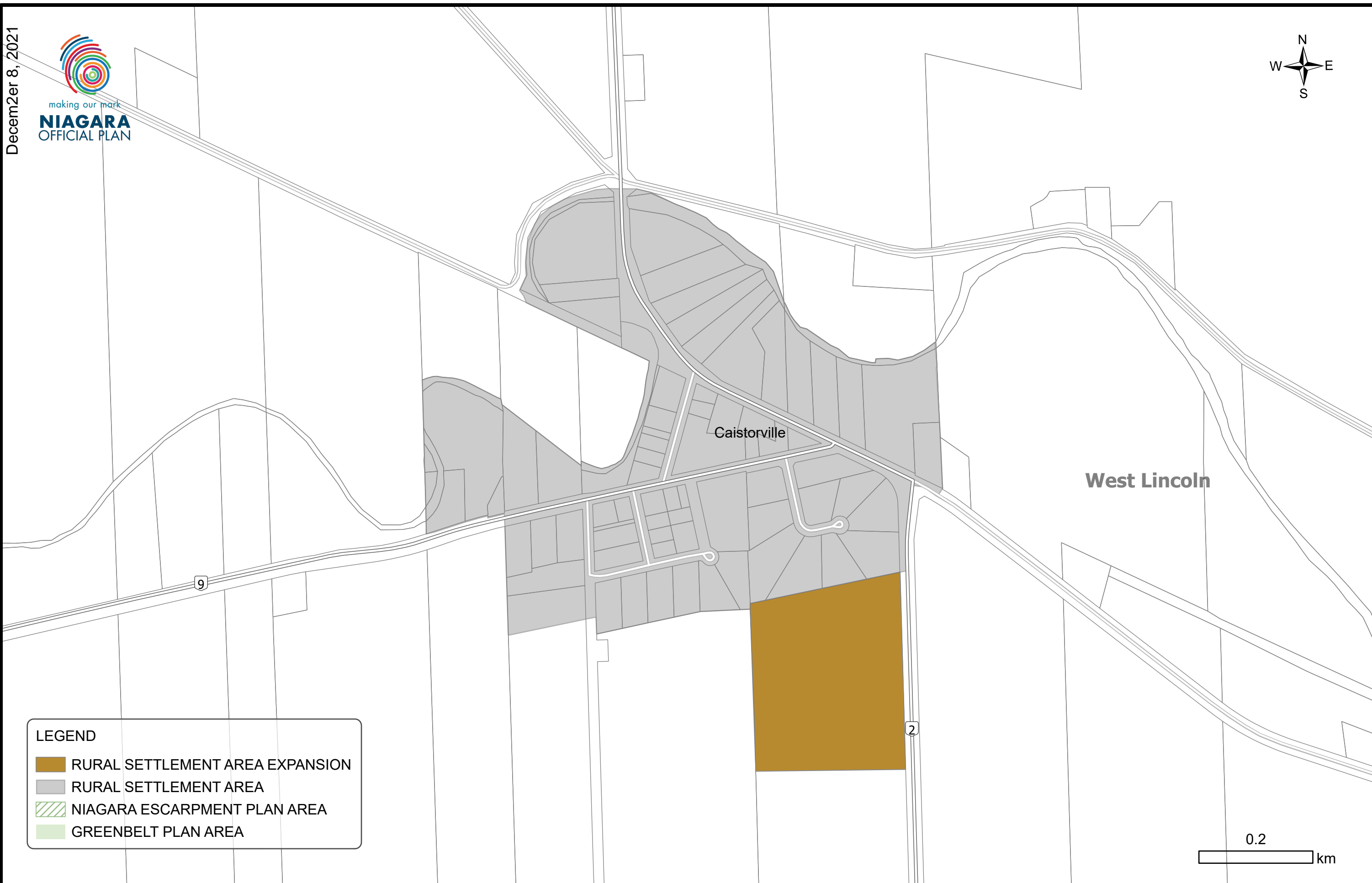
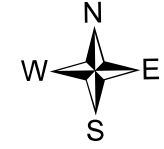
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RURAL SETTLEMENT EXPANSION RECOMMENDATION
DECEMBER 2021

Appendix 1
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LEGEND

- RURAL SETTLEMENT AREA EXPANSION
- RURAL SETTLEMENT AREA
- NIAGARA ESCARPMENT PLAN AREA
- GREENBELT PLAN AREA

0.2 km

RURAL SETTLEMENT EXPANSION RECOMMENDATION
DECEMBER 2021

Appendix 1

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RURAL SETTLEMENT EXPANSION RECOMMENDATION

Appendix 1

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December 8, 2021



West Lincoln

Fulton

LEGEND

- RURAL SETTLEMENT AREA EXPANSION
- RURAL SETTLEMENT AREA
- NIAGARA ESCARPMENT PLAN AREA
- GREENBELT PLAN AREA

0.15 km

RURAL SETTLEMENT EXPANSION RECOMMENDATION DECEMBER 2021

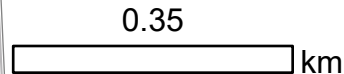
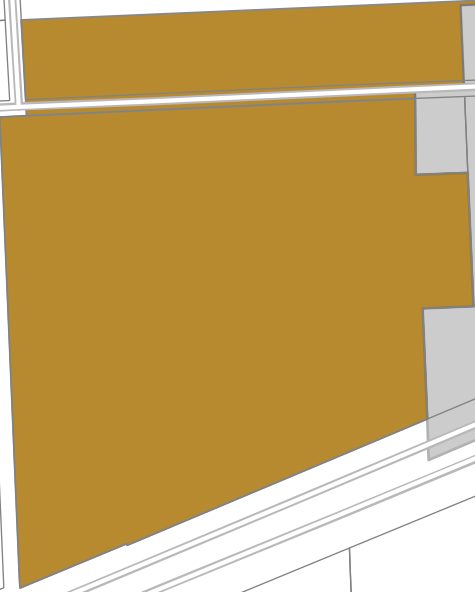
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-  NIAGARA ESCARPMENT PLAN AREA
-  GREENBELT PLAN AREA

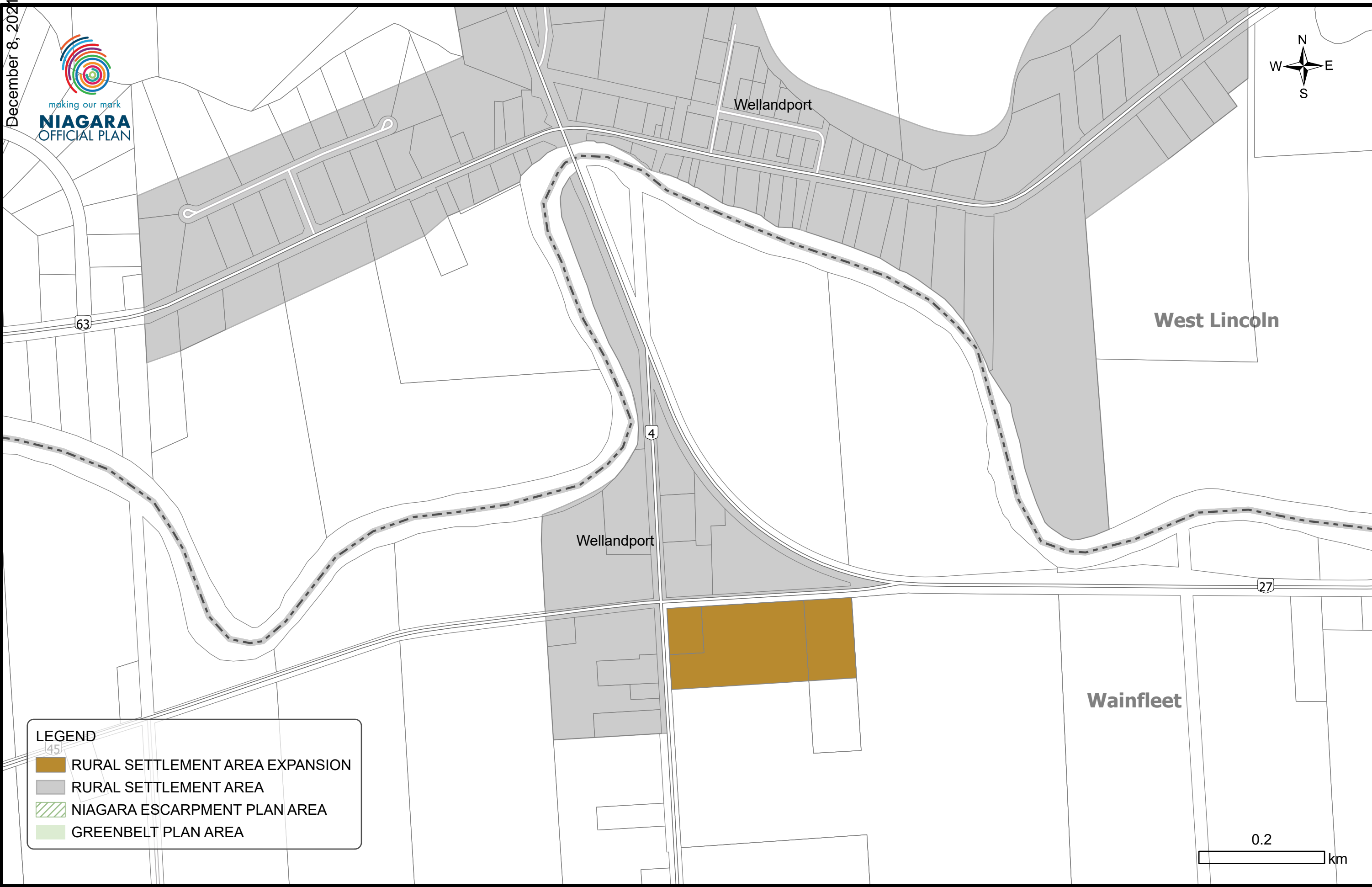


RURAL SETTLEMENT EXPANSION RECOMMENDATION

Appendix 1

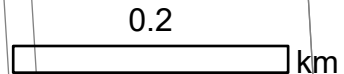
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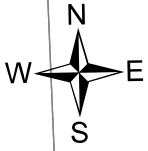
- RURAL SETTLEMENT AREA EXPANSION
- RURAL SETTLEMENT AREA
- NIAGARA ESCARPMENT PLAN AREA
- GREENBELT PLAN AREA



RURAL SETTLEMENT EXPANSION RECOMMENDATION DECEMBER 2021

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LEGEND

- RURAL SETTLEMENT AREA EXPANSION
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- NIAGARA ESCARPMENT PLAN AREA
- GREENBELT PLAN AREA



RURAL SETTLEMENT EXPANSION RECOMMENDATION DECEMBER 2021

Appendix 1
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LEGEND

- RURAL SETTLEMENT AREA EXPANSION
- RURAL SETTLEMENT AREA
- NIAGARA ESCARPMENT PLAN AREA
- GREENBELT PLAN AREA

0.2 km



NIAGARA OFFICIAL PLAN

2051 Rural Land Needs Assessment

This report should be read in conjunction with Appendix 3 to PDS
41-2021

Niagara Region
December 2021

GROWING REGION



Rural Land Needs Assessment

As directed by the Provincial Land Needs Assessment Methodology, an additional assessment was undertaken for Rural Settlement Areas.

Niagara has a modest population and employment base outside of urban settlement areas. Limited growth is anticipated to continue within rural areas and rural settlement areas. Between 2021 and 2051, the *2051 Growth Update Memo* forecast an additional 900 housing units and 8,090 jobs will occur within the rural area.

The Rural Settlement Area assessment determines where the forecast growth will occur within the rural areas and if additional land is required within rural settlement area boundaries (also known as Hamlets).

The Rural Land Needs Assessment has been restricted to municipalities where Rural Settlement Areas currently exist and are outside of the Greenbelt Plan Area. In other words, the analysis only considers the potential for additional Rural Settlement Area lands where supported by Provincial policies.

Table 1 provides a summary of housing and employment forecasts within both the Rural Area and the proportion to be directed to Rural Settlement Areas. Distribution of units and employment to Rural Settlement Areas is based on historic trends and policy direction within associated Local Official Plans.

Table 1: Rural Area and Rural Settlement Area Forecasts

Rural Area and Rural Settlement Area Forecasts: 2021 to 2051

Municipality	Rural Area Housing Forecast	Rural Area Employment Forecast	% Rural Employment to Rural Settlement Areas	% Units to Rural Settlement Areas
Fort Erie	40	500	0%	10%
Port Colborne	10	550	100%	100%
Wainfleet	420	460	60%	50%
West Lincoln	40	570	60%	100%

Residential land need within Rural Settlement Areas was determined by converting the housing growth to area (hectares).

In Niagara, residential lots within Rural Settlement Areas must be a minimum of 1 hectare in size. However, lots may be reduced to 1 acre based on studies. To determine the developable lot size for the Rural Settlement Area assessment, staff analyzed the vacant land supply within hamlets and the surrounding lot fabric of existing development.

It was determined that new residential lots within Rural Settlement Areas will have an average lot size of 0.6 hectares or 1.5 acres.

Table 2 provides an overview of residential land needs within Rural Settlement Areas.

Table 2: Rural Settlement Area Forecasts (Housing), 2021 to 2051

Rural Settlement Area Forecasts: Housing 2021 to 2051

Municipality	Housing Forecast	Residential Need (ha)
Fort Erie	0	0
Port Colborne	10	6
Wainfleet	210	140
West Lincoln	40	25

Rural Employment land need within Rural Settlement Areas was determined by converting employment growth to area (hectares).

Employment densities were calculated based on existing businesses identified through the Niagara Employment Inventory.

Table 3 provides an overview of employment land needs within Rural Settlement Areas.

Table 3: Rural Settlement Area Forecasts (Employment), 2021 to 2051

Rural Settlement Area Forecasts: Employment 2021 to 2051

Municipality	Employment Forecast	Employment Density (jobs per hectare)	Employment Need (ha)
Fort Erie	50	35	0
Port Colborne	550	10	55
Wainfleet	275	15	20
West Lincoln	335	10	35

Finally, the overall land need for Rural Settlement Areas was determined by adding the residential and employment land needs, and subtracting existing supply.

Table 4 provides an overview of Rural Settlement Area land needs.

Table 4: Rural Settlement Area Land Needs to 2051

Rural Settlement Area Land Needs

Municipality	Residential and Employment Land Need (ha)	Existing Supply (ha)	Land Need (ha)
Fort Erie	0	0	0
Port Colborne	60	80	-20
Wainfleet	160	85	75
West Lincoln	60	20	40

Based on the Rural Settlement Area assessment, an additional 75 hectares is needed within Wainfleet and 40 hectares within West Lincoln.

Conclusion

The Rural LNA Summary represents the land need requirements for Rural Settlement Areas to 2051 and is a component of the overall Regional assessment.

The *Growth Plan* requires that the Province approve the Region's final LNA. The Region has been consulting with the Province on the draft LNA and will continue to communicate until the final assessment is approved.

In preparing this document, careful consideration was given to input from the public, agency and area municipalities.



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Appendix 4 - PDS 42-2021

Boundary Changes from Technical Adjustments to Rural (Hamlet) Settlement Areas

Settlement Area Boundary Review

Niagara Region
December 2021

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Rural Settlement Boundary Review – Technical Adjustments

In preparing the NOP, the Region identified small mapping discrepancies between Regional and Local boundaries in rural settlement areas (Hamlets). This occurred where Hamlet boundary alignment incorrectly reflected the parcel boundary, did not align with the zoning by-law boundary, or had deficient access width.

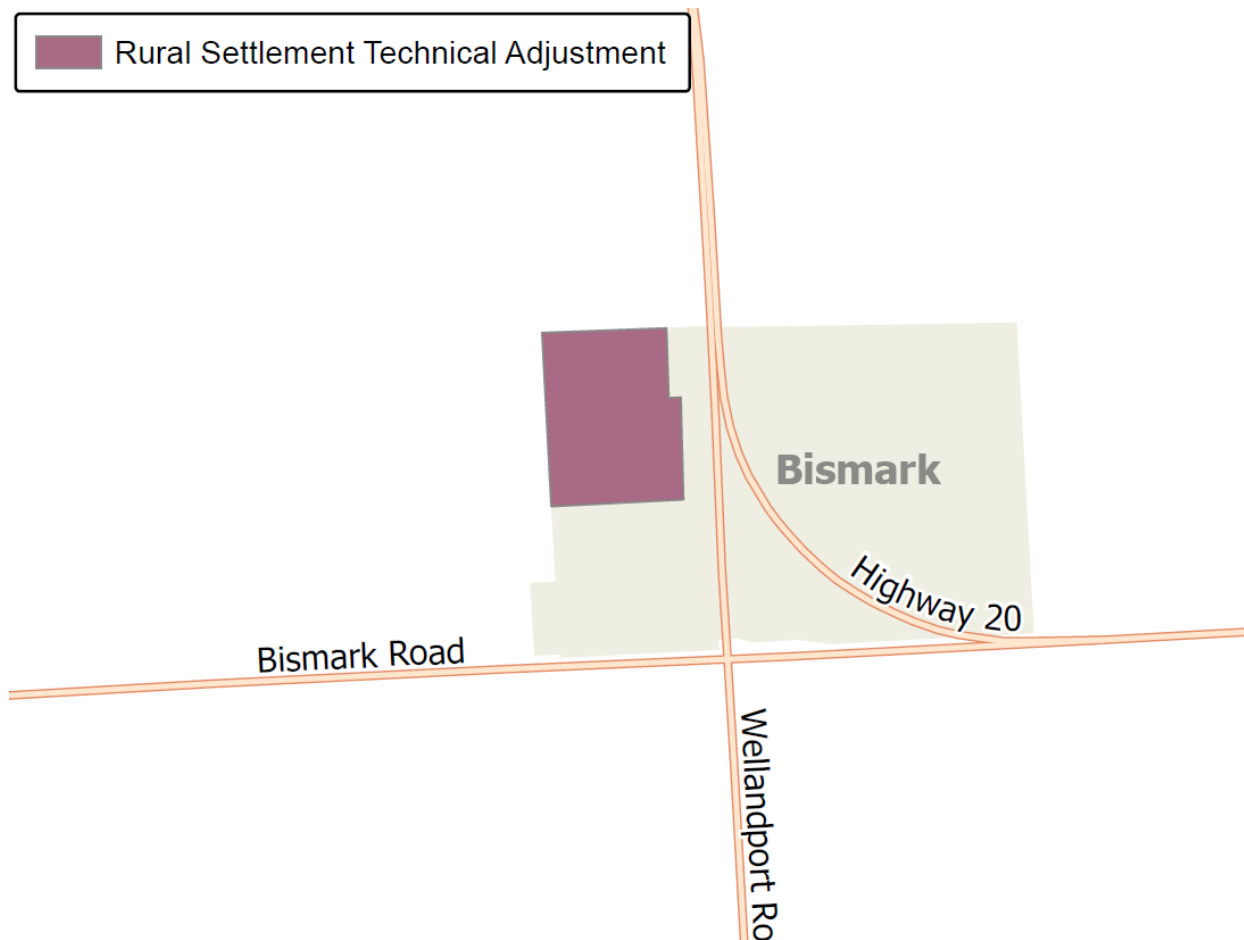
Similar to the urban technical adjustments, covered under a separate Appendix, changes are proposed to correct the above errors. These changes do not add to land supply to accommodate growth.

Rural technical adjustments occur in West Lincoln and Wainfleet. Four areas are identified below.

Technical Boundary Adjustments

Technical Adjustment #1 – Bismark, West Lincoln

The Region proposes a minor technical adjustment for the Bismark Rural Settlement boundary. The adjustment will add approximately two hectares immediately adjacent to an existing established commercial (restaurant) lot and residential lot, both undersized. This adjustment will not facilitate the development of new rural residential lots. The purpose of this adjustment is to allow a future property boundary adjustment to add land for private servicing purposes to the adjacent lots. The technical change better aligns with the existing Hamlet zoning.



Technical Adjustment #2 – Winger, Wainfleet

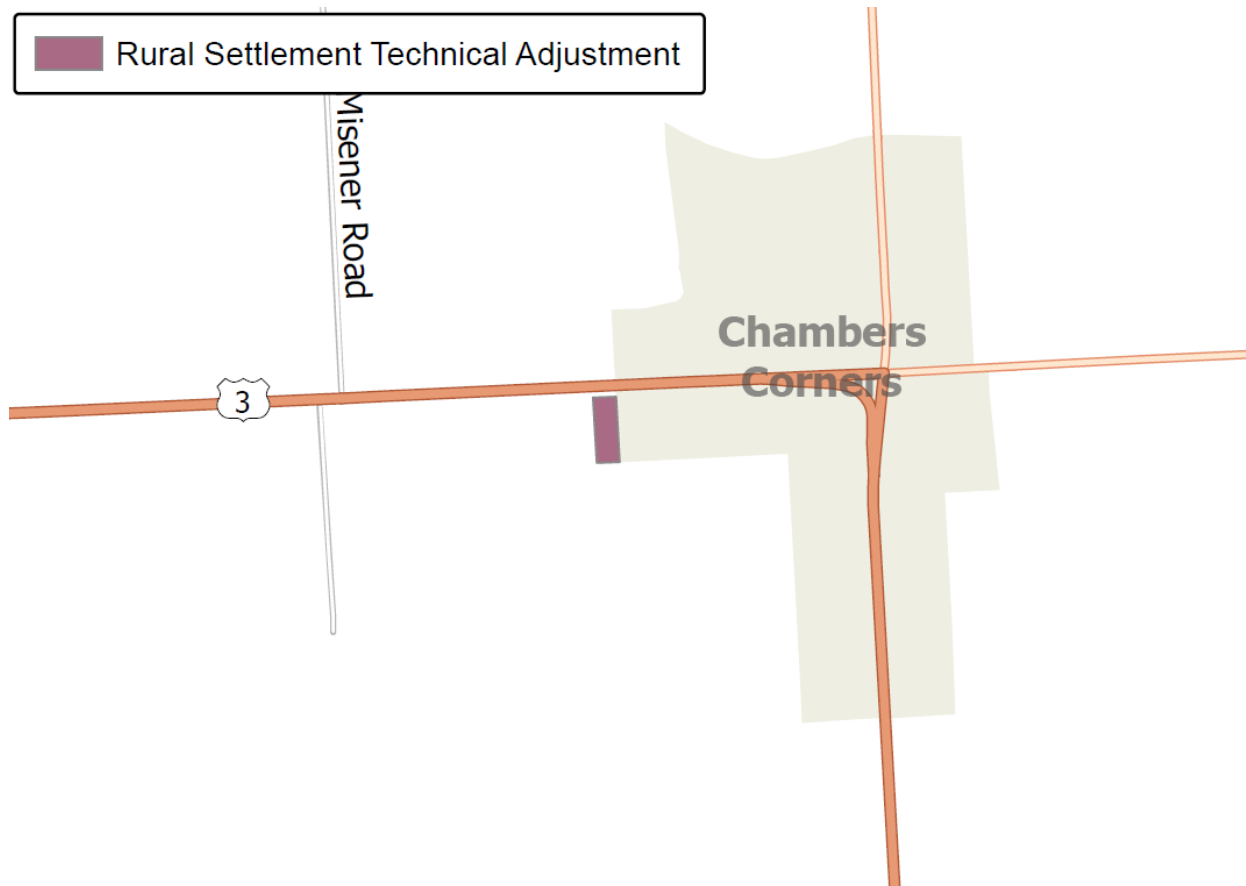
A technical adjustment is supported for the Winger Hamlet to facilitate a through road to connect two large vacant parcels for development. These parcels are currently within the boundary. The adjustment would allow for coordination of development to provide alternate road connect to Wills Road, as well as to Highway 3.

The Region supports the Township’s position of adjusting this boundary to allow for the coordination of development within the Winger boundary.



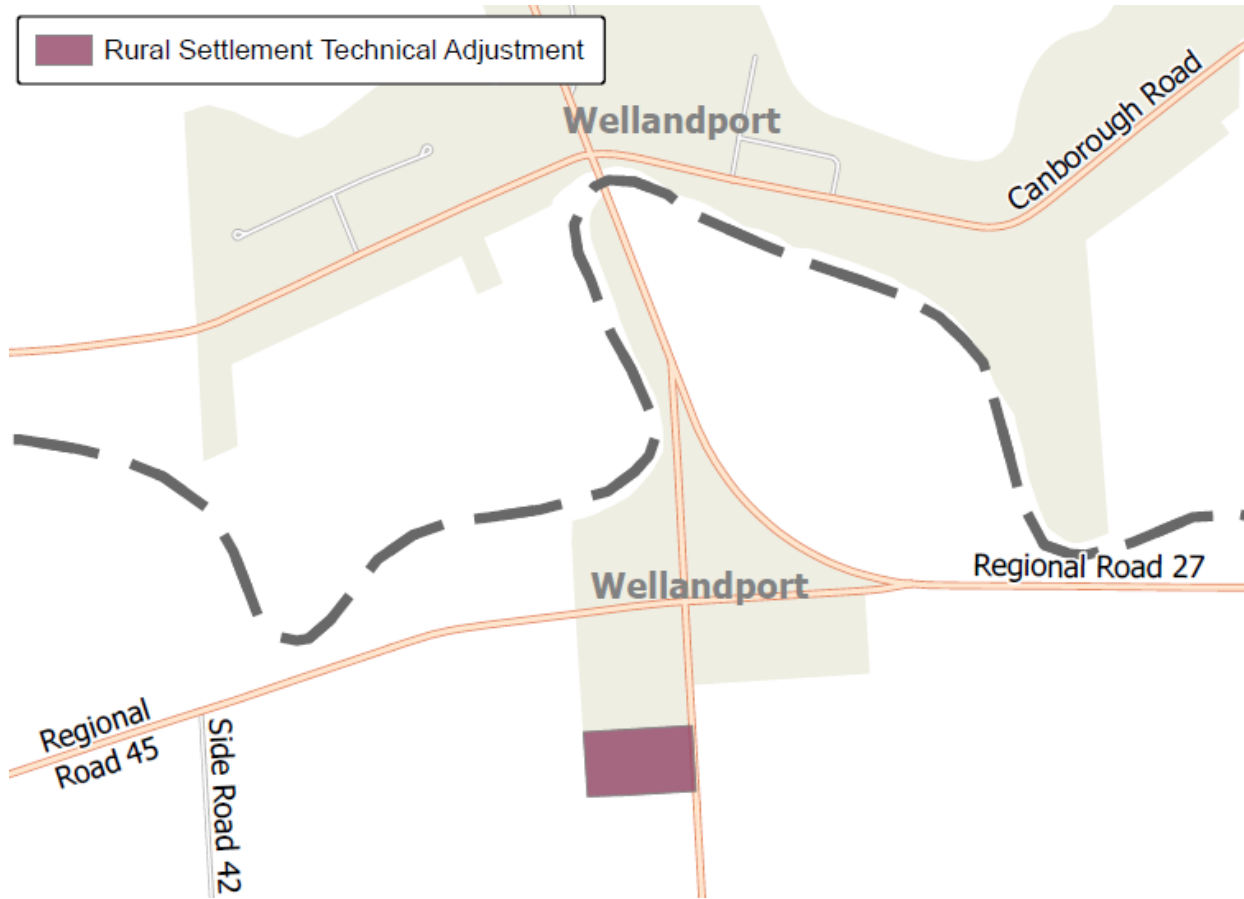
Technical Adjustment #3 – Chambers Corners, Wainfleet

A technical adjustment is recommended to extend the Hamlet boundary to align with the westerly property line of the property it currently splits. The purpose of this adjustment is to facilitate the future expansion of fire department operations, emergency services and a fire training tower.



Technical Adjustment #4 – Wellandport, Wainfleet

An existing church is located on the west side of Wellandport Road, immediately adjacent to the Wellandport rural settlement boundary. There is a site specific policy in the current Official Plan that permits the church as an extension to the boundary; this technical adjustment would include the church in the boundary. This facilitates a community use that is more appropriately located within a rural settlement boundary.





NIAGARA OFFICIAL PLAN

Appendix 5 - PDS 42-2021 Provincial Policy Review

Niagara Region
December 2021

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Provincial Policy Review

The *Planning Act, 1990* requires all municipal Council decisions to be consistent with, conform to, or not conflict with the applicable Provincial policy. Regional and local planning staff must provide planning advice and make recommendations under the same requirements.

Below is a summary of some applicable Provincial Policy as it relates to this Report. The recommendations of Report PDS 42-2021, and updated LNA, conforms to, is consistent with, and does not conflict with these documents, as applicable.

Provincial Policy Statement (2020)

The PPS, 2020 provides direction on land use planning to promote sustainable, strong communities, a strong economy, and a clean and healthy environment.

The PPS provides direction through policies in Section 1.1.4 Rural Areas in Municipalities.

Rural areas are defined as a system of lands within municipalities that may include rural *settlement areas*, *rural lands*, *prime agricultural areas*, natural heritage features and areas, and resource areas.

Policy 1.1.4.1 states Healthy, integrated and viable *rural areas* should be supported by:

- a) building upon rural character, and leveraging rural amenities and assets;
- b) promoting regeneration, including the redevelopment of *brownfield sites*;
- c) accommodating an appropriate range and mix of housing in rural *settlement areas*;
- d) encouraging the conservation and *redevelopment* of existing rural housing stock on *rural lands*;
- e) using rural *infrastructure* and *public service facilities* efficiently;
- f) promoting diversification of the economic base and employment opportunities through goods and services, including value-added products and the sustainable management or use of resources;
- g) providing opportunities for sustainable and diversified tourism, including leveraging historical, cultural, and natural assets;

- h) conserving biodiversity and considering the ecological benefits provided by nature; and
- i) providing opportunities for economic activities in *prime agricultural areas*, in accordance with policy 2.3.

In addition, Policy 1.1.4.2 provides direction for rural *settlement areas* (within *rural areas*) to be the focus of growth and development and their vitality and regeneration promoted.

Policy 1.1.4.3 provides criteria for growth when directing development in rural *settlement areas* in accordance with policy 1.1.3. Planning authorities shall give consideration to rural characteristics, the scale of development and the provision of appropriate service levels.

Section 1.1.3 – “Settlement Areas” includes direction for settlement area boundary expansions only at the time of an MCR and only after there has been demonstrated need.

A Place to Grow - Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (2019) as amended August 2020

The Growth Plan provides a strategic, long-range growth management framework for the Greater Golden Horseshoe area. The Growth Plan supports Ontario’s vision of building stronger, more efficient, prosperous communities through appropriate growth management.

Similar to the PPS, the guiding principles of the Growth Plan are focused on achieving complete communities, stimulating economic growth, prioritizing intensification and higher densities to optimize infrastructure investments, and mitigating the adverse impacts of climate change.

Policy 2.2.1.5 identifies the Province’s Land Needs Assessment methodology to be used by the Region to assess the quantity of land required to accommodate forecasted growth to 2051.

Policy 2.2.8 of the Growth Plan speaks to Settlement Area Boundary Expansions. Policy 2.2.8.2 provides the direction for expansions to proceed through the MCR process based on the components and direction of the LNA.

For Rural Areas, Policy 2.2.9.1 encourages municipalities to plan for a variety of cultural and economic opportunities within *rural settlements* to serve the needs of rural residents and area businesses.

Further, Policy 2.2.9.7 provides specific direction for rural settlement minor rounding out that considers rural character, confirmation of private servicing and direction to the applicable criteria of Policy 2.2.8.2.

Greenbelt Plan and Niagara Escarpment Plan, 2017

The Greenbelt Plan and Niagara Escarpment Plan were also reviewed. The policies of both provide direction for enhancement and protection of the natural and agricultural systems. Expansions into the Greenbelt and Niagara Escarpment areas are prohibited.