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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

NEW AMENDMENTS CALL FOR FLEXIBLE DESIGN OPTIONS AND BETTER ACCESSIBILITY

Welland, ON– The City of Welland Building and Planning Divisions of Integrated Services are working with building designers and contractors under some new amendments for 2015. The Ontario Building Code has made some significant changes by introducing more flexible design options for the construction of wood frame buildings. With recent changes to the Ontario Building Code, wood frame buildings can now be built up to six storeys high, increasing structures with two more stories from last year's guidelines. The amendments give designers and builders more options that could make buildings more affordable, and support more attractive pedestrian-oriented buildings to enhance streetscapes.

Further to wood frame construction, the Ontario Building Code now requires owners to install visual strobe signals for all smoke alarms. This could mean the difference between life and death for people with hearing impairments. The amendment is a relief to the fire fighting community and municipal government. "The 2015 changes in the Building Code will give designers and builders more flexibility in building design and construction," said Mike Mantesso, Chief Building Official for The City of Welland.

Other changes in the Ontario Building Code will enhance living for people with disabilities now that the code requires a barrier-free path of travel throughout most occupancies and building types. The Building Code also sets a number of requirements related to common access and circulation throughout buildings. "These changes will improve the standard of living for people with challenges in mobility," said Mantesso.

The City of Welland Building Division had a busy year in 2014 as it issued 636 Building Permits, totalling a value of \$80.1 million in construction, which is an increase from the \$61.7 million in 2013. The Building Division is open during Monday to Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. and happy to answer questions regarding building or renovating at 905 735-1700 ext 2251 or 2257.

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