



**CITY OF
WELLAND**

**OFFICIAL
PLAN
REVIEW**

COMPLETE COMMUNITIES BACKGROUND REVIEW



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1 Introduction



1.1 City of Welland Official Plan Review

- The City of Welland Official Plan Update (the Study) involves a review and update of the City's current Official Plan.
- With a focus on intensification and diverse housing mix in the latest Provincial policy documents, as well as the Region's ongoing Municipal Comprehensive Review, it is an opportune time to develop a strong vision for guiding growth in the City to 2051.
- The Study provides an opportunity to deliver an updated Official Plan that will ensure the City continues to evolve prioritizing development along the Canal and Recreational waterway lands supported by a growing economic sector, sustainable infrastructure and vibrant complete community.
- The Update of the Official Plan will build upon the existing Official Plan, while establishing a robust land use policy vision for Welland and sets out directions for managing growth, promoting the development of a complete community, and celebrating its deep historic roots.
- Phase 1 of the Study involved a background review of current documents including the City's Official Plan, the Region of Niagara Official Plan, Provincial policies, as well as other guiding documents and plans currently guiding growth and development within the City.
- The background review address a variety of key themes including Growth Management, Complete Communities, Natural Environment, Forestry, Economic growth, and a Policy Gap Analysis.
- These key themes will be reflected in the overarching policies for the City Official Plan as a whole as well as more specific plans and policies

1.2 Purpose of the Background Review

- This Complete Communities Background review provides a review of current policies within the City of Welland Official Plan in comparison to Regional and Provincial policies
- The City's Official Plan must be consistent with and conform to the higher level documents.
- The purpose of this Background review is to summarize existing direction for complete community elements within the City, as well as analyze trends, best

practices and opportunities for Welland that facilitate the growth and development of a complete community.

- A complete community is resilient and adaptable, and therefore as specific concepts are considered, the City's Official Plan policies must also provide opportunities for resilient and adaptable development.

1.3 What is a Complete Community?

Complete communities refer to a concept that aims to develop places that serve the daily needs of residents through providing access to jobs, schools, community services, parks and recreation facilities, and retail. The Complete Communities Background Review will take a look at the various elements that contribute to the creation of complete communities, including placemaking and urban design, cultural heritage, active transportation and transit, and parks and open spaces. As part of our analysis, we will review all documents relating to these topics, including the Parks, Recreation and Culture Master Plan as well as best practices from other municipalities on how the concept of complete communities is addressed in their official plans. This will inform further work to be undertaken in the Study process.

The following policy documents were reviewed in preparing this background review:

- Provincial Policy Statement, 2020 (PPS);
- A Place to Grow: Growth plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, 2020 (Growth Plan);
- The Niagara Region Official Plan, 2014 (NROP); and
- The Existing City of Welland Official Plan, 2019.

2 Direction for the Development of Complete Communities



2.1 Provincial Policy Statement

- The Provincial Policy Statement doesn't include specific policies for complete communities however it seeks to plan for "strong, sustainable and resilient communities for people of all ages, a clean and healthy environment and a strong competitive economy"; and
- Promote and enhance human health and social well-being that is both economically and environmentally viable.

2.2 A Place to Grow, Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe

A Place to Grow, Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, 2020 (Growth Plan) sets out the Province's vision and guiding principles, which includes the achievement of complete communities. The Growth Plan defines complete communities as age-friendly and accessible mixed-use neighbourhoods and areas that provide opportunities for people to conveniently access daily needs including a mix of jobs and housing, local stores and services, transportation options and public service facilities. Complete communities may take on different shapes and forms appropriate to their context.

According to the Growth Plan, complete communities:

- Feature a mix of land uses and convenient access to stores, services and public service facilities;
- Improve social equity, health and overall quality of life for people of all ages, ages, abilities and incomes;
- Provide a diverse mix and range of housing options including affordable housing;
- Expand convenient and safe access to:
 - A range of transportation options including transit and active transportation;
 - Public service facilities that are co-located and integrated within the community;
 - Publicly-accessible parks, open spaces, trails and other recreational facilities; and
 - Healthy, local and affordable food options;
- Provide compact built form and a vibrant public realm;
- Provide measures to mitigate the impact of climate change and greenhouse gas emissions and contribute to environmental sustainability; and

- Integrate green infrastructure and low impact development (Policy 2.2.1.4).

2.3 Niagara Region Official Plan

- Niagara Region's Official Plan sets out several policies within its Designated Greenfield Areas and Sustainable Urban Growth Vision for complete communities.
- Niagara Region seeks to develop a more sustainable framework that unifies its diverse communities.
- Niagara Region aspires to build sustainable complete communities that addresses "social environmental, economic and cultural aspects of land use planning".
- Some of these guiding principles include:
 - Encouraging a mix and efficient use of land that is both compact and transit supportive;
 - Supporting intensification;
 - Building towards better greenfield neighbourhoods that are contiguous with existing built-up areas;
 - Creating grid street patterns that support transit and active transportation within its surrounding areas;
 - Ensuring municipal servicing and infrastructure is in line with all water and wastewater servicing master plans
 - Ensure the integration of cultural programs and facilities;
 - Conserve any available natural resources; and
 - Ensure cost effectiveness.

2.4 Welland Official Plan

- The current long-term vision guiding the Welland Official Plan is focused around developing the City into a healthy, safe and vibrant complete community that provides convenient access to an appropriate mix of jobs, services, a full range of housing and community infrastructure including affordable housing, schools, recreation and open space".
- Section 2.3.2 in the Official Plan sets out strategic directions for complete communities. Several policies prioritize the need to support youth and young families to allow for aging in place. Some of these policies include:

- Promoting social inclusion, improved access to housing, commerce, job opportunities and social services;
- Ensure a sufficient supply and wide range of housing types;
- Encourage residential and non-residential development that supports and retaining youth and families to allow for an age-in-place community;
- Encourages the development of places of employment;
- Encourages development that is located and designed to meet the needs of all citizens;
- Encourages cultural events and activities;
- Promoting neighbourhood design and accessible transportation systems; and
- Strengthen the social, physical environmental, and economic systems of Welland.

3 Placemaking and Urban Design



3.1 What is Placemaking?

- Placemaking is a concept that has come to the forefront of planning for successful complete communities in recent years. It is a multi-faceted approach to the planning, design and management of public spaces.
- Placemaking impacts how we experience the public realm and interact with different destinations such as places to shop, eat, gather, interact, learn, enjoy and work.
- Placemaking strengthens the connection between people and the places they share. It promotes physical and mental health and well-being through reimagining or reinventing public spaces.
- Placemaking plays a key role in the design and development of complete communities, which focuses on the principles and concepts that create vibrant, accessible and equitable public spaces which residents cherish.
- Placemaking has a role to play in each of the complete communities elements described in this report.

3.2 Role of Urban Design

- Urban design also plays a key role in the development and success of complete communities.
- Urban design policies create the opportunities to enhance placemaking in the municipality and helps to establish destinations and landmarks.
- The image of a place, or “sense of place”, refers to distinct identities, which may be reflected through urban design, cultural heritage, neighbourhood identity and character, the environment or sustainability features.
- Urban design ensures age-friendly, safe, healthy, active, comfortable and sustainable design which helps facilitate good placemaking and contributes to the success of complete communities.

3.3 Provincial and Regional Direction

3.3.1 Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, 2020

- Throughout the Growth Plan, the policies generally speak to high-quality design that supports the achievement of complete communities.
- Complete communities should be age-friendly and well-designed to meet people’s needs for daily living throughout an entire lifetime, as well as able to support healthy and active living.
- Specifically, Policy 5.2.5.6 provides the following direction:

“In planning to achieve the minimum intensification and density targets in this Plan, municipalities will develop and implement urban design and site design official plan policies and other supporting documents that direct the development of a high quality public realm and compact built form.”

- It is clear that the Growth Plan considers urban design as a key element to the achievement of complete communities. The policies of the Welland Official Plan should place a strong emphasis on age-friendly urban design that supports healthy and active living, which may be achieved through the incorporation of a variety of placemaking practices as previously discussed.

3.3.2 Niagara Region Official Plan, 2014

- Policies 4J, Urban Design and the Public Realm, in the Niagara Official Plan, set out some objectives to create well thought out urban spaces and to employ the highest standard of urban design which:
 - Supports the development of a strong sense of place and consideration to design at a broader neighbourhood and/or community scale;
 - Promotes beautification, streetscape improvements, public art and public gardens;
 - Encourages private realm design;
 - Ensures public spaces enhance quality of life and communities remain attractive;
 - Supports vibrant social and cultural gathering spaces; and
 - Ensures easy accessibility by transportation.
- Evaluation of the urban design policies of the Welland Official Plan should ensure that these specific elements are considered and addressed.

3.4 Current Direction within the City of Welland

- The City encourages place-making within its new neighbourhoods with more specific design requirements set out through secondary plan urban design guidelines and accessibility design guidelines.
- The Welland Official Plan does not contain any specific section on urban design, rather its design policies are dispersed throughout as they relate to different areas, designations and elements within the City.
- These sections include the provision of City-wide public art policies where culture and heritage are addressed in the Plan and accessibility policies where community sustainability is addressed. In addition to City-wide policies, specific urban design policies are provided for different areas of the City where applicable.
- Specific areas that the City sets out urban design policies for are:
 - Development within the Downtown, 4.1.2.2;
 - Medium Density Development, 4.2.2.3.D;
 - High Density Development, 4.2.2.4.C;
 - General infilling and intensification, 4.2.3.1; and
 - Redevelopment within existing neighbourhoods, 4.2.3.6.
- These policies include direction for neighbourhood design and placemaking, streetscape improvements and public realm, landmarks, pedestrian linkages, built form and views.

3.5 Current Official Plan Best Practices

The following section provides an overview of how placemaking and urban design is addressed within other Official Plans, primarily with respect to the structure, location and organization of policies within each document.

Town of Innisfil Official Plan, 2018

- The Innisfil Official Plan, or “Our Place” is closely tied to placemaking, community character and social connections with the intent of strengthening sense of place and maintaining a great community.
- The purpose of the Plan is to ensure that placemaking is a primary focus for land use patterns and decisions, the design and programming of public spaces, as well as investment decisions.
- Specifically, Section 2: Making ‘Our Place’ Great: A Place Making Strategy, sets out the elements of what makes a great place and also provides strategies to achieve placemaking, which are applicable across the Town. Section 3 of the Plan: Socially Connected, additionally sets out policies for the Town’s key placemaking destinations.

- The Innisfil Official Plan does not contain one specific section on urban design, rather its design policies are dispersed throughout as they relate to different areas, designations and elements within the Town.
- These sections include the provision of Town-wide public art policies where culture and heritage is addressed in the Plan, complete street and streetscape design policies where transportation is addressed and well-being and accessibility policies where community sustainability is addressed.
- In addition to Town-wide policies, specific urban design policies are provided for different areas of the Town where applicable.
- Innisfil's urban design policies are dispersed throughout the Plan to address different Town-wide topics, which place a strong focus on placemaking strategies. Design policies are also included to address development practices within specific areas of the Town as applicable.

City of St. Catharines Official Plan, 2012

- The City of St. Catharines Official Plan, or “The Garden City” Plan is focused on the development of an innovative, sustainable and well connected community.
- The policies are closely related to the community's identity of the Garden City. The urban design policies reflect an emphasis on the maintenance and enhancement of its gardens, parks, historical settings and natural amenities especially those located around the Niagara Escarpment and between Lake Ontario.
- Detailed urban design policies are provided within Section 4 of the Plan. The urban design guidelines set out policies for:
 - Built Form, which provides policy guidance for evaluating compatibility and achieving good design standards in development and redevelopment. Design policies are also provided for parking;
 - The Natural Environment, which seeks to protect and enhance the existing natural features, visibility and accessibility to them;
 - The Public Realm, which provide guidance streetscapes, squares, public buildings and open spaces including design priority areas;
 - Universal Access, which provides guidance for accessibility and providing a broad range of users with varying needs;
 - Landscaping, which provides policies on appropriate buffering and general landscape design; and
 - The encouragement and funding of public art in the City.
- The policies in the Official Plan throughout refer to the City's Urban Design Guidelines for further design direction on individual uses.

- There are also design criteria for individual uses such as drive thru's in Section 7.12.
- The Grand Niagara Secondary Plan includes policies for place-making which seek to provide a strong pedestrian realm that respects and strengthens the community's structure and natural heritage systems.

Dissimilar to Welland's Official Plan, the St. Catharines Official Plan provides one section to address urban design policies. The St. Catharines Official Plan sets out detailed policies for several urban design elements in the City with emphasis on the environment.

City of Niagara Falls Official Plan, April 2019 Consolidation

- The purpose of the Plan is to ensure that the City builds a pedestrian friendly, sustainable, and livable community through the use of urban design criteria and guidelines.
- Includes urban design strategy within its environmental management sections which include policies that pertain to both the public and private sectors.
- Separate urban design sections can be found in the various Secondary Plans which provide direction on public realm, streetscapes, public art, open spaces and gateway features.
- The City of Niagara Falls Official Plan does not contain one specific section on urban design, rather its design policies are dispersed throughout as they relate to different areas, designations and elements within the City.
- These sections include the provision of City-wide safe streets and appropriate landscaping policies where environmental management is addressed in the Plan and streetscape and comfort design policies where transportation is addressed.
- In addition to City-wide policies, specific urban design policies are provided for different areas of the City where applicable.

- Section 11 of the City of Niagara Falls Official Plan also provides policies for Community Improvement which speak to the rehabilitation and revitalization through community improvement plans to create attractive and safe communities.
- This section sets out policies for how to accomplish community improvement and criteria that should be considered when designating these areas.

City of Thorold Official Plan, 2016

- The City of Thorold Official Plan is focused on the protection and enhancement of Thorold's small-town character and seek to achieve livable, safe, accessible and attractive communities.
- Section A2.4 includes City-wide policies on the Urban Character seeking to maintain and enhance urban areas that respect the character of the neighbourhood.
- The City of Thorold Official Plan does not contain one specific section on urban design, rather it contains general design policies on development in the Downtown and intensification corridors and accessible design for new buildings. It also contains basic policies within different designations.
- All new buildings must incorporate accessible design including ramps, elevators/escalators and automatic doors.
- Detailed urban design criteria is set out in the Secondary Plans and include policies on gateway areas, private realm, building facades, landscaping, storage and parking.
 - These policies also set out major and minor streetscape areas that need improving.
- Section E1.7 also gives direction to Community Improvement which includes incentive and implementation methods, community improvement goals and criteria.
- The goals of this section seek to provide an attractive and safe community through social and economic development, private investment and conservation, maintenance and rehabilitation of developments and buildings with significant cultural significance.

Town of Fort Erie Official Plan, 2011

- Similar to Welland, the Fort Erie Official Plan also sets out its design policies throughout the Official Plan as they relate to different designations and areas.
- For example, there are design standards on industrial areas which provide basic policies for landscaping, building envelopes, buffering, outside storage and parking.
- Directions for urban design amongst various uses and complete communities are also set out in the Secondary Plans of the Town.

3.6 Opportunities for Welland

Based on a review of current urban design policies and directions from the Province, Region and City, as well as information from other recent Official Plans, the following

provides a summary of the opportunities to be explored further and addressed within the next stage of the Study:

- A large part of placemaking and creating complete communities involves community collaboration. It is important to ask what types of activities, uses and spaces the community would like to see be developed or improved, and how they would like these places to feel and look. This understanding will better help inform the implementation of the Official Plan as places are shaped and evolve over time.
- Urban design policies as they pertain to different land use designations should remain – this approach of having urban design policies throughout the plan ensures that urban design is at the forefront of land use planning decisions. However, the updated Official Plan could benefit from having a section of urban design policies that apply to all parts of the City. This section should also contain policies to introduce placemaking as an important element of the development of complete communities.
- The current Official Plan calls for the development of Urban Design Guidelines. The City developed Urban Design Guidelines in 2014 and the Official Plan should be updated to reflect those additions. It is important that the new design policies of the Official Plan will be comprehensive enough to appropriately guide City-wide urban design in a consistent and high-level manner that blends and incorporates the direction from the Welland and Niagara Urban Design Guidelines.
- The recently planned Northwest Welland Secondary Plan urban design policies and guideline documents should also be considered, with the opportunity to consolidate any direction that may be applicable across the entire City. The policies of the Official Plan should be evaluated to ensure they align with the direction provided within City's current urban design guideline documents and the Northwest Welland urban design guideline documents.

Currently, the urban design policies of the Official Plan largely focus on the development and design aspects of individual uses and accessibility. Over the years, placemaking and public realm design practices have become important aspects of successful complete communities within other current planning documents. Official Plan policies should be considered that provide more detailed design direction for public realm aspects, in order to provide a

framework for the development of the spaces in between individual sites. The Welland Official Plan could use the addition of City-wide public realm design policies with directions that speak to public parks, squares and urban squares, roads and lanes, views and focal points, the pedestrian environment and streetscape design. Similar to Innisfil's Official Plan, the policies could be enhanced to more specially focus on placemaking ensuring a primary focus for land use patterns and decisions, the design and programming of public spaces, as well as investment decisions.

- The adaptability and flexibility of urban design policies will be important as Welland continues to grow. The City's urban design policies should be structured to encourage development that may evolve and change over time, which may be achieved through specific street and block and/or built form guidance.
- Other Official Plans focus on the relationship of urban design and sustainability practices, as well as human health and wellness, in order to contribute to the creation of a complete community. The new Official Plan should consider stronger policy direction on sustainable design practices through further review of specific policies.
- The current Official Plan contains very general policies, and could use design policies that provide more specific direction as it relates to built form, compatibility, parking, access and loading and site design.

4 Active Transportation and Transit

Complete communities are dependent on safe, efficient and convenient access to active transportation and transit services. Active transportation consists of pedestrian sidewalks and trails, on- and off-road cycling routes, and all associated infrastructure (for example, bicycle parking facilities). Transit consists of publicly funded transportation methods including Niagara Region Transit, Welland Transit and TransCab, and GO Transit, as shown in **Figure 1**.

The following section provides a summary of the current direction provided for active transportation and transit by the Province, the Region and the City, followed by a review of policy best practices from other Official Plans. Based on this review, opportunities for the City's Official Plan Update are provided, to be explored further and addressed within the next phase of the Study.



Figure 1. Welland Transit Network

Source: Welland Transit Schedule

4.1 Provincial and Regional Direction

A new key focus in Provincial policy is supporting the achievement of complete communities with access to transit networks and active transportation options between residential, employment and institutional areas. The policies of the Provincial Policy Statement (PPS), Growth Plan and Niagara Region Official Plan emphasize the importance of transit in the creation of complete communities through the identification of strategic growth areas along transit corridors and surrounding major transit station areas, as well as supporting growth in areas with access and/or planned access to transit. The documents promote:

- An increase in the use of active transportation and transit before other modes of travel to mitigate negative impacts to air quality and climate change, and promote energy efficiency; and
- Linking residential areas to nearby office, retail, and open space areas, as well as to transit nodes to shorten commute journeys and decrease transportation congestion.
- The Niagara Regional Official Plan also sets out policies and directions for:
 - Coordinated Transportation System Planning;
 - Public Transit;
 - Active Transportation;
 - Complete Streets;
 - The Regional Road System;
 - Transportation Demand Management; and
 - Goods Movement
- Niagara Region will prioritize investment and expansion in public transit across the Region and ensure transit-supportive development that integrates with active transportation networks.

4.2 Current Direction within the City of Welland

- The following section provides a brief overview of the active transportation and transit policies of the City's Official Plan.
- Section 6.4 of the Welland Official Plan provides policies for transportation, roads, active transportation, transit, railways and accessibility.
- The planning objectives as set out in 6.4.1 of the Official Plan ask to provide an integrated, safe, responsible and coordinated transportation system that projects the future system needs, especially in cooperation with the Province and Region and supports a variety of modes including railways, automobiles, transit, cycling and pedestrian modes.

- The Plan's policies for transit are set out within Section 6.4.2.2 and generally include:
 - Encouraging its use through encouraging intensification around transit corridors and the Welland Transit Terminal to overall reduce automobile reliance;
 - Linking land uses with transit through the concentration of housing, employment and trail as well as other community service facilities, inter-city transit and parks;
 - Integrating transit with pedestrian linkages, trails and major roadways which provides convenient and direct access;
 - Ensuring all transit is within walking distance of all urban land uses; and
 - Ensuring accessibility, safety and comfort through the design of stops and transit locations.
- The Plan's policies for active transit are split up between policies on Cycling and policies which are set out within Section 6.4.2.3 and Section 6.4.2.4 and generally include:
 - Cycling considerations during road projects, bridge crossing and development to ensure safe accommodation to cyclists;
 - Establishing advisory committees to monitor and seek advice on cycling and allocating City budget towards improving cycling infrastructure;
 - Developing a safe, convenient and attractive pedestrian systems that is to scale and well maintained for citizens;
 - Ensuring smooth transitions between walkways and connectivity between transit stops; and
 - Reducing walking distance where available.

In addition to these policies, the Official Plan includes accessibility policies for transportation that support accessible design for buildings, parking and sidewalks.

4.3 Current Official Plan Best Practices

This section provides an overview of how active transportation and transit are addressed within other Official Plans.

City of St. Catharines Official Plan, 2012

- Section 5 of the St. Catharines Official Plan provides policies for transportation, roads, active transportation, transit, rail and parking.

- Following general policies outline the need for multi-modal transportation systems that complement existing and planned urban structures for a better public realm.
- Policies for alternative forms of transportation within the City are set out within Section 5.3 which include policies for transit, cycling and pedestrians.
- The Official Plan also contains policies that speak to Major Transit Station areas which plan to support development for a range of uses and functions at higher so to optimize the development and use of the Major Transit Station area.

Some relevant active transportation policies include:

- Implementation of a system level bicycle network on all arterial and collector roads;
- Continuous access to schools, recreation and cultural destinations, community services and other high traffic pedestrian centers; and
- The provision of active transportation amenities to help with safety, accessibility and convenience including lighting, continuous walkways and practical bicycle facilities including bicycle parking and racks.

Policies for transit generally include:

- Transit that supports pedestrian movement and works in conjunction with it such as providing bicycle parking facilities at major transit station and access to transit facilities within a maximum of 400m.
- Connections to the City's major activity areas, including the Downtown, employment areas and major transit station areas;
- Include the facilities to support multi-modal transportation to help move away from the use of the automobile.
- The addition of comfort and safety amenities at transit stops and stations such as seating areas, weather protection, and lighting.

City of Niagara Falls Official Plan, 1993

- Section 1.5 of the City of Niagara Falls Official Plan provides policies for transportation corridors, active transportation facilities, collector and local road network, rail and public transit.
- The general policies focus on increasing public and active transit ridership while decreasing the dependency on the automobile.
- It also prioritizes the movement of people and goods in a smooth and consistent fashion; and

- The efficient use of land along transportation corridors with an emphasis on comfort through street trees, benches and bus shelters.
- The Plan's policies for public transit are within Section 1.5.5 and sets a goal to increase public transit use by 3.2% including:
 - Encourage transit services near higher density residential developments, high employment concentration, intensification areas, nodes and intensification corridors, housing developments for people with special needs and social amenity areas such as the Niagara Parks;
 - Connecting transit service with City and Regional bike networks and pedestrian paths; and
 - Expansion of the commuter GO Transit services.
- City of Niagara Falls also sets out general policies for active transportation seek to increase bicycle and pedestrian trips and increase public facilities for public transportation including shared bicycle lanes, off-road recreational trails and bicycle parking facilities.

City of Thorold Official Plan, 2016

- Transportation policies are provided in Section D2 of the City of Thorold Official Plan and prioritize safe, accessible movement of people and goods. The policies in this section speak to access to the city by roads, public transit and active transportation.
- The public transit and active transportation policies are minimal with direction to provide more policies in Secondary Plans and an Active Transportation Plan.
- Transportation policies of the Rolling Meadows Secondary Plan outline the anticipated changing nature of the transit network in the City and consideration that it will evolve.
- The Port Robinson West Secondary Plan transportation policies identify specific areas that need improvement.
- The Brock Business Park Area Secondary Plan seeks to accommodate all modes of transportation and sets out proposed improvements to the transit networks.

Town of Fort Erie Official Plan, 2011

- Transportation policies are provided in Section 2.3.12 and 2.3.13 of the Town of Fort Erie Official Plan.
- The policies set out goals that prioritize and consider active transportation as well as it's connectivity from neighbourhoods to employment uses, commercial uses and community facilities.

- Some objectives that the Town has put out include:
 - Establish an Active Transportation Advisory Committee;
 - Ensure low commute times, convenience, safety, low-cost and adequate design for users;
 - Conduct studies to identify what improvements and opportunities there are for transportation; and
 - Develop a hierarchy of roads that recognizes functionality.
- Active transportation policies are set out within Section 2.3.13 and emphasize the encouragement of public participation in the development of the Official Plan, land use and transportation plans.
- Various transportation policies including improvements in specific areas are set out in the Secondary Plans.

4.4 Opportunities for Welland

Based on a review of current active transportation and transit policies and directions from the Province, Region and City, as well as information from other recent Official Plans, the following provides a summary of the opportunities to be explored further and addressed within the next stage of the Study:

- The overall vision (goals and objectives) for the Welland Official Plan is not reflective of the importance of public transit and active transportation systems in the development of a complete community. This should be addressed and updated in the next stages of this Study and in response to feedback received from public engagement.
- The policies of the Official Plan should be based on the City's most recent transit and trail routes (and any future plans) and should provide direction for the implementation of new active transportation or transit routes where they may be needed within the community.
- The Updated Official Plan transportation policies should be updated to ensure consistency with the Region's long term vision for the transportation network found in the Region's Transportation Master Plan (2017).
- The Official Plan policies should be updated to include implementation mechanisms geared towards achieving the active transportation and transit objectives of the City, as other Official Plans have done, which could include specific short and long term goals.

- Detailed complete street and streetscape design policies should be considered that demonstrate how different modes should be accommodated within the City that place an emphasis on pedestrians, cyclists and transit.
- Welland should consider the development of a Transportation Master Plan and either a dedicated section to Active Transit within it or the consideration of an Active Transportation Master Plan to further support the advancement of active transportation within the community. The Official Plan update should contain policies to support the development of a Transportation Plan and Active Transportation Master Plan.
- As outlined in the Policy Gap Background review, the Updated Official Plan should introduce policies that support the construction of transit and cycling infrastructure in a complete streets approach when streets are being repaired or new streets are being planned and building upon the existing trail system (GP 3.2.2.3).

5 Parks, Open Spaces and Community Facilities



The provision of appropriate community services and facilities serve as a community's foundation and contribute to the successful operation, ongoing development and vibrancy of a healthy, strong and complete community. This section of the Background review provides a summary of the current direction for parks, open spaces, community services and facilities required by the Province and the City, followed by a review of policy best practices from other Official Plans. Based on this review, opportunities for the City's Official Plan Update are provided, to be explored further and addressed within the next phase of the Study.

5.1 Provincial Direction

- The PPS and Growth Plan set out direction for the efficient provision of existing and planned public service facilities, as well as their strategic location to meet the needs of all residents.
- Both the PPS and Growth Plan encourage the co-location of public service facilities within community hubs, where appropriate, in order to promote cost-effectiveness, integrate services and provide access to active transportation and transit.
- Specifically, the Growth Plan encourages the maintenance and adaptation of existing public service facilities and spaces, and those that are located near strategic growth areas and are transit accessible should be the preferred location of community hubs.

5.2 Current Direction within the City of Welland

5.2.1 Welland Official Plan

The following section provides a brief overview of the community services and facilities policies of the City's Official Plan and Parks, Recreation and Culture Master Plan.

- Section 6.2 of the Welland Official Plan provides general land use policies for parks, open spaces and recreation.
- The planning objectives as set out in 6.2.1 of the Official Plan call for the fulfillment of an integrated and diverse system of parks and open spaces that provide linkages to important destinations within the City to serve citizen needs.
- Parks and open spaces should provide recreational opportunities and multi-purpose uses to maximize investment.

- The protection and management of waterfront lands is encouraged.
- The remainder provides direction on permitted uses, park hierarchy size, design, trail connections and golf courses

5.2.2 Welland Parks, Recreation and Culture Master Plan

- The City of Welland Parks and Recreation Master Plan was created in 2019 and is used to guide the provision of the parks and recreation facilities for over a 10 year period. The plan was guided by City Council, Staff and Welland residents.
- The Plan's Vision outlines:
 - A need for connectivity, creativity and play which seek to connect parks, recreation and culture services to each other;
 - Providing several activities and interests that will promote healthy life styles that overall strengthen citizen's quality of lives; and
 - Facilitating creativity through a strong arts and cultural system.
- The plan places strong significance on the Welland Recreational Corridor (WRC) and Welland Canal as it defines the "heart" of the City's parks and culture.
- The Plan provides an overview of the current supply and parkland need for the next 10 years including recommendations for parkland revitalization and renewal efforts. Recommendations that support these endeavours are:
 - Acquiring parkland in future development areas and maximizing allowable land contributions as set out in the Ontario Planning Act;
 - Prepare a Trails or Active Transportation Master Plan to clearly identify routes for residents and visitors; and
 - Ensure comfort elements such as shade, seating, lighting and/or washrooms as a part of parks development and revitalization.
- The recommendations of the Parks, Recreation and Culture Master Plan should be reviewed and incorporated into the Official Plan update where appropriate.

5.3 Current Official Plan Best Practices

The following section provides an overview of how community facilities are addressed within other Official Plans.

City of St. Catharines Official Plan, 2012

- Policies for St. Catharines Green Spaces are set out in Section 13 of the City's Official Plan which include policies on parkland and open space in Section 13.1
- The policies outline a need to ensure a connected system of parks, open spaces and trail systems that conserve the natural environment while contributing to the benefit and enjoyment of residents.

- Where parks and open spaces are inadequate, the City will step in to restore.
- The Parkland and Open Space designations are intended to provide opportunities for both active and passive recreation.
- A range of different uses are permitted within the designation which should all generally be located within designated areas provided that it ensures attractive design, minimal slopes and does not conflict with policies related to natural hazard lands, natural heritage and cultural heritage.
- Parkland is classified and organized in order to identify City needs and types of parks required by different areas.
- Parkland acquisition will be prioritized to achieve the needs of the Parks Policy Plan and Recreation Master Plan.
- The City recommends undertaking several studies to develop a consolidated City-wide Trails Master Plan, Gateway Master Plan and Cycling Master Plan for City Parks.

City of Niagara Falls Official Plan, 1993

Section B1.6 of the City of Thorold Official Plan sets out policies for open space, which promote and enhance an attractive community through the maintenance of recreation and open spaces. The policies in this section set out permitted uses and secondary uses and generally encourage the following:

- Acquisition of land by public agencies;
- Integration and linkage of areas especially along major utility corridors especially for pedestrian walkways, bicycle paths and passive recreational use;
- Collaboration with Federal, Provincial and local agencies to support the conservation and maintenance of open spaces and significant environmental features;
- The recognition of estate residential developments within Open Space designations.
- Open space policies are also dispersed throughout the Official Plan as they pertain to certain areas and designations. The policies in these sections speak to design elements and policies in specific areas including Open Space Plan maps.

City of Thorold Official Plan, 2016

Section 12 of the City of Niagara Falls Official Plan sets out policies for open space, which ensure accessibility to well-planned, accessible parks that support active transportation modes.

- Policies in this section include defining permitted uses and components of open space and parks designations.

- Component of open space and parks identify specific areas that include major parks in settlement arts, other public parkland, Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority Lands, Greater Niagara Circle Route and Hydro Corridors.
- These uses shall support public open space and public transportation as set out in the designation's purpose.
- Secondary Plans within the Official Plan contain additional direction for open spaces including parkland requirements and locations.
- Public Parkland policies are also found in Section D4.4 which set out policies for dedication of land during development processes and parkland development policies.
- The City's Parks and Recreation Master Plan shall take precedent over any Official Plan policies.

Town of Fort Erie Official Plan, 2011

- Intent for Open Spaces are set out in Section 2.3.7 which seek to ensure access to diverse active and passive open space recreation opportunities through:
 - Establishing hierarchies for open spaces and promoting recreational opportunities;
 - Facilitate development through the use of abandoned railways that support active transportation; and
 - Preserve natural heritage features and functions.
- General policies for Open Spaces are set out in Section 4.13. Development standards are outlined, along with policies that define permitted uses and secondary uses of the designation.
- The Town of Fort Erie Official Plan also provides policies for Social and Community Needs in Section 2.3.2 which ensure sustainable, accessible and adequate development and community services that protect the community identity of the Town.
- These policies encourage joint use of social, community and institutional facilities, cooperation with the government to establish community facilities where needed and enhancing the community's quality of life.
- Policies for Communities and Neighbourhoods are set out in 2.3.3. These policies foster the development of accessible, attractive, compact, livable and healthy communities that maintain community identity.
- The Town's Parks and Open Space Master Plan provide detail on gaps, community needs and long term implementation.

5.4 Opportunities for Welland

Based on a review of current community facility and institutional use policies and directions from the City, as well as information from other recent Official Plans, the following provides a summary of the opportunities to be explored further and addressed within the next stage of the Study.

- The PPS and Growth Plan set out direction to identify the need for new “community hubs” and encourage the co-location of community facilities in order to facilitate multiple community uses under one roof or facility. The policies of the Welland Official Plan should further emphasize this concept and provide measures to meet this goal.
- The Northwest Welland Secondary Plan policies could be considered and included within the parent policies of the Official Plan.
- The City’s Parks and Recreation Master Plan provides a list of 47 recommendations to direct the City’s parks, open space and culture for the next 10 years. The recommendations should be considered as part of the update to the Official Plan.
- Urban design implications for community facilities should be considered as policies are developed as they relate to building design, the public realm and connections to parks and open spaces.
- The next stages of the Study should include a review of the City’s existing community facilities, as well as consideration for future facilities, based on feedback from the public and land use considerations.

6 Cultural Heritage



This section of the Background review provides a summary of the current direction for cultural heritage required by the Province and the City, followed by a review of policy best practices from other Official Plans. Based on this review, opportunities for the City's Official Plan Update are provided, to be explored further and addressed within the next phase of the Study.

6.1 Provincial and Regional Direction

6.1.1 Provincial Policy Statement and Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe

- The PPS and Growth Plan set out direction for the conservation of Cultural Heritage resources in a way that protects and maximizes the communities uniqueness and attractiveness.
- Both documents outline the need to conserve and protect significant cultural heritage landscapes and resources that help support the social, economic and cultural well-being of communities.
- This can be done through the monitoring of planning authorities who should encourage archaeological management plans and working with First Nations and Metis communities to develop Official Plan policies that ensure wise use and management of cultural heritage resources.
- Overall, conserving cultural heritage resources will help foster a sense of place.

6.1.2 Ontario Heritage Act and Niagara Regional Official Plan

- The Ontario Heritage Act sets out criteria for determining cultural heritage value and prevents its demolition in order to conserve heritage resources.
- New legislation, which came into effect on July 1, 2021, gives power to appeal demolition of designated heritage properties.
- The amendments come through Bill 108, the More Homes, More Choice Act, 2019 (Bill 108).
- Niagara Region uses the provisions of provincial documents such as the Ontario Heritage Act to help guide protection of significant built heritage resources and cultural heritage landscapes.
- The Region encourages municipalities to establish Municipal Heritage Committees that will assist with the preparation of Conservation Plans and Archaeological Management Plans.

6.2 Current Direction within the City of Welland

- Section 6.6 of the Welland Official Plan provides policy directions for arts, culture and heritage in the City of Welland.
- The planning objectives as set out in 6.2.1 of the Official Plan encourage the maintenance and enhancement of cultural and heritage resources and landscapes including the protection amongst districts and will continue to support arts and culture within the area while maintaining quality design.
- The policies in this plan generally speak to the protection of landscapes and cultural heritage through different avenues including:
 - Advisory committees to consult on heritage matters;
 - The requirement for Archaeological Resource Assessments;
 - The tracking of heritage building inventory and use of heritage designations, districts and site specific properties to ensure protection; and
 - Supporting arts and cultural activities in Welland as well as encouraging the display of art.
- Policies for Heritage Impact Assessments are located within Requirements for all Studies in Section 7.11.16 and may require these studies if site alteration or development has any potential negative impact on cultural heritage resources.

6.3 Current Official Plan Best Practices

The following section provides an overview of how community facilities are addressed within other Official Plans.

City of St. Catharines Official Plan, 2012

- Policies for St. Catharines Cultural Heritage designations are set out in Section 3 of the City's Official Plan, which are to conserve and enhance cultural heritage as it benefits the local economy.
- The general policies of this section support the identification and protection of cultural heritage including continuing use and reusing.
- The City shall provide awareness to appreciation of heritage and will ensure mitigation of any negative effects on heritage during development/redevelopment.
- Other policies set out in this section give direction to:
 - Heritage Designation, which provide criteria for evaluating heritage significance;

- Heritage Registrar, Archaeological Resources and Cultural Heritage Landscape; which outline the need for inventory plans management plans and lists;
- Cultural Heritage Impact Assessments, which outline the potential need for studies when a site is developed, altered or redeveloped and could potentially pose a threat to the cultural heritage resource; and
- Implementation, which sets out ways in which the City should help encourage the conservation and enhancement of cultural heritage resources.

City of Niagara Falls Official Plan, 1993

- Cultural Heritage policies are located within the Environmental Management Part of the Plan in Section 4.
- The City shall appoint citizen representatives to form a Heritage Committee which will address all heritage matters for the City;
- The policies set out criteria for the Heritage Committee in identifying studying and assessing the designation and conservation of cultural heritage value and properties.
- Policies also include considerations for zoning by-law amendments for heritage properties and general policies which speak to the intent of conserving and maintained to protect the heritage and history of the City as well as attract economic development

City of Thorold Official Plan, 2016

- Cultural Heritage policies are provided in Section A2.7 of the City of Thorold Official Plan. It's goal is to identify, conserve and enhance the City's significant cultural heritage resources.
- Some objectives that the City has put out include:
 - Encouraging retention and development that is appropriate scale;
 - Encourage economic development through cultural heritage resources by increasing tourism and enhancing the surrounding character;
 - Prevent the demolition and certain alterations of cultural heritage resources and to promote awareness of them; and
 - Identify cultural heritage inventory and bringing awareness to it.
- Section D3 also sets out policies and tools that help with managing heritage and archaeological resources within the City such as:
 - Heritage Impact Assessment;
 - Built Heritage and Cultural Landscape Resources; and
 - Archaeological Assessment Requirements.

- It provides policies that speak to the Planning Act and Heritage Act to help with identifying significance.
- Policies in Section E1.7.2 encourage the conservation of cultural heritage significance as a way to improve communities.

Town of Fort Erie Official Plan, 2011

- Section 2.3.10 of the Fort Erie Official Plan sets out goals and objectives for Cultural Heritage which seeks to conserve, research and promote heritage and archaeological significance.
- The objectives encourage sympathetic development, retention, collection and preservation and designating heritage properties to celebrate the cultural heritage diversity.
- Section 11 of the Plan gives extensive direction for the protection and enhancement of Fort Erie's Cultural Heritage.
- The general policies include information on appointing a Municipal Museum and Cultural Heritage Committee to be responsible for managing and identifying cultural heritage in the Town as well as any development and requirements for development. It also gives direction for what to do until the Committee and Museum have been established.
- This section also includes policies on:
 - Cultural Heritage Landscapes;
 - Built Heritage;
 - Archaeological sites;
 - Moveable heritage (artifacts and archives); and
 - Intangible heritage.
- Each sub-section includes definitions and ways in which the categories of cultural heritage need to be coordinated and managed by the Municipal Museum and Cultural Heritage Community.

6.4 Opportunities for Welland

Based on a review of current cultural heritage policies and directions from the City, as well as information from other recent Official Plans, the following provides a summary of the opportunities to be explored further and addressed within the next stage of the Study.

- The Cultural Heritage policies for Welland are simplistic compared to the policies set out in some of the other plans reviewed. Several policies refer back to the Ontario Heritage Act for criteria on how to designate and identify cultural heritage

whereas the City of St. Catharines and the City of Niagara Falls provide a thorough direction for planning processes. Welland could benefit from a more comprehensive Cultural Heritage section in the Official Plan.

- Policies for heritage impact assessments should also be incorporated within the Cultural Heritage Section for easy readability and relevance like the other examples of Official Plans reviewed.
- The new Amendment to the Ontario Heritage Act and any new changes should be considered and included within the parent policies of the Official Plan.

