

REPORT TO: Mayor James M. Diodati
and Members of Municipal Council

SUBMITTED BY: Planning, Building & Development

SUBJECT: **PBD-2016-22**
Official Plan Amendment No. 117
Thundering Waters Secondary Plan
Applicant: GR (CAN) Investments Ltd.
Endorsement of Draft Secondary Plan Principles and
Objectives

RECOMMENDATION

That Council support the future growth of the Thundering Waters (Paradise) area through the preparation of a Secondary Plan using the draft principles and objectives outlined in this report and with input received from the public and agencies.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

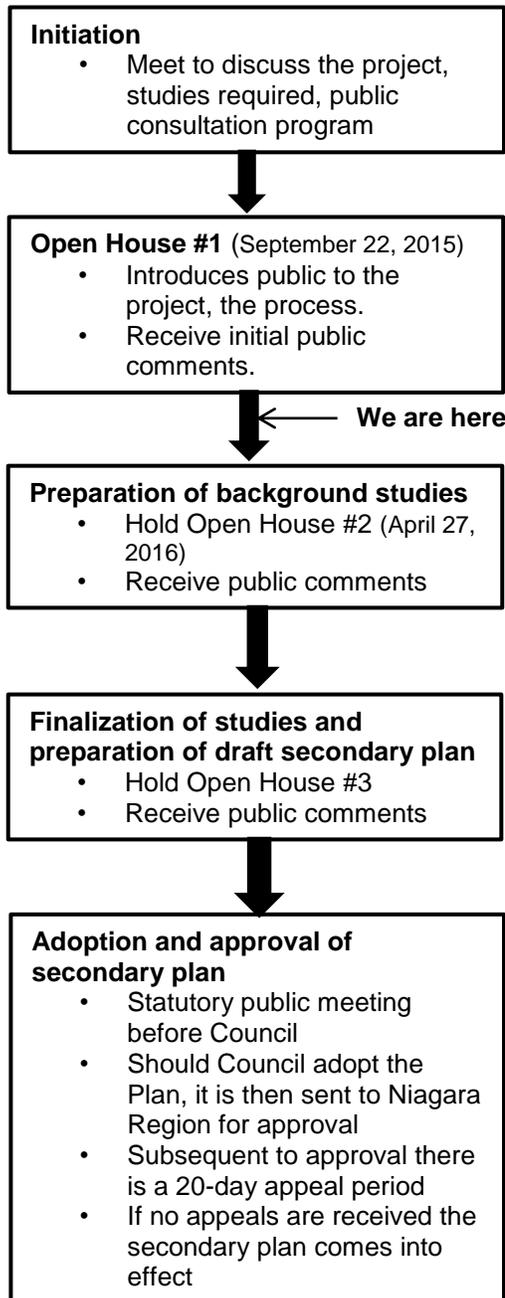
The City's Official Plan was amended (OPA # 81) by Council in 2008 to recognize the lands south of McLeod Road extending to Chippawa Parkway between Dorchester Road and Stanley Avenue as an area for future residential growth while protecting the natural heritage features. These lands were identified as Special Policy Area # 56 which requires that the area be developed based on the preparation of a Secondary Plan.

GR (CAN) Investments Ltd. (GR (CAN)) is undertaking a secondary plan study of approximately 196 ha (484 ac) of land (see Location Map - Appendix I) where 115 ha (284 ac) will be developed for residential, commercial, institutional and employment uses. The remaining 81 ha (200 ac), or 42 % of the total area, are provincially significant wetlands which are to be protected through the Environmental Protection Area policies of the Official Plan. (Note: A portion of SP Area # 56 is currently being developed as the Oldfield Subdivision.)

GR (CAN) has commenced a number of studies (environmental, transportation, servicing, land use) which will be used to formulate the Secondary Plan policies. These studies should be concluded in the near future. In addition, GR (CAN) has brought forward five (5) draft principles with objectives which will serve as the framework from which the secondary land use concepts and policies will be formulated. Council is to receive comments at the public meeting which will assist in the secondary plan preparation.

The purpose of presenting the draft principles and objectives, at this time, is to inform City Council of the basis for the secondary plan, introduce a draft concept plan of land use layout and to receive public comments. Input from the public meeting will be referred to staff and the consultants to inform the study and secondary plan preparation. Adoption of this report does not constitute formal adoption under the Planning Act.

Secondary Plan Process



BACKGROUND

GR (CAN) Investments Ltd. (GR (CAN)) began consultation with City staff and others in 2015 on the process of developing a secondary plan for the area referred to as Thundering Waters. The Secondary Plan Area is composed of approximately 484 ha (see Location Map - Appendix 1). A portion of the lands were previously converted from Industrial to Residential in 2008 (Official Plan Amendment (OPA) No. 81) with a portion of the lands designated as Environmental Protection Area (as further amended by OPA No. 96). The lands are identified as Special Policy Area # 56 which requires the preparation of a Secondary Plan prior to development taking place.

Staff and agencies have met with GR (CAN), as is standard practice, initially to advise them of various studies which are necessary to prepare a Secondary Plan. The dialogue with GR (CAN) and the consultants has, and will continue the secondary planning process. At this point, GR (CAN) is in the latter stages of preparing the various reports, including:

- environmental impact study;
- transportation study;
- servicing study;
- land use compatibility; and
- planning analysis report.

Work is continuing following the Secondary Plan process.

The Secondary Plan Process

Secondary Plans are a refinement to the Official Plan and provide a detailed set of policies and schedules that guide and direct growth, establish design criteria and protect natural heritage. The Official Plan provides that secondary plans are to be adopted as amendments to the Official Plan.

The Planning Act requires that amendments provide for at least one open house (or Public Information Centre - PIC) and one statutory public meeting prior to the adoption of the amendment. In the case of a secondary plan preparation there are numerous issues that have to be studied and addressed; accordingly, additional public and stakeholder consultation has been incorporated. The process, being followed, is outlined to above.

The first open house for the Thundering Waters Secondary Plan (TWSP) was held on September 22, 2015, to inform the public that a secondary plan was being contemplated and to receive input. A separate stakeholder meeting was held with the Stanley Avenue Business Park Association. The Second Open House is scheduled for April 27, 2016. Planning staff and the consultants will be in attendance to present a preliminary concept plan and draft principles and objectives. Public input will be sought to refine the land use layout and policy regime which will lead to the preparation of the draft secondary plan.

Principles and Objectives

GR (CAN) has brought forward a land use concept plan (see Appendix 2) which shows an overall development scheme for the entire area. The concept plan depicts arterial and collector road systems, including a possible bridge connection. Large areas of the plan are slated as Environmental Protection Area and Open Space (dark and light green colours). Residential areas are identified as both low and medium density (yellow and orange). A commercial centre (red colour) has been identified as well as employment lands (brown). This plan may be further refined through the consultation process.

The concept plan together with five (5) draft principles (see Appendix 3) and corresponding objectives have been submitted by GR (CAN) to serve as the basis of the plan. The principles for the secondary plan are as follows:

1. Create a healthy, complete community.
2. Create a sustainable, resilient green community.
3. Create a dynamic residential community.
4. Development of a linked open space system and natural heritage system.
5. Create employment opportunities and support a vibrant local economy.

Support for these draft principles will provide an opportunity to prepare secondary plan policies. The draft principles and objectives may also be further refined through the consultation process. Finalization of the background studies and draft secondary plan will then proceed to a final open house and a statutory meeting before City Council. Support of the principles and objectives does not constitute formal adoption under the Planning Act.

Biodiversity Offsetting

The attached plan represents a land use concept under current local, Regional and Provincial documents and legislation. Biodiversity offsetting of PSW's is currently not permitted by the Provincial Policy Statement (PPS). However, at some point in the future, should the Province provide opportunities for biodiversity offsetting, the proponents could submit an application to amend the planning documents under the Planning Act to take advantage of any legislative change.

FINANCIAL/STAFFING/LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Support for the Secondary Plan and the principles and objectives appended to this report do not have financial/staffing/legal implications.

CITY'S STRATEGIC COMMITMENT

Support for the Secondary Plan principles and objectives is consistent with Council's strategic commitment to economic growth.

LIST OF ATTACHMENTS

- Appendix 1 – Location Map
- Appendix 2 – Preliminary Concept Plan
- Appendix 3 – Principles and Objectives

Recommended by:

Alex Herlovitch, Director of Planning, Building & Development

Respectfully submitted:

Ken Todd, Chief Administrative Officer

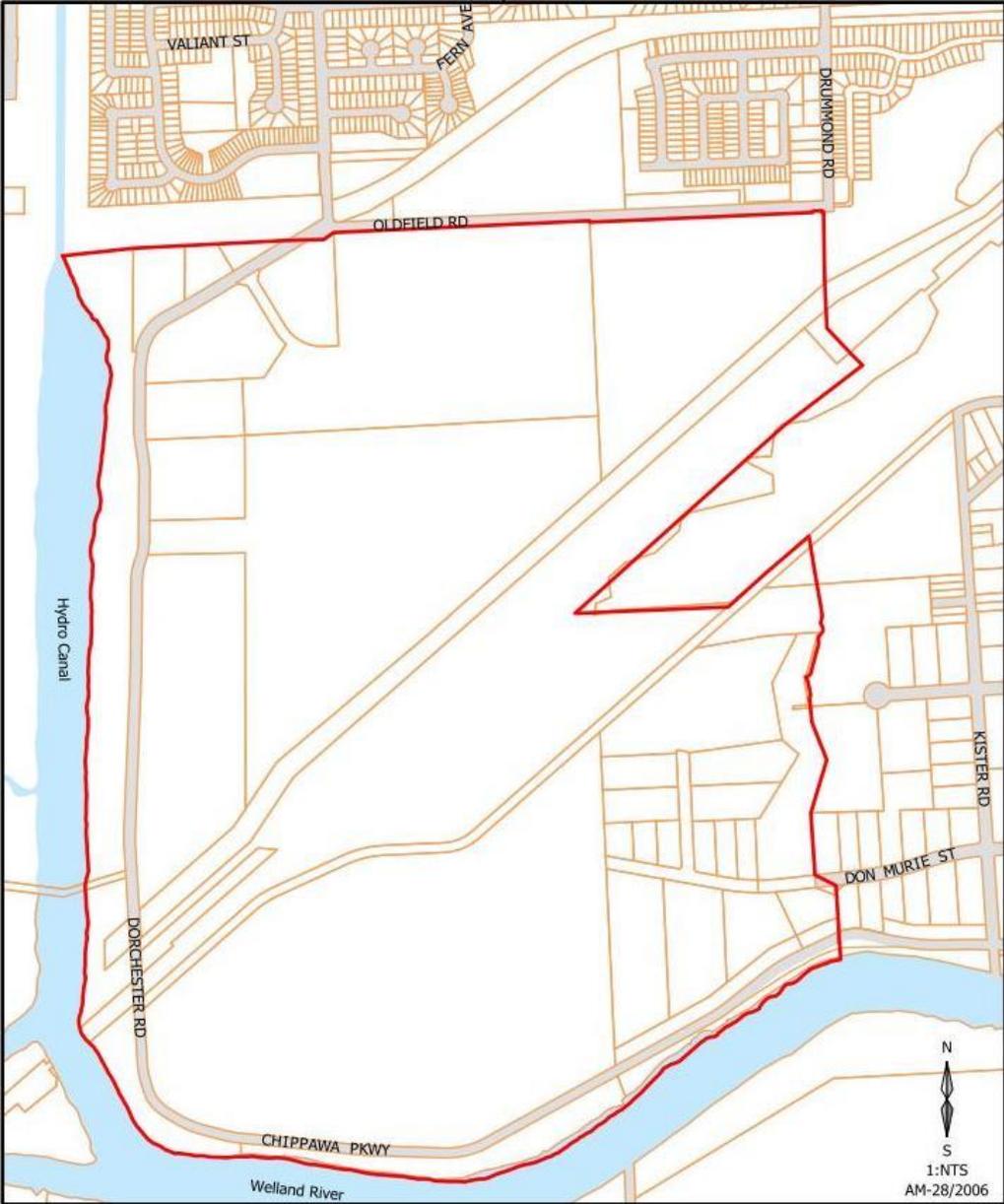
J.Barnsley/A. Herlovitch
Attach.

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APPENDIX 1

Location Map

Thundering Waters Secondary Plan Area



APPENDIX 3

Thundering Waters Secondary Plan

DRAFT Principles and Objectives

The following principles and objectives are to be achieved in the Thundering Waters Secondary Plan Area.

1. Principle – Create a Healthy, Complete Community

The Secondary Plan is designed to create a safe, liveable, attractive, healthy and multicultural community, which will provide living, working, learning, recreational and community services opportunities. This complete community will be based on a balanced environment with linkages to the natural features that encourage healthy, active living and create a strong sense of community.

Objectives

- (a) to create a vibrant, memorable community core which is focused on lively streets that provide local residents and tourists with a multicultural setting and which acts as the focal point and draw for the community;
- (b) to create an interconnected street system that is transit-supportive, comfortable and engaging for pedestrians and efficiently transports people and goods;
- (c) to provide for a range of residential, commercial, employment, institutional, community and retirement facilities and uses that meets the daily and weekly needs of residents and employees;
- (d) to create an interwoven system of parks, greenways, trails and open space linkages throughout the community that encourages active transportation and a healthy lifestyle and facilitates connections to nearby recreational opportunities;
- (e) to integrate into the existing context and protect and minimize conflicts with adjacent industrial uses by mitigating any potential environmental air quality, noise and vibration effects.

2. Principle – Create a Sustainable, Resilient, Green Community

Approximately 42 percent of the Secondary Plan Area will be protected for natural heritage features which provide the basis for a healthy and "green" community that is developed in harmony with the environment. The community will draw inspiration from water both externally through visual connections to the Welland River and Canal and internally through the water features. The community will embrace the outdoors and will be focused on "green" design and building strategies.

Objectives

- (a) to sustain and enhance the natural environment through protection of key wetlands features and associated buffers and promote opportunities for functional linkages of protected areas using a combination of natural corridors and green space and special features which are incorporated into the built form;
- (b) to maintain and improve the hydrological function of the protected wetlands;
- (c) to provide for views to natural areas, parks and open spaces as well as to the Welland River and Canal where possible in order to assist in the creation of a unique sense of place;
- (d) to provide contemporary municipal services (water, wastewater and storm) which satisfies the requirements of the regulatory bodies, and to encourage the use of storm water management best management practices, where appropriate, which mimic the natural hydrology of the area and protect water quality;
- (e) to promote travel by more sustainable and less environmentally harmful modes of transportation, such as walking and cycling;
- (f) to preserve existing mature trees located outside of the environmental protection areas where possible and to integrate them into the built environment; and
- (g) to encourage environmentally sustainable development, construction and servicing standards which consider climate change resiliency.

3. Principle - Create a Dynamic Residential Community

To develop a dynamic residential community with its own special character that integrates with the established character of the Niagara Falls urban area and ensures land use compatibility with surrounding areas, while providing for a diverse range of housing types and densities that caters to people in all stages of their lifecycle and allows for a range of affordability levels.

Objectives

- (a) to ensure that the residential built form contains a range of low to high rise buildings in the Secondary Plan Area and ensures an appropriate transition between housing types;
- (b) to meet the needs of residents of all ages including children, students, adults, and seniors, and ensure that development is accessible to all abilities;
- (c) to provide a range of affordability, consistent with targets established by Regional Niagara; and

- (d) to develop neighbourhoods that each have a "sense of place" created by the design of the development, including the pedestrian orientation of the buildings and streetscapes, and the provision of parks and greenways which are designed to facilitate interaction.

4. Principle - Development of a Linked Open Space System and Natural Heritage System

A linked open space, greenways, Environmental Protection, and parkland system, which collectively forms the basis of the natural heritage system (NHS), is a central feature of the community. The road pattern is designed to provide accessibility to the natural heritage and open space system both physically and visually. Parks and greenways are also used as central "meeting places" for neighbourhoods and sub-neighbourhoods to increase the quality of life for residents.

Objectives

- (a) to integrate parkland and key community features with the greenways and open space system;
- (b) to provide connected public open spaces throughout the community to enhance connectivity as well as provide view corridors;
- (c) to integrate the Con Rail drain into the design of the community as a receiver of treated drainage as a component of the storm water management systems and an aesthetic enhancement to the community; and
- (d) to ensure that development protects significant natural heritage features by providing appropriate separation distances and buffers;

5. Principle - Create Employment Opportunities and support a Vibrant Local Economy

Creating a variety of employment opportunities in the Secondary Plan Area in order to provide opportunities for employment close to home will be essential to the development of a complete community.

Objectives

- (a) to retain the existing employment designations on Dorchester Road, recognize existing industry on Oldfield Road and create new employment opportunities through the creation of an office business area adjacent to the Stanley Avenue Business Park;
- (b) to create a new community core located on Dorchester Road which provides for a variety of commercial, entertainment, health care and tourist facilities and to create new institutional facilities all of which provide a variety of employment opportunities;

- (c) to achieve high quality urban design on employment and commercial lands; and
- (d) to provide an efficient, integrated transportation network that enables connectivity between employment and residential areas, maintains linkages to the greater community, accommodates the long term travel needs of the area and supports the use of all modes of transportation (including walking, cycling and public transit).