

Re-designation of Ontario Street property approved

Dec. 1, 2020 — Last night Council approved amendments to the City's Official Plan, which included the re-designation of industrial land on Ontario Street for residential and mixed-use purposes.

"In the past month, Council has taken significant strides to put in place policies and programs that will transform St. Catharines," explained Mayor Walter Sendzik.

"Council's decision to change the designation of the former GM lands on Ontario Street from industrial to residential and commercial uses, combined with the recently approved Community Improvement Plan, sets the stage for a tremendous amount of growth – not just on Ontario Street – but in many other areas of the city as well. As we emerge from the impacts of COVID-19 on our community, the recent decisions of Council will help drive our collective return to prosperity."

Changes to the City's Official Plan were triggered by direction to study the potential redevelopment of industrial land located at 282 to 285 Ontario Street to allow for mixed-use purposes. This change required an amendment to the Official Plan, and as such a comprehensive city-wide Land Needs Assessment was completed by the City's Planning and Building Services department.

"This latest version of the Official Plan represents three years of dedicated research, growth management calculations, policy analysis and collaboration with the Province, Region, public and stakeholders to ensure our city has adequate lands for employment, population and housing targets to 2041 and beyond," said Director of Planning and Building Services Tami Kitay.

The city is expected to grow by roughly 31,000 people by 2041, which according to the Land Needs Assessment will require over 14,000 new dwelling units to accommodate that growth. The City is also expected to accommodate for the provision of 18,000 new jobs during this time.

The recommendations approved at Council mean the re-designation of 60 hectares of Employment Land to Mixed Use Land, which will provide for a variety of housing and employment opportunities. This included the properties at 282 to 285 Ontario and lands west and south of the Niagara Health St. Catharines site on Fourth Avenue.

"These changes reflect a very significant re-alignment to the City's land-use structure and landscape," said Senior City Planner Bruce Bellows. "They provide opportunities for new housing, jobs and accommodation of growth within our finite urban area, and as such, enabling protection of our world class agricultural lands at the same time. The changes provide a balance towards complete community, and a footprint for sustainable growth management for the benefit of future generations."

Changes to the City of St. Catharines' Official Plan will now go before the Niagara Region for final approval.

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