

2022-02-07

**ERIE ROAD LOTS, CRYSTAL BEACH – RECONSIDERATION FOR URBAN BOUNDARY EXPANSION**

David Heyworth, RPP

Niagara Region Planning Department

1815 Sir Isaac Brock Way,

Thorold, ON L2V 4T7

Dear David,

I am writing this letter on behalf of the property owners of seven unaddressed parcels of land along Erie Road “subject lands” – Roll Number west to east 270302001739400 – 270302001738900 regarding the lands not being further investigated for inclusion to the Crystal Beach urban boundary expansion. This is a formal letter for reconsideration, as explained below.

The reason for the request of reconsideration of these lands into the Crystal Beach urban boundary expansion would be to allow a rezoning to permit the development of a single-detached dwelling per lot. Driveway access and building footprint layout would be lot-specific, so as to work within the confines of the existing trees on the lands, minimizing any potential tree removal.

The existing zoning on the Subject Lands is Neighbourhood Development (ND). According to Fort Erie Planning staff, this is a placeholder zone and would require the lots to be rezoned to R1 (Residential 1 Zone) before single detached dwellings could be built. To rezone would trigger an Official Plan Amendment (OPA) because the current designation on the lands is Environmental Protection. In understanding an amendment to the Official Plan designation, we would be subject to provide an Environmental Impact Study of the lands.

The subject lands are located along the north side of Erie Road, approximately 130 meters west of Willowood Avenue and is bounded by the existing urban boundary along the south and eastern property lines. The subject lands are comprised of seven (7) individual lots, with frontages ranging from 11 meters to 18 meters per lot. Collectively, the site has a frontage of about 109 meters along Erie Road, and a depth of about 55 meters. The total size of the site is about 1.5 acres, or 0.6 hectares. Please see **Appendix A – Subject Lands**.

The physical makeup of the subject lands features trees and brush. Tree coverage appears patchy and sparse throughout the majority of the subject lands, and prior to January 24<sup>th</sup>, there was no mapped wetland or substantial area of wetland buffer that would prohibit development. A species at risk records for the area has documented a snake species dating back to 1987 and is not considered to have been extirpated. We understand this would likely result in a field search to locate snake or snake habitats on these lands prior to any development.

We recognize the subject lands fall within the mapped extent of the Provincial Natural Heritage System (NHS), and additionally, the tabular summary of the Municipal Comprehensive Review (MCR) Assessment

Criteria would place the subject lands within the pink/red square “All shown as NHS”. One concern taken from the Provincial NHS mapping is this is a very wide-ranged scope and does not seem to reflect actual site-specific conditions. To expand this point, NHS has mapped over portions of long-established businesses, homes, farmsteads, and corn fields where there are currently no natural features.

Further, an updated NHS mapping was provided on January 24<sup>th</sup> to the public (see **Appendix B** – NHS mapping). This included an overlay in blue across the subject lands as “Other Wetlands Non-Provincially Significant”. In the Niagara Official Plan – Natural Environment System (Draft, December 1, 2021), “other wetlands” is defined as the means lands that meet the definition of a wetland, and which have not been evaluated as a provincially significant wetland.

Understanding this information, this should at least be considered a trigger for further investigation of the subject land’s physical attributes, as there have been many other sites similar across the region that have built single detached houses, while still respecting the existing natural heritage features on site (including wooded lots). As stated during the January 26<sup>th</sup> Virtual Open House, staff have recommended parcels of land for urban boundary expansion that would have to be further studied from an environmental perspective to determine appropriate development (specifically, the parcel just south of Pelham Street / Welland Road intersection in Pelham).

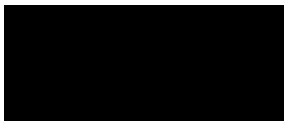
Erie Road has existing waterfront residential properties to the south of the subject lands and are within the existing urban boundary. These waterfront properties are serviced by a 12” watermain, and a 12” sanitary sewer. The subject lands would only require lateral connections to connect with the municipal servicing. This would eliminate the need for septic tanks across the subject lands, minimizing impact, and utilizes existing municipal infrastructure.

The request for urban boundary expansion is to simply provide seven single detached dwellings that are located along a main arterial road within Crystal Beach and can be serviced without extending municipal services. The added density is gentle and appropriate for the existing context of the surrounding area and contributes to the Town’s residential growth targets. Dismissal of this request would sterilize the lots from any residential development.

I trust this letter will prompt a site-specific analysis of the request of these lands in accordance with the urban expansion guidelines and lands assessments criteria.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact the undersigned.

Yours sincerely,



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**Greg Lipinski, B.U.R.P**  
Development Coordinator

## APPENDIX A – SUBJECT LANDS



**APPENDIX B - NHS MAPPING OVER NON-NATURAL FEATURES**

