



# City of Welland Commercial Policies

Statutory Public Meeting

April 7<sup>th</sup>, 2009

# Presentation Outline



- Presentation will address the following four areas:
  - Purpose of this Statutory Public meeting?
  - Why does the City need new commercial policies?
  - What is the context for the new commercial policies?
  - Highlights from the recommended Commercial Policy Official Plan Amendment

# What is the purpose of this Statutory Public Meeting?



- The purpose of this Statutory Public Meeting is to:
  - Present the new commercial policies and seek public feedback on the proposed policies.

# Why Do We Need New Commercial Policies for the Official Plan?

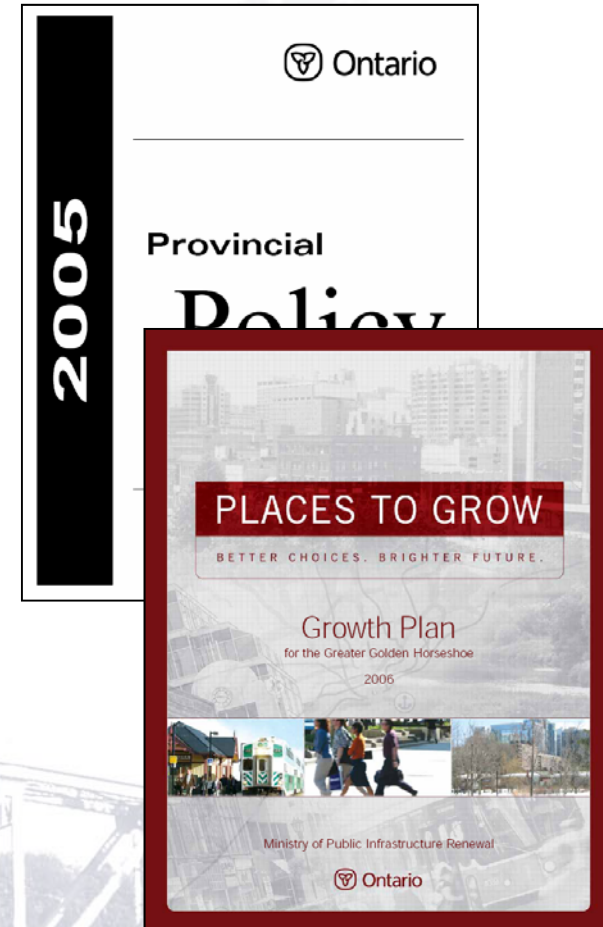


- The City does not have a comprehensive, City-wide land use policy structure for its commercial areas.
- The original plan dates back to 1952, and these policies have been amended on a site specific basis over the years.
- The City recently received several large commercial applications, and there is a need for the City to prepare a more strategic approach to planning for its commercial areas.

# What is the planning context for the City's New Commercial Policies?



- Provincial planning context:
  - Provincial Policy Statement
    - Develop healthy, liveable and safe communities by...promoting a range of uses, including employment (industrial, commercial and institutional)...to meet long term needs.
    - Provides a framework for employment land conversion.
  - Places to Grow Plan



# What is the planning context for the City's New Commercial Policies?

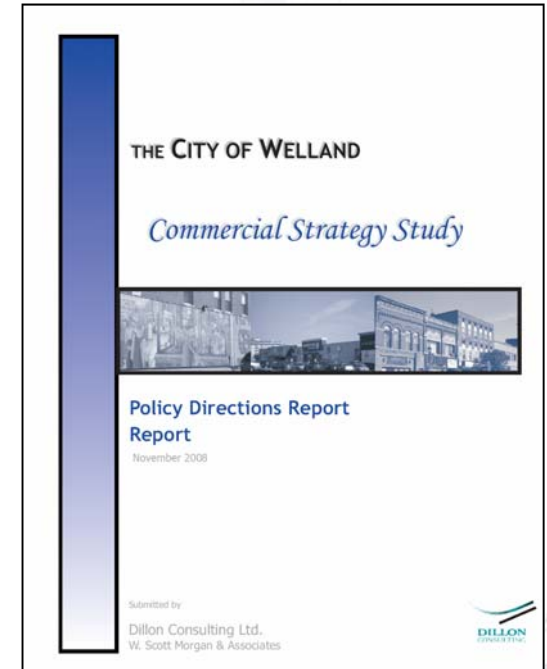


- Regional planning context:
  - Region of Niagara Policy Plan
    - Provides a policy framework for active, sustainable and viable commercial areas.
  - Region of Niagara Growth Management Strategy (Niagara 2031)
    - Establishes population, household and employment projections for lower tier municipalities.

# What is the planning context for the City's New Commercial Policies?



- Local context
  1. Regional Commercial Systems Study (April 2008)
  2. Commercial Strategy Study Policy Directions Report (November 2008)



# What is the planning context for the City's New Commercial Policies?



- Key findings from the Regional Commercial Systems Study?
  - Recent market place changes in Welland are part of broader trends in the retail industry that are being seen in municipalities across North America.
  - Welland will see limited change in the short term.
  - Concluded that there is an adequate supply of designated commercial space to meet the projected short term demand (2007-2016).
    - 2007 – 2016 Demand is 429,000 square feet.
    - 2007 – 2016 Supply is 415,000 square feet (vacancies and existing approvals for commercial development).
    - By 2016, there will be a small residual demand for an additional 15,000 square feet.

# What is the planning context for the City's New Commercial Policies?



- Key findings from the Commercial Strategy Study Report?
  - Welland's commercial hierarchy consists of a series of nodes and corridors.
  - These areas offer a similar suite of goods and services, but the key difference between them is geography, size/scale and built form.
  - Identified the need/opportunity for comprehensive urban design guidelines.
  - Recommended a policy approach which supports the existing nodes and corridors.
  - Allows for growth through planned expansion over time.
  - Future development should be tied to market demand within the trade area.

# What is the planning context for the City's New Commercial Policies?



- Key findings from the Commercial Strategy Study Report?
  - Also recommended a series of actions to continue the improvement efforts in the Downtown:
    - Undertake a BIA review in the Downtown in an effort to better understand the high vacancy rates;
    - Update Downtown incentives program;
    - Policy framework which establishes the Downtown as the pre-eminent mixed use node;
    - Actively market Downtown as a location for unique and specialized retail and office facilities;
    - Prepare a program of regular maintenance and restoration for the Downtown; and,
    - Continue to improve pedestrian, vehicular and bicycle access in and around the Downtown.



# Draft Official Plan Commercial Policies: Highlights



- New commercial policies are based on eight planning objectives:
  1. Provide for the orderly growth and distribution of commercial areas.
  2. Provide a range of commercial uses.
  3. Support the City's existing commercial hierarchy.
  4. Carefully balance the supply of commercial space with the demand for commercial goods and services.
  5. Support existing areas and designations.
  6. Promote opportunities for intensification and redevelopment.
  7. Develop attractive, accessible and pedestrian friendly spaces.
  8. Minimize potential negative impacts.

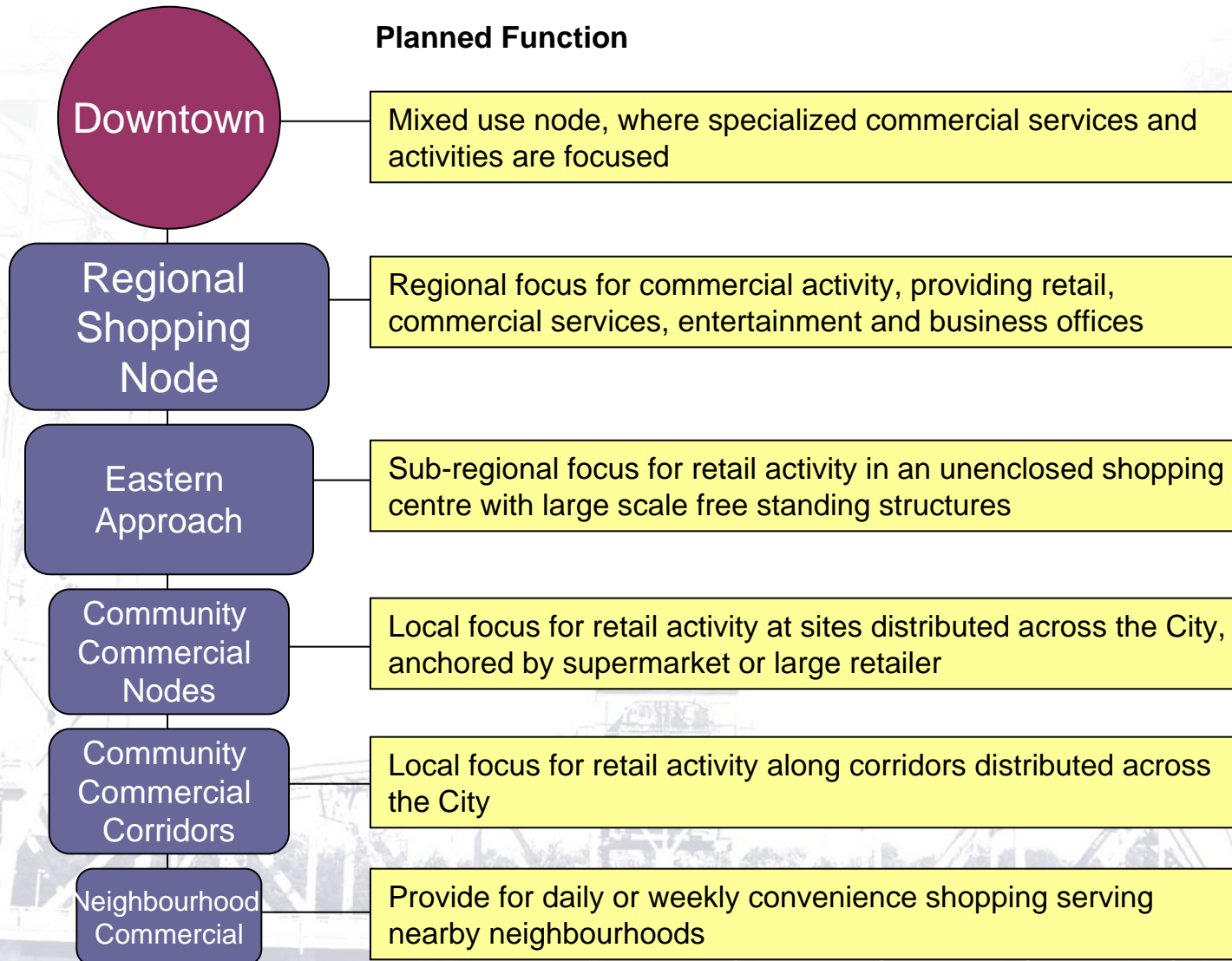
# Draft Official Plan Commercial Policies: Highlights

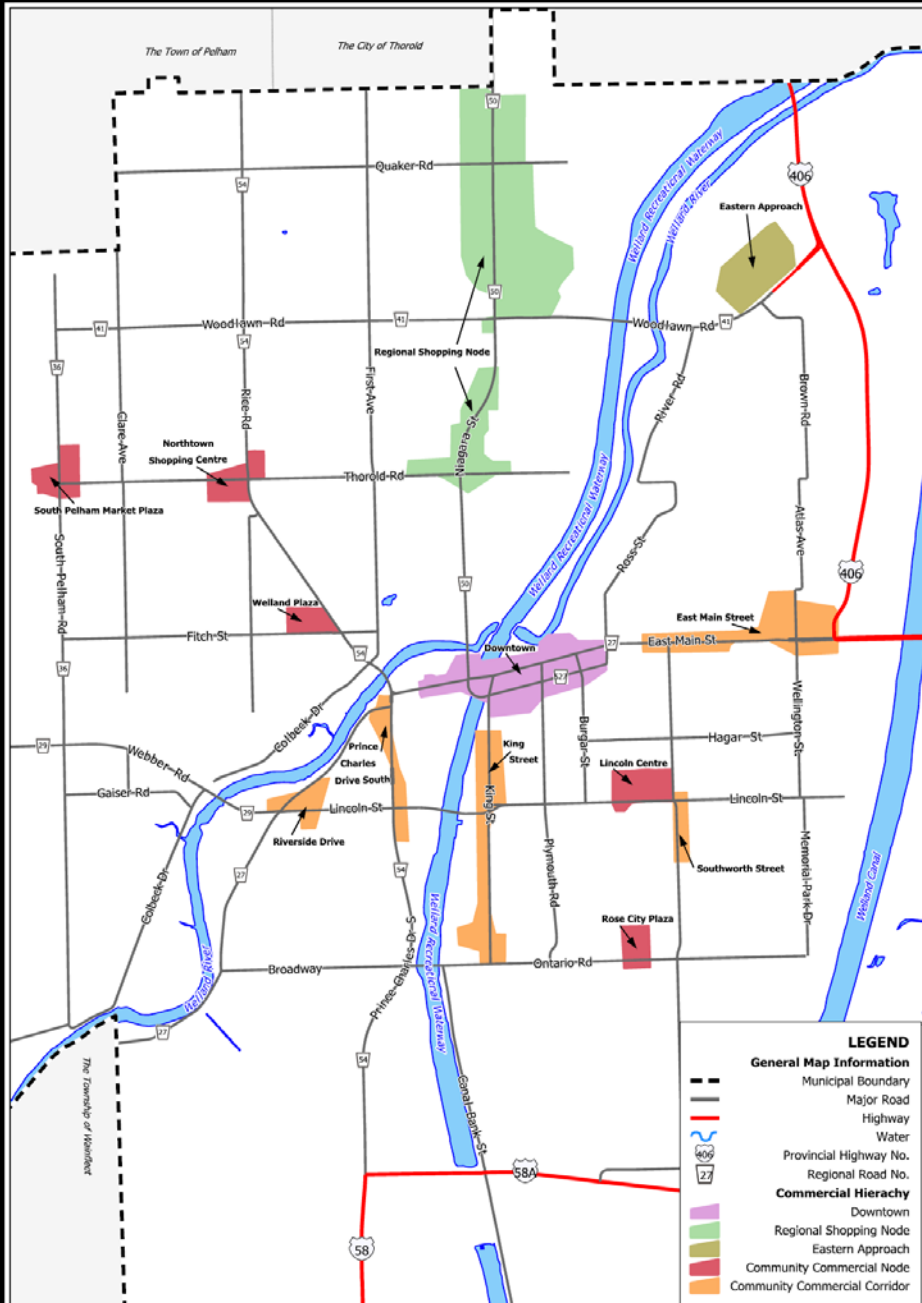


- Commercial policies recognize the existing hierarchy of commercial areas in Welland and include the following land use categories:
  - Downtown Welland;
  - Regional Shopping Node;
  - Eastern Approach;
  - Community Commercial Nodes;
  - Community Commercial Corridors; and,
  - Neighbourhood Commercial areas.



# Commercial Hierarchy





**LEGEND**

**General Map Information**

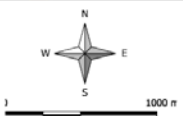
- Municipal Boundary
- Major Road
- Highway
- Water
- Provincial Highway No.
- Regional Road No.

**Commercial Hierarchy**

- Downtown
- Regional Shopping Node
- Eastern Approach
- Community Commercial Node
- Community Commercial Corridor



**SCHEDULE "A"  
Commercial Landuse**



# Downtown



- Special policies for the Downtown will be developed through the City's Official Plan project.
- For this OPA, the Downtown is recognized as the focus for specialized commercial and services uses.
- The Downtown is a mixed-use node, functioning as the cultural, community and administrative centre of the City. Combined with recreational and residential uses, it is the most diverse area in the City.

# Regional Shopping Node



- Regional focus of commercial activity, providing retail, entertainment and business offices for City residents and those in adjacent municipalities.
- Allows for both enclosed and stand alone structures.
- Permitted uses include entertainment type uses, a full range of retail, office, and service commercial uses, including anchor stores and other general merchandise stores, smaller scale specialty retail stores, business and professional offices, hotels, motels and personal services.
- 1.2 million square feet of commercial space, including 500,000 square feet in the Seaway Mall and an additional 750,000 square feet in the surrounding area on Niagara Street north and south.

# Eastern Approach



- Planned to function as a sub-regional focus of retail and service activity in the City in an unenclosed shopping centre with generally large scale free-standing facilities.
- Policies and permissions reflect the site specific OPAs. Key features include:
  - Planned to provide for a total of up 392,900 square feet of commercial uses.
  - The maximum amount of non-department store DSTM permitted within the Eastern Approach is 20,000 square feet.
  - The minimum floor size for commercial retail units and complementary service type uses is 4,000 square feet.



# Community Commercial Nodes



- Serve as local focus for retail activity at sites distributed across the City to serve community commercial functions with free-standing commercial uses and small plazas on larger lots (anchored by supermarket facilities or a large retailer).
- Serve the needs of local residents living in areas within relative close proximity to the Node.
- Planned to accommodate a full range of retail, office, and service commercial uses, including a supermarket or a general merchandise anchor store and a diversified mixture of basic shopping facilities, specialty retail, business and professional offices, and personal services. Community Shopping Nodes are generally anchored by supermarket or a general merchandiser.
- Planned to accommodate up to 185,000 square feet of commercial space.

# Community Commercial Corridors



- Serve as a focus of retail activity along major access corridors to serve a local commercial function with free-standing commercial uses and small plazas generally on relatively small lots.
- Permitted uses are intended to serve the travelling public with a range of retail, office, and service commercial uses, excluding a supermarket anchor, but including a diversified mixture of specialty retail, specialty food, business and professional offices, personal services, places of worship, automotive commercial uses (excluding motor vehicle body shops), hotels / motels, places of entertainment, restaurants, private and commercial schools, and private recreational facilities (banquet halls and private clubs).

# Neighbourhood Commercial areas



- Provide for daily or weekly convenience shopping and service needs of nearby residents.
- Neighbourhood Commercial areas are not shown on Schedule A.
- Permitted uses include small retail stores, small commercial service uses and small offices which are intended to draw residents of the surrounding neighbourhood(s).
- Residential units are permitted above commercial uses within these buildings.
- Permitted within the City's residential areas, provided that they meet appropriate planning criteria.
- Should fit within the context of the surrounding neighbourhood and individual areas should not exceed 20,000 square feet of gross floor area.

# Other Policies



- Infilling and Intensification:
  - Infilling and intensification is encouraged throughout the City's existing built up commercial areas. Infilling in existing commercial areas should address:
    - The need for parking located wherever possible at the rear of the building(s);
    - Land use compatibility;
    - Accessibility;
    - The potential for additional traffic;
    - The need for a unified and cohesive design of the overall site by locating new development at the street front; and,
    - The maximum size requirements identified in this Plan.



# Other Policies

- Major applications:
  - Market Impact Studies and Peer Reviews are required for all major applications including expansions and redevelopment proposals.
  - The City reserves the right to determine what constitutes a major application based on a series of qualitative and quantitative criteria.
  - Generally, major applications are defined as any application greater than 30,000 square feet.



# Other Policies

- Major applications (continued):
  - However, size alone should not be considered the sole factor in determining what constitutes a major application. Applications proposing less than 30,000 square feet may still be considered a “major application” within the context of any one of the following:
    - The need for the proposed use;
    - Location, size and scale of the proposed development;
    - Potential for compatibility issues;
    - Potential market impacts;
    - The potential for negative impacts on the natural environment;
    - The adequacy of the existing transportation infrastructure, including pedestrian and cycling infrastructure, serving the proposed use; or,
    - The adequacy of the existing water and waste water infrastructure and other municipal services.

# Other Policies



- **Market Impact Studies and Peer Review:**
  - Market Impact Studies and Peer Reviews shall document the impact of the proposed application on the City's existing commercial hierarchy.
  - Will include a supply-demand analysis which identifies the City's existing supply of commercial areas, the demand for commercial services and is related to the population growth assumptions found within the Official Plan.
  - The cost of Market Impact Studies and Peer Reviews will be borne by the applicant/owner.

# Other Policies



- Proposed Amendments:
  - When considering proposed amendments to designate additional commercial areas, the City shall consider:
    - How the proposed amendment implements the Objectives set forth in this Plan;
    - The need for the proposed use;
    - Location, size and scale of the proposed development;
    - Potential for compatibility issues;
    - Potential market impacts;
    - The potential for negative impacts on the natural environment
    - The adequacy of the existing transportation infrastructure, including public transit, roads, pedestrian and cycling infrastructure, serving the proposed use; and,
    - The adequacy of the existing water and waste water infrastructure and other municipal services.



# Next Steps

- The City will revise policies, if necessary, based on feedback from Public Information Centre and the Statutory Public Meeting.
- City will present revised policies to Council.
- Once adopted by City Council, the Commercial Policy OPA will be sent to the Region for approval.