

COMMUNITY TRAILS STRATEGY

CITY OF WELLAND



Technical Memo #1

February 2021

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1 INTRODUCTION.

The City of Welland has retained WSP to support staff in the development of a Community Trails Strategy: Cycling, Walking and City Recreational Trail 20-year Master Plan (hereafter referred to as a Community Trails Strategy or CTS) that will outline an approach to expanding its cycling, walking, and recreational trails network over the next 20 years.

This technical memo is the first technical deliverable for this project – summarizing the approach and outcomes of the project’s first phase of work. It addresses relevant policies and plans at the local, regional, and provincial level, demonstrates community needs and interests through a socio-demographic analysis, identifies a trails vision and objectives based on part work undertaken by the City and through input gathered from members of the public, staff and stakeholders, and assesses the current and planned trail conditions through context specific field investigations.

This technical memo is one of three documents that will be prepared which will serve as the “technical project record”. Once completed, WSP will work with City staff to prepare the Master Plan document which is intended to be a strategy and implementation tool to support the day to day coordination and advancement of on and off-road trails within the City of Welland.

1.1 PROJECT PURPOSE & PROCESS

The Community Trails Strategy project will establish a plan for infrastructure implementation and funding as well as outreach programming that will encourage transportation by walking, cycling, and other active modes in the City of Welland. Cycling, walking, and active modes play an important part in how residents and visitors explore Welland’s history, communities, and natural areas. The purpose of developing the Community Trails Strategy tailored to the City of Welland is to:

- Outline an approach to implement a network of on- and off-road facilities that connect the communities of Welland. The network will consider equitable access between communities, safety and comfort on different routes, and guidance/standards established at the regional, provincial, and national levels.
- Develop recommendations for trail design and the implementation of supportive infrastructure like lighting, signage and amenities
- Establish tools to facilitate the implementation of the CTS through policies, guidelines and external funding sources
- Develop maintenance and monitoring tools for existing and future community trails
- Provide recommendations for supportive programs that will encourage and grow community trail use in Welland

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The project has been designed to be completed using through five “tasks” integrated with a robust engagement program. It was initiated in December 2020 and is anticipated to be completed in September 2021. **Figure 1** illustrates the project timeline.

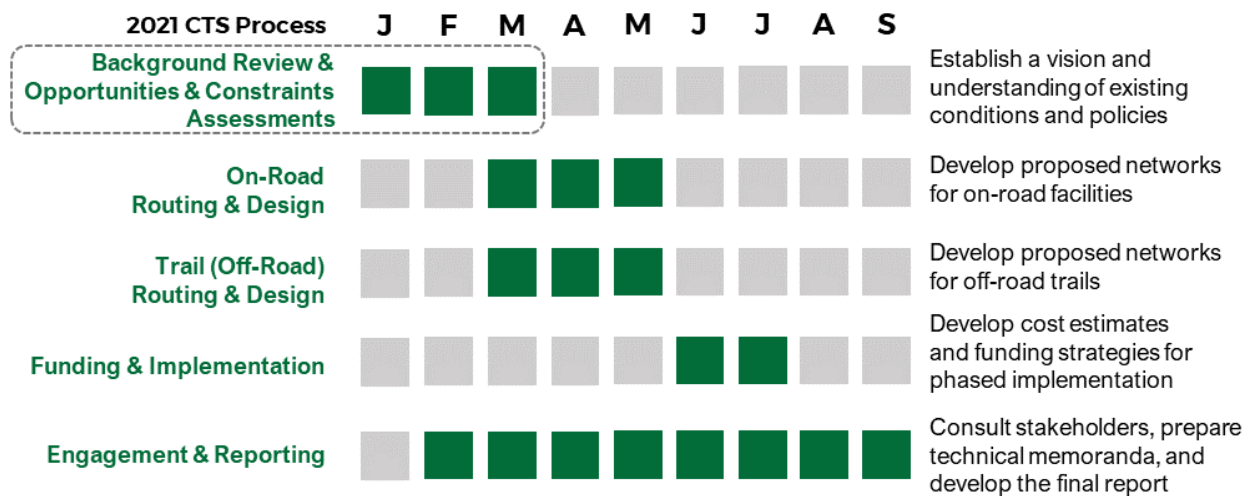


Figure 1 . Community Trails Strategy Development Timeline

Work performed to date as part of Task 1 in the workplan consisted of the following which is summarized and presented within this document:

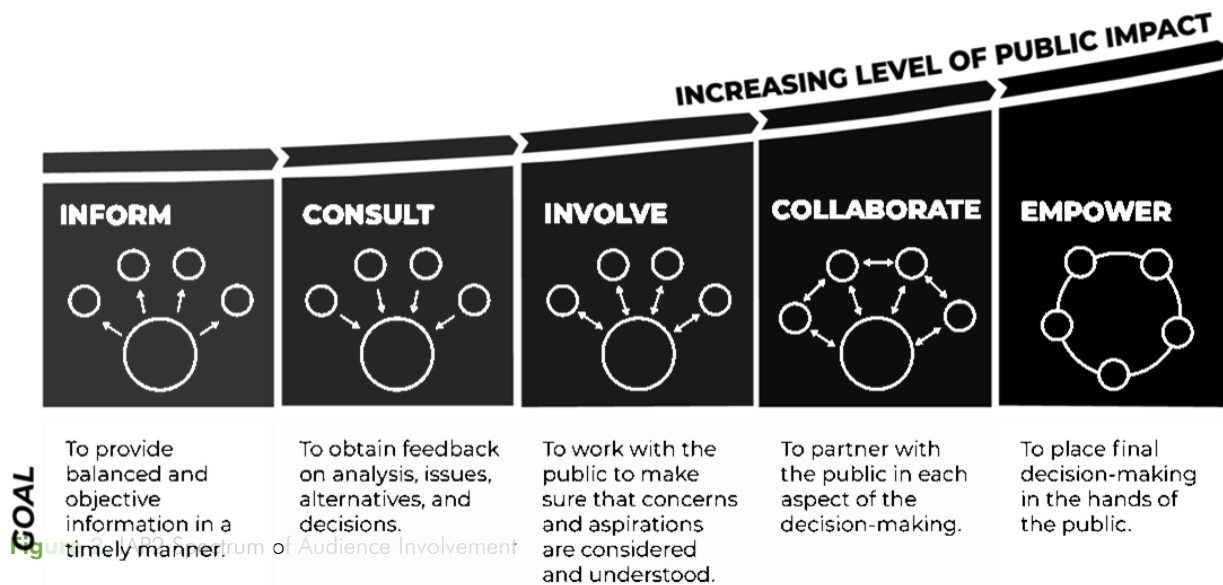
- **Vision and goals:** Establishing a direction for the project and community trails in Welland that can be used to guide future phases of the project and the final deliverable.
- **Community needs and profile:** Assessing the current socio-economic and commuting characteristics of Welland to identify areas that could benefit from improved access to community trails.
- **Existing and proposed on-street road and off-road community trails:** Mapping and identifying current routes and gaps in the network.
- **SWOT (Strength, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) analysis:** Assessing the City’s existing community trails approach to identify actions moving forward.
- **Background information and policy review:** Reviewing and analyzing policy at the local, regional, and provincial levels related to community trails that could be used to guide recommendations in future phases of the project.
- **Field Investigations:** Investigating current conditions of existing trails as well as parks and open spaces to inform potential improvements with the intent of capitalizing on existing infrastructure, such as the Welland Canal Parkway Trail and Merritt Island Trail, and identify new projects that could demonstrate a tangible benefit to how people move in Welland.

1.2 ENGAGEMENT & OUTREACH

A key deliverable of Task 1 is the development and adoption of the engagement strategy – found in Appendix A. The strategy serves as the foundation upon which the engagement for the remainder of the project will be structured while also providing opportunities for flexibility and adaptability considering the ever-shifting impacts of COVID-19 and stakeholder preferences.

The strategy has been developed in accordance with the International Association of Public Participation (IAP2) process and practices. The IAP2 seeks to create public participation and engagement for all affected stakeholders with a focus on clearly articulating to audiences, their expected level of involvement through a planning process and their roles following the plan’s completion. The IAP2 outlines a full preparation, management, and evolution process which is based on a spectrum of involvement tailored to the wants and needs of the anticipated or desired audiences / stakeholders as well as the overall objectives of the project. There are five levels of commitment which are known as the IAP2 Spectrum of Engagement which are illustrated in **Figure 2**.

Beyond the audience focused approach of the engagement strategy informed by the IAP2 process, the



engagement approach identified for the Welland CTS also follows the principles of Dignity Infused Community Engagement, where our team commits to conducting specific outreach to communities that have been marginalized by traditional engagement processes. Throughout the development of the CTS, our team will work with City Staff to identify stakeholders with a strong connection to communities who might rely on the City’s trails to access their daily needs and engage in outreach to ensure that those voices are heard as the CTS moves towards completion.

The engagement strategy provides an overview of the planned engagement milestones and proposed tactics – based on the audiences and objectives. Engagement builds on the City’s past and present

Section 2.0 . PLAN FOUNDATIONS

consultation efforts, continuing the strong community outreach that was developed with the Parks, Recreation and Culture Master Plan.

It is the goal of this project to leverage the stakeholder relationships that were built during the PRC Master Plan process to expand the audience for this Strategy by connecting with the existing networks of each stakeholder group. **Table 1** provides an overview of the anticipated audiences / stakeholders, their level of involvement based on the IAP2 spectrum as well as the planned engagement tactics that will be used to gather their input.

Table 1 . Stakeholder Groups and Consultation Tactics Summary

STAKEHOLDER	DESCRIPTION	IAP2 LEVEL OF INVOLVEMENT	PRIMARY TACTICS
Core Project Team	Key staff representatives from City Departments <i>Example members: Director of Recreation, Supervisor of Parking, Traffic etc.</i>	Involve, Collaborate, Empower	Project update meetings (x4), Stakeholder Workshops (x2), SWOT Interviews
Technical Agencies	Representatives from local stakeholders and other governmental decision-making bodies. <i>Example members: City Advisory Committees, Niagara Region and Adjacent municipal staff.</i>	Involve, Collaborate, Empower	SWOT Interviews Stakeholders Workshops (x2)
Interest Groups & Organizations	Representatives from groups who have interest in trails within the City <i>Example members: Local service clubs, local cycling clubs, service delivery agencies</i>	Inform, Consult, Involve	SWOT Interviews Stakeholder Workshop Sessions (x2)
Members of the Public	Residents including the people who live, work and play in Welland.	Inform, Consult	Online Engagement Activity (x2) Public Consultation Centres (x 2)
City Council	Elected City and Regional Council members	Inform, Empower	Council Survey Council Presentation

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The planned engagement activities were developed based on the technical requirements of the work plan. As such, engagement for the Welland CTS will take place in 3 Phases with the following engagement objectives:

- **Phase 1:** identifying the Vision, Objectives and Needs for the CTS. The background information presented in this Memo serves to inform the development of these foundational aspects of the project, which will be further refined through public and stakeholder engagement. This phase of engagement aligns with Task 1 of the work plan.
- **Phase 2:** refining priorities and phasing for implementation for the CTS, as well as identifying potential supporting programs. This phase of engagement aligns with Task 2 and 3 of the work plan.
- **Phase 3:** providing accountability by informing the public of how we arrived at the conclusions in the CTS and moving the Plan towards completion. This phase of engagement aligns with Task 4 and 5 of the work plan.

The following is a high-level overview of the engagement and communication activities that were completed as part of the first Phase / Task 1 of the project.

ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

- Development and launch of a public online survey through the YourChannel Welland online portal. This survey sought to understand existing travel patterns and preferences among residents of Welland, and to gain a better understanding of the existing assets and barriers to trail use and active travel in the City. A summary of the survey and accompanying mapping tool results will be presented as part of the Round 1 Engagement Summary.
- Development and launch of an online interactive mapping tool through the YourChannel Welland online portal. Launched in tandem with the public survey, the mapping tool helped the project team to gain a better understanding of the existing conditions and barriers to trail use in Welland. When coupled with our field investigation and background review, the mapping tool provided the project team with a strong understanding of the needs and options for improving trails use within the City of Welland....
- Detailed interviews with key stakeholders were organized by the project team. Over the course of 9 interviews, the team developed a more detailed Project Contact List and a preliminary SWOT Analysis for the City of Welland's Trails and Active Transportation programs to date, which can be found in Section 5 of this memo.
- Development and distribution of a City Council Survey. In partnership with the City's Corporate Leadership Team, a brief survey was distributed to all City Council members. The survey focused on understanding the objectives and values of Council members as it relates to the CTS, and aimed to identify potential stakeholders and agencies that should be involved in the development of the plan as it moves forward.

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- The organization and facilitation of a stakeholder workshops with the Core Project Team, Technical Agencies and Interest Groups & Organizations. The intent of the workshops was to present an overview of the project including key assumptions and preliminary outcomes and to gather input to inform the final refinement of the project Vision and Objectives. Some of the information gathered at the workshops will also help to inform the second Phase of engagement which will help shape the outcomes of Task 2 and 3 of the work plan.

COMMUNICATION TACTICS

- Development and launch of the project webpage and distribution through the project contact list
 - During the first Phase of online engagement, **nearly 500 unique visitors** interacted with the CTS Page.
 - Over 130 completed surveys
 - 24 markers placed using the online mapping tool
- Promotions for the Online Engagement Platform were posted on The City's Social Media channels, generating over 6400 impressions and 78 Engagements.
- Promotions for the Engagement Platform were posted using City TV and Outdoor Screens, generating additional awareness of the project
- Partner organizations, including Niagara Public Health, Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority and more, circulated information about online engagement to their networks.

2 PLAN FOUNDATIONS.

Prior to the development of any recommendations and strategies it is important to set the foundations of the plan. Plan foundations typically refer to two key considerations:

- The development and confirmation of the project vision and objectives which articulate the desired / ultimate outcome that the plan is meant to be developed to achieve; and
- The socio-demographic patterns and trends that are being experienced by the City which help to establish the community needs and preferences related to trail development.

The following section provides an overview of how the City's Welland's Community Trails Strategy vision and goals were developed along with a presentation of the vision statement and supporting goals, followed by a detailed review of socio-demographic information in the form of a community profile.

It is important to note when reviewing this section – and others that following with Task 1 and the remaining technical tasks and engagement program – that WSP has identified the need for a greater emphasis on equity within the City of Welland context related to community trail development. Ensuring these considerations are factored into the foundations of the plan as well as the technical components, including the network development process, requires an assessment of the socio-economic and demographic profile of the community to identify areas underserved by existing and planned active transportation. The equity lens is one that is meant to be interwoven throughout all components of the plan starting with the development of the project vision and goals and ending in the recommendations – to be identified in the following project Tasks.

2.1 ESTABLISHING A COMMUNITY TRAIL VISION & GOALS

The Community Trails Strategy is considered a Functional Master Plan - in the wider municipal policy structure (described in further detail in section 4.1). A functional master plan is designed to provide topic specific direction building upon recommendations, policies and strategies identified in high-order policies such as the City's Official Plan. A critical component of any functional master plan is the development of a vision statement which is meant to articulate the desired future for the community. A strong vision statement not only looks to the future but identifies opportunities for alignment with and articulation of wider community goals and objectives.

A vision statement articulates the desired future, however it can be difficult to capture all the intended outcomes within one statement. As such, vision statements are typically supported by a series of goals, which articulate the desired directions in support of the vision. The vision and goals are considered the "foundations" of the CTS – they provide an opportunity for the project team to check our work and assumptions as we move forward in developing the Strategy to ensure that the decisions that are made to inform the project align with these foundations at each step of the process.

2.1.1 DEVELOPING THE VISION AND GOALS

A vision statement should be aspirational as well as realistic in terms of the ability to achieve the outcomes through implementation. As part of the kick-off meeting with City staff, the team discussed aspirations for the City’s Community Trails Strategy. Through these discussions a considerable amount of information was shared about current trail practices as well as hopes and needs for future consideration. The following is a brief summary of the input received on desired outcomes:

- Better connections between trails and city parks, including wayfinding improvements
- Enhanced trail safety designs and measures
- Integration of recreational amenities and investments (e.g. signage, pedestrian bridges, bike repair stations) to compliment and support the trail network
- Mapping of proposed trail locations for land acquisition and new development applications
- Capital cost estimates for east-west trail connections, both on- and off-road
- Recommendations for new municipal standards related to trails
- Recommendations for ongoing maintenance that provide a high standard of care for accessibility

Beyond staff input, when crafting a master plan vision and goals it is critical to ensure that the statements align with the City’s previously approved plans. For the purposes of the Community Trails Strategy it is taking the values articulated in the City’s Official Plan and its Parks, Recreation and Culture Master Plan, among others, and applying those values to trails. An initial step in developing these foundations was to review the documents to determine if there were any statements which could be utilized or integrated into the CTS vision and goals. **Table 2** provides an overview of some of these potentially applicable vision statement considerations from these documents.

Table 2 . Overview of Existing Policy and Strategy Considerations to inform the CTS Vision

PLAN	TRAIL SPECIFIC VISION CONSIDERATIONS
City of Welland Official Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Parks and trails are to be integrated into the design of new developments — Trails and pedestrian infrastructure should be designed to reduce walking distance between residential developments and transit, as well as public institutions or facilities — Cycling is to be considered in the design of new or reconstructed roads — Sidewalks, where constructed, should be safe, convenient, accessible, and attractive

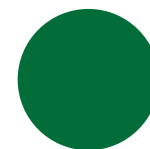
PLAN	TRAIL SPECIFIC VISION CONSIDERATIONS
City of Welland Parks & Recreation Master Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – The vision for parks, recreation and culture is based on three core themes: connecting, creativity and play – Within the “connecting” theme there is reference to the provision of opportunities to connect physically i.e. trails within the City with an emphasis on the Welland Recreation Corridor (WRC) and the Welland Canal by residents – The connecting “theme” places emphasis on accommodating people “regardless o their abilities, interests or background” as well as using recreation – such as trails – to stimulate “its vibrancy, strengthens the local economy and community”.

Last but not least, are the interests and preferences of local stakeholders and members of the public. Through the first round of engagement, questions were posed through the stakeholder interviews, Council survey as well as the publicly available online engagement platform to help inform the development of the vision and goals for the Community Trails Strategy. The following are some of the key themes that emerged from the engagement activities:

- Connectivity consistently emerged as a top priority for stakeholders and members of the public. The gaps observed in Welland’s trails and active transportation network are preventing the development of a complete network, but the foundations for this future network are already existing.
- Separation between road and trail users was highlighted as a priority. On busy trails corridors, separating people walking and people cycling was highlighted by many respondents. In addition, respondents also highlighted the need for increased physical separation between people driving and people cycling through the implementation of separated bike lanes on major corridors.
- Ensuring that trails, sidewalks and cycling facilities are well maintained, and that some of the more popular routes be included for ongoing winter maintenance as well
- Improving lighting along some of the trails and corridors to enhance feelings of safety, particularly among women and seniors
- Where trails intersect with roads, interventions to improve safety should be considered.

With both consultation and engagement input as well as alignment with existing policies and plans in mind, the following vision statement has been prepared for Community Trails within the City of Welland:

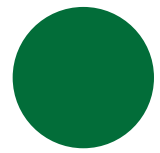
The City of Welland aims to create a community where trails are Connected, Continuous, Safe, Accessible, Well-Maintained, and Convenient for users of all ages and abilities. On and off-road trails will provide enhanced recreation and transportation choices for visitors and



residents of Welland alike, enhancing access to public space and quality of life across the City.

To further articulate this vision statement and the desired outcomes of the process, the following goals have been identified:

- **Guide Decision-making:** The Community Trails Strategy is meant to inform the planning, design, implementation, funding, coordination and management of trail infrastructure (both on and off-road) in the City of Welland for the next 20 years. The strategy provides the City with a long-range approach that builds upon existing assets while prioritizing new connections for completion according to community need and fiscal capacity.
- **Build Connectivity:** The development of a continuous and connected system of on and off-road trails connects major and minor destinations within the City and expands connectivity to Welland's neighbouring municipalities, creating economic development and tourism opportunities that support the City's plans to grow. It also provides opportunities to access day to day services and employment needs for those who live, work and play within the City.
- **Facilitate Implementation:** The CTS provides staff, decision makers and partners with the necessary tools and resources to inform short and long-term decision making related to planning, design, implementation, maintenance and programming. This includes accurate costing estimates of potential improvements, the prioritization of investments, policies and design guidelines, monitoring and management strategies and roles and responsibilities to encourage City-led coordination and long-term implementation.
- **Develop supportive partnerships and programs:** The CTS focuses on the development of social infrastructure to support trails use in addition to the physical infrastructure. Opportunities to connect with service delivery agencies, service clubs, external stakeholders and community groups to deliver new programs to encourage trail use maximize the potential for wider community outreach and impact through community-led partnerships.
- **Build Equity into decision-making:** The community trails network forms a safe and comfortable network that attracts a range of users for utilitarian and recreational trips. Access to the network is equitably distributed to all communities in Welland. This may provide an opportunity for all residence to transition toward walking and cycling as a preferred modes for short trips. The importance of equity is elevated in all aspects of active transportation (walking and cycling) planning, design and implementation considering the role of trails as part of a healthy and affordable form of transportation that may benefit low-income households and communities.



2.2 COMMUNITY PROFILE & CONSIDERATIONS

As noted previously, a key foundation of the CTS is the identification of unique geographic and socio-demographic trends which influence current transportation and travel behaviours as well as the unique needs and opportunity within the community relative to day to day transportation and recreation.

In terms of the geographic context, the City of Welland is a municipality within the Region of Niagara located on the Welland Canal between Lake Ontario and Lake Erie. Due to its location at the crossing of the canal with a few railways, Welland attracted heavy industry in the 20th century that fostered growth within the community. The City has a mix of urban, suburban and rural conditions making it an attractive area for residential and employment growth.

In September 2020, the City updated their Community Profile – prepared by the City’s Economic Development department.

The profile provides a detailed overview of the City’s real estate, labour market, business / investment, manufacturing, retail, infrastructure, education / innovation, health / wellness, sports, recreation and culture and festivals and events. The document provides an excellent snap shot of the community as it relates to different indicators. It positions the City as a growing community with a young population that is looking for recreation, employment and healthy community opportunities. The Canal Trail and Merrit Island are noted as a key part of Welland’s emerging and high demand Recreation Corridor with the inclusion of bilingual trail signage as a significant success in the recent years.

For the purposes of the Community Trails Strategy, we have focused on reviewing community trends and needs in three categories – socio-demographics, transportation modes and commuting behaviour as well as equity consideration. The information was developed based on our review of the 2016 National Census. This information was mapped to the dissemination area level to identify spatial trends within the community. Overlaying trails and active transportation facilities otop of these maps can assist in identifying communities that are underserved by Welland’s existing network. This process will be used in future phases of the project to ensure network enhancements are proposed in communities that would receive greater positive impact. Dissemination areas are the smallest standard geographic areas used for census data in Canada. These areas may vary by shape and land area; however, their populations are relatively similar – approximately 200 to 600 people per dissemination area. Dissemination area mapping highlights statistical data relative to each dissemination area, not the City as a whole.

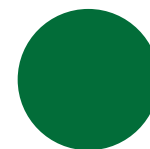


COMMUNITY PROFILE

UPDATED: SEPTEMBER 2020



Economic Development Office
69 East Main Street
Welland, Ontario L3B 3X4
Phone: 905-735-1700 Ext. 2111 | Fax: 905-735-1543
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www.welland.ca
www.madeinwelland.ca



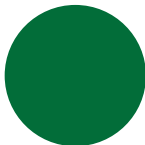
2.2.1 SOCIO-ECONOMIC BREAKDOWN

According to the 2016 National Census, the population of Welland is 52,285. Among its residents, 21% are seniors aged 65 and over and 15% are children under the age of 14. Combined these demographics represent 36% (1/3) of Welland’s population, which emphasizes the importance of creating active transportation facilities and networks that are safe and comfortable for all ages and abilities.

0.5% of residents have aboriginal ancestry and 5.2% are visible minorities. The City’s immigrant population is highest in its urban and suburban communities. The communities north of East Main St near Atlas Ave and north of Fitch St along Clare Ave have relatively high immigrant populations. The general population density and immigrant populations are both low in Welland’s rural communities. Conversely, the median household income is highest in Welland’s rural and suburban-most communities where it exceeds \$80,000. The median household income in Welland is below \$40,000 in its city centre and urban communities, particularly those between the new and old Welland Canals.

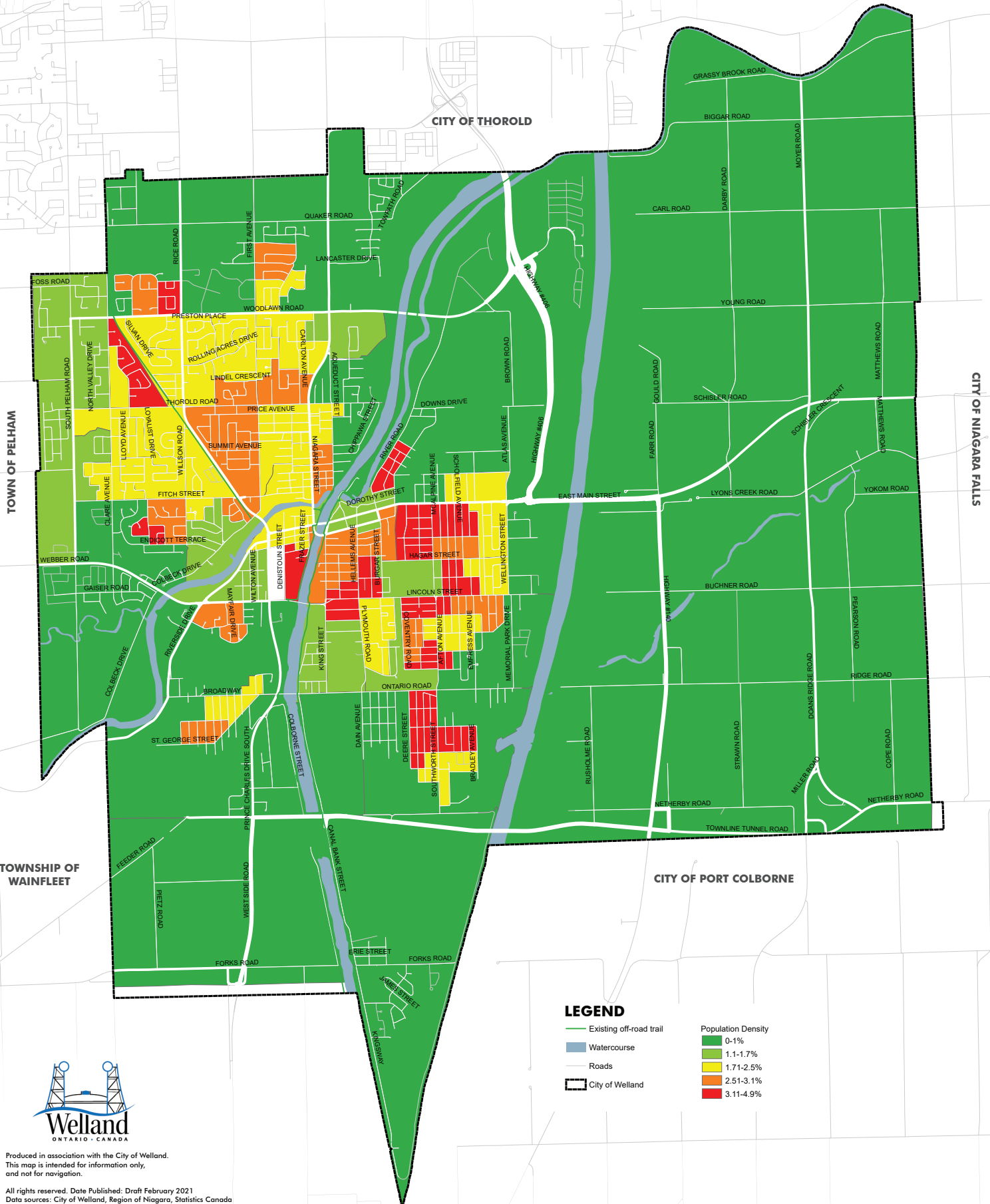
Table 3 . Summary of Socio-Demographic Dissemination Maps for the City of Welland

MAP OVERVIEW	KEY TAKEAWAYS
Map #1. Population Density	High density can encourage active transportation due to shorter distance trips. Welland’s population density is highest east of downtown, between the new and old Welland Canals. These areas also have the lowest median household income.
Map #2. Population Over 65	Seniors (people 65+) are a key active transportation demographic. This group may use walking and cycling as a form of low impact exercise. Furthermore, they may require assistive mobility devices, more space, and accessibility considerations. Welland’s urban areas have higher concentrations of seniors compared to rural areas.
Map #3. Immigrant Population	Communities that attract new Canadians should connect and permit mobility throughout their broader municipality. Welland’s suburban areas have higher concentrations of immigrants compared to urban and rural areas. Many of these areas are not connected to existing off-road trails.
Map #4. Median Household Income	Cycling and walking are low-cost transportation modes. Infrastructure for walking and cycling should be equitably distributed across a municipality particularly near low-income communities. Welland’s highest income communities are in the suburbs and rural communities.



Map 1. Community Profile: Population Density

CITY OF WELLAND COMMUNITY TRAILS STRATEGY



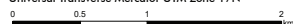
LEGEND

- Existing off-road trail
 - Watercourse
 - Roads
 - City of Welland
- | | |
|--|--------------------|
| | Population Density |
| | 0-1% |
| | 1.1-1.7% |
| | 1.71-2.5% |
| | 2.51-3.1% |
| | 3.11-4.9% |



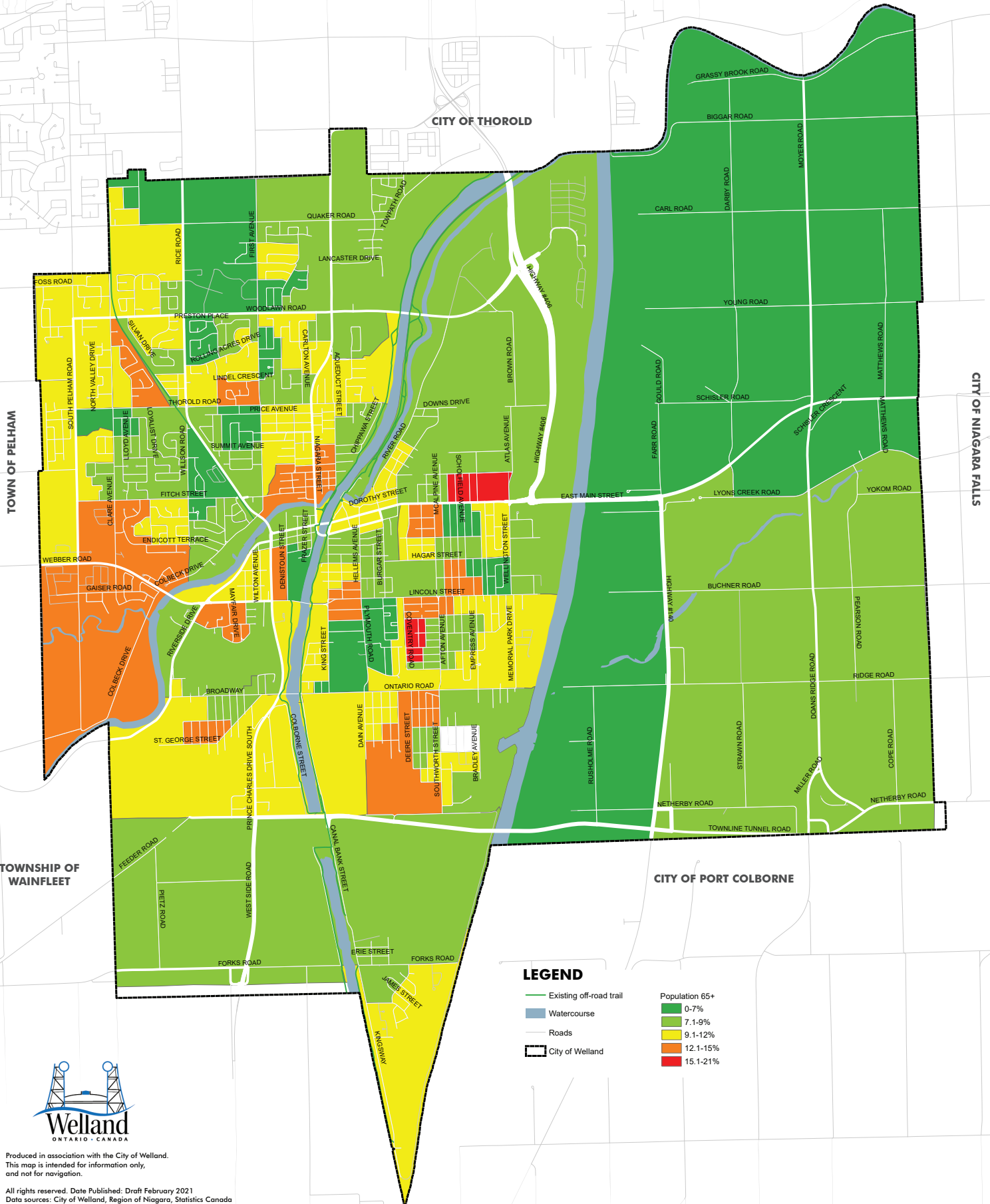
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Data sources: City of Welland, Region of Niagara, Statistics Canada
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Map 2. Community Profile: Population Over 65

CITY OF WELLAND COMMUNITY TRAILS STRATEGY



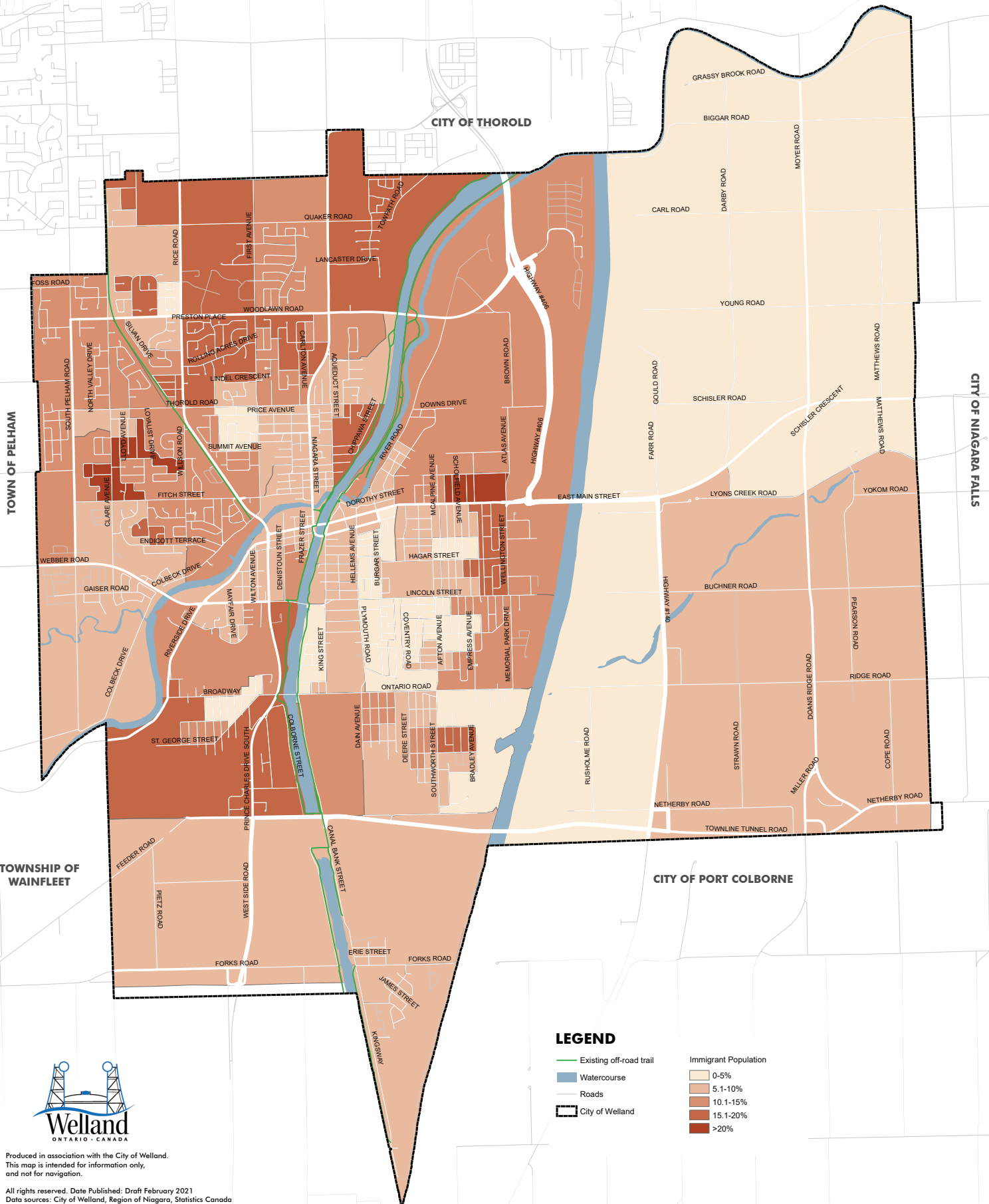
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Map 3. Community Profile: Immigrant Population

CITY OF WELLAND COMMUNITY TRAILS STRATEGY



LEGEND

- Existing off-road trail
 - Watercourse
 - Roads
 - City of Welland
- | Immigrant Population | |
|----------------------|----------|
| | 0-5% |
| | 5.1-10% |
| | 10.1-15% |
| | 15.1-20% |
| | >20% |



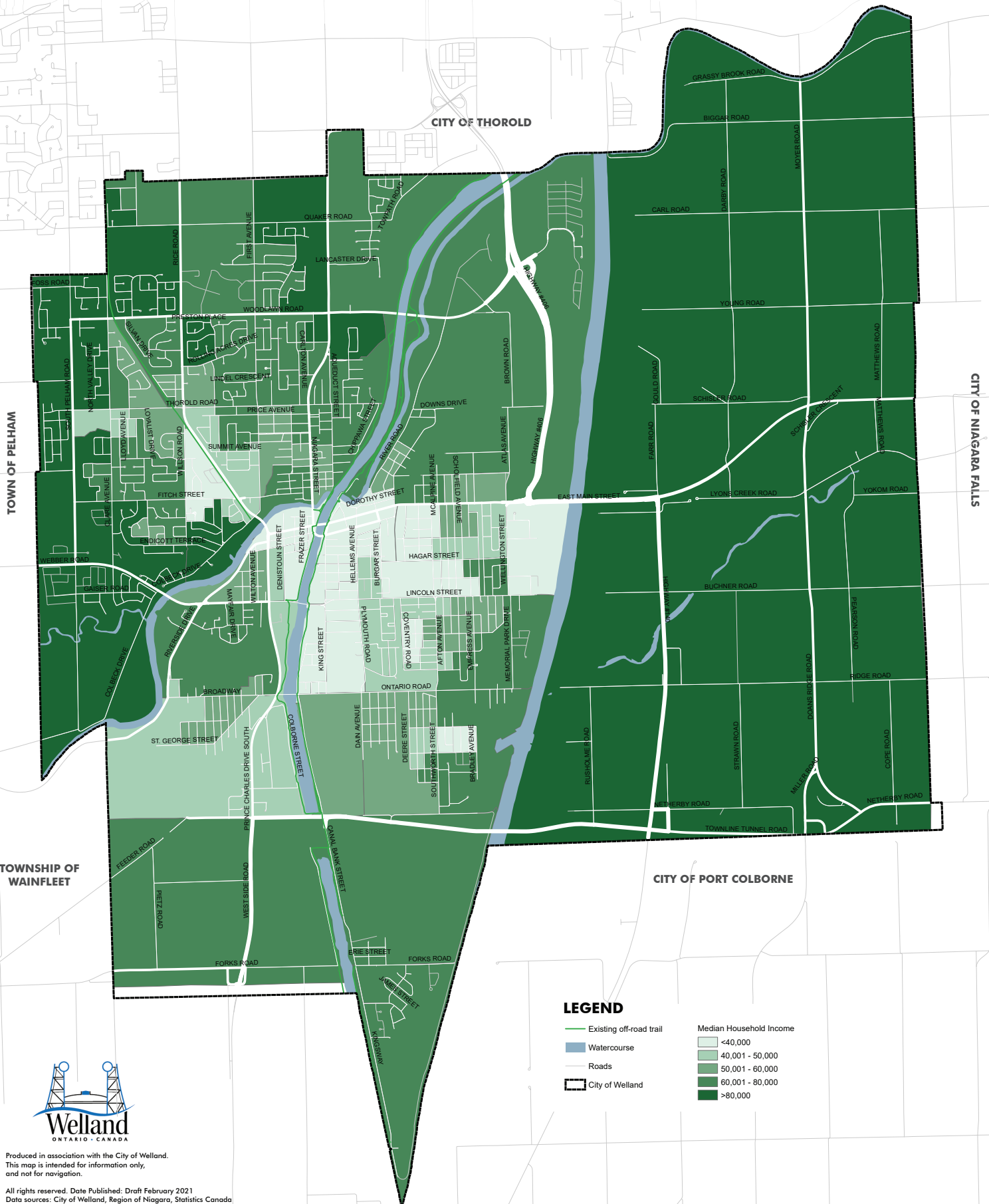
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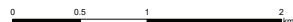
Map 4. Community Profile: Median Household Income

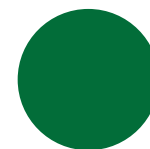
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2.2.2 COMMUTING BEHAVIOUR

Prior to stay at home orders due to the COVID-19 pandemic, 42% of residents commuted to work. Among these commuters, 70% spent under 30 minutes commuting to work with 34% spending less than 15 minutes. Despite having short travel times, only 5% of commuters chose to travel by active modes (cycling = 1%; walking = 4%).

86% percent of commuters drove their own vehicles to work and 6% carpooled with drivers. While these statistics do not reflect the distance travelled by commuters in Welland, it is important to note that many residents spend a relatively low amount of time commuting and still choose to drive.

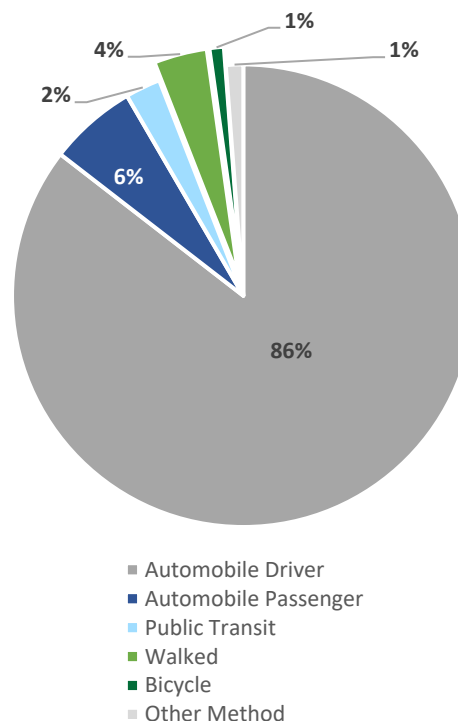
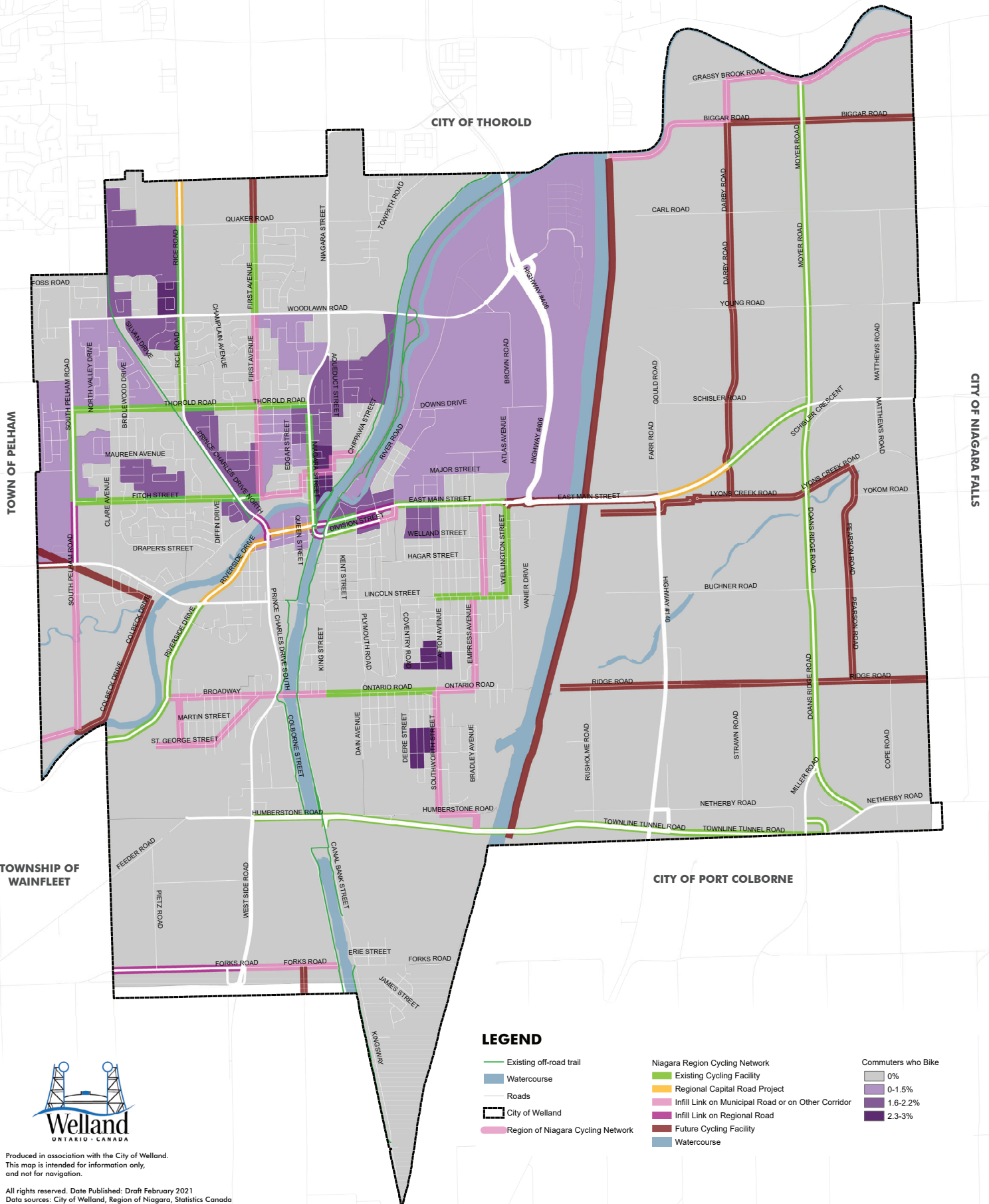


Table 4 . Summary of Commuting Behaviour Dissemination Maps for the City of Welland

MAP OVERVIEW	KEY TAKEAWAYS
Map #5. Commuters Who Bike	Cycling infrastructure facilitates recreational, utilitarian, and commuter transportation. To manage traffic congestion, many municipalities establish commuter mode share objectives to increase the percentage of commuters traveling by bike during rush hour. This is achieved in part by implementing appropriate infrastructure to invite commuters to bike instead of using their car. A lack of infrastructure in a community may diminish the capacity to choose to bike. In Welland, the downtown and northwest communities have the highest commuter population that bikes. Areas connected to the Steve Bauer Trail, Niagara Street bike lane, and East Main Street bike lane appear to have high cycling commuter populations.
Map #6. Commuters Who Walk	Similar to cycling infrastructure, the presence of wide pedestrian infrastructure and comfortable roadway crossings can encourage commuters to travel on foot or connect with local transit. A lack of infrastructure in some communities may be a deterrence to walking, similar to cycling. In Welland, the downtown and core communities have the highest commuter population that walks.

Map 5. Community Profile: Commuters Who Bike

CITY OF WELLAND COMMUNITY TRAILS STRATEGY



LEGEND

- Existing off-road trail
- Watercourse
- Roads
- City of Welland
- Region of Niagara Cycling Network
- Watercourse
- Existing Cycling Facility
- Regional Capital Road Project
- Infill Link on Municipal Road or on Other Corridor
- Infill Link on Regional Road
- Future Cycling Facility
- Watercourse

- Commuters who Bike
- 0%
 - 0-1.5%
 - 1.6-2.2%
 - 2.3-3%



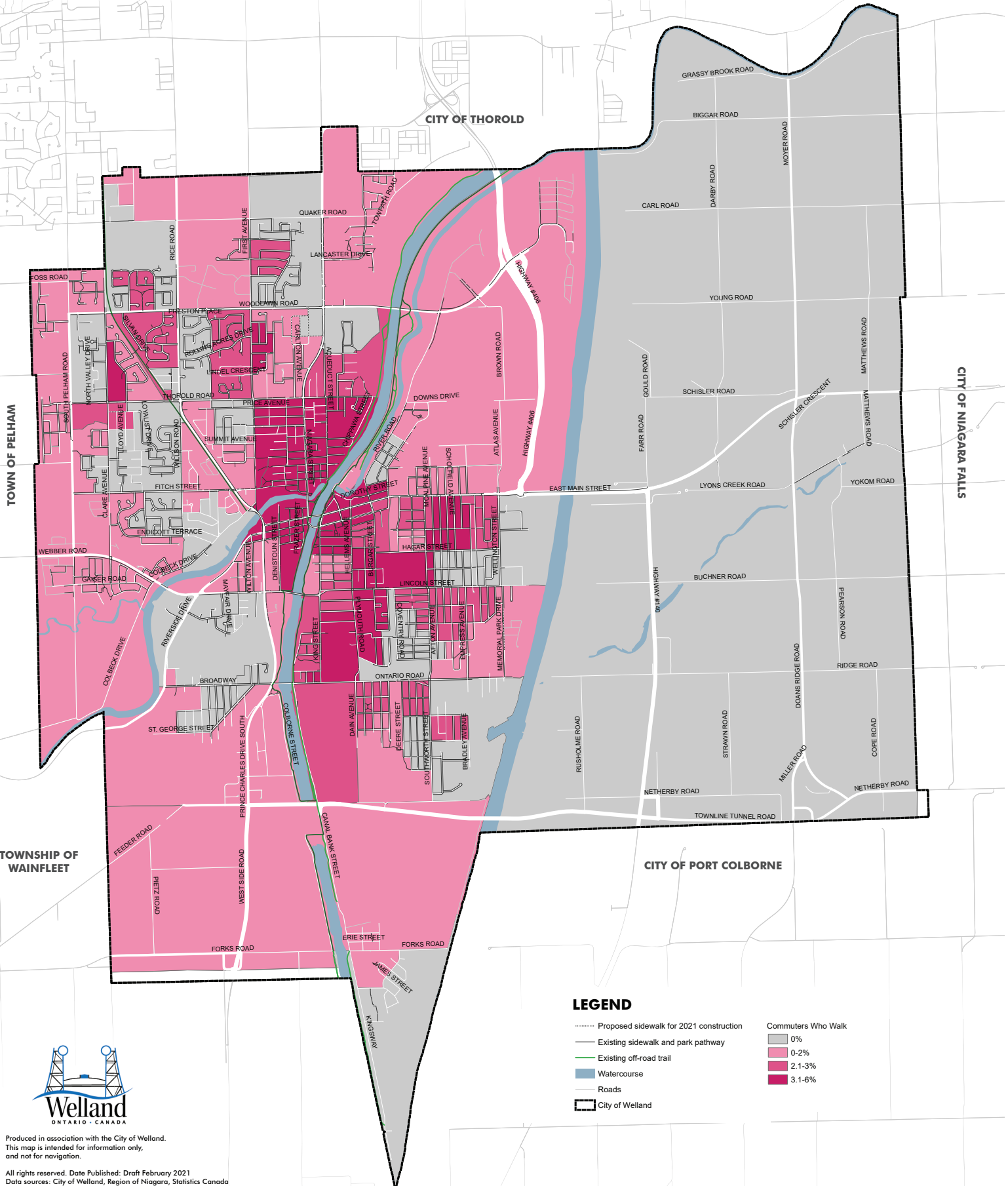
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Map 6. Community Profile: Commuters Who Walk

CITY OF WELLAND COMMUNITY TRAILS STRATEGY



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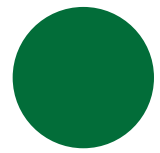
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LEGEND

- Proposed sidewalk for 2021 construction
 - Existing sidewalk and park pathway
 - Existing off-road trail
 - Watercourse
 - Roads
 - City of Welland
- | |
|--|
| <p>Commuters Who Walk</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 0% 0-2% 2.1-3% 3.1-6% |
|--|





3 EXISTING CONDITIONS.

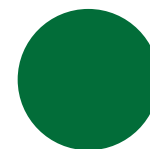
The intent of the Welland Community Trails Strategy is to build upon the successes, lessons learned and existing support for cycling, walking, and recreational trails within the City. To do this, there needs to be a clear understanding of the existing conditions within Welland. Existing conditions, within the trails strategy context, refers to existing infrastructure that is currently on the ground, routes / facilities that have been previously identified in past planning and policy documents, as well as the current demand and usage for cycling, walking and recreational trails in the City. The following sections provide a summary of the outcomes of this work.

3.1 EXISTING ROUTES & FACILITIES

Task 1b in the Welland Community Trails Strategy project workplan consisted of a review of existing and previously proposed trails in the City. When referring to “trails” in the context for the City of Welland, consideration should be given too the trail type relative to their intended use, experience and design. While there are a considerable number of design options pertaining to trails, for the purposes of the existing investigation, trails were identified within two categories:

- **On-road trails:** which refers to trails and pathways that are found within the road right-of-way (between the curbs) or within the boulevard of the roadway in place of a sidewalk. These on-road facilities typically accommodate more of the utilitarian day to day travel and provide critical linkages between recreational off-road trails and to major community destinations such as employment areas or local services. Their design is dependent on other transportation conditions and context including the speed and volumes of motorized vehicles and the presence of transit or goods movement. The selection and design of appropriate facilities for on-road trails is typically guided by Ontario Traffic Manual Book 18: Cycling Facilities or the Transportation Association of Canada Guidebooks.
- **Off-road trails:** which refers to trails and pathways found within parks, natural areas or utility corridors. These off-road facilities typically accommodate more recreational travel and provide users with environmental and cultural experiences that are meant to explore, enhance and leverage areas of natural and cultural significance within the City. Their design is dependent on the natural area as well as the presence of environmental features as well as the overall experience of the user. The selection of design solutions is very context sensitive and requires the consideration of technical elements such as surface type, slope, latitude, maintenance, etc. Design of these facilities can be based on guidelines and standards such as the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act Built Environment Standards but typically are guided by more localized standards based on a consistent hierarchy of trail types.

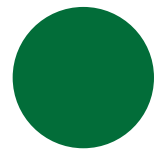
Section 3.0 . EXISTING CONDITIONS



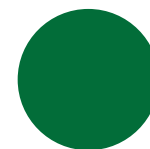
Considering the City of Welland is a municipality in a regional context, there are unique jurisdictional impacts with the presence of Regional roads, conservation authority land as well as the Niagara Parks Commission. The documentation of existing conditions identifies all existing and planned trails – both on and off-road - no matter the jurisdiction based on past policies and planning documents including the City of Welland’s Parks, Recreation and Culture Master Plan (2019) and Niagara Region’s Transportation Master Plan (2017). Map 1a illustrates the existing community trails – both existing and planned – found within the City of Welland. **Table 5** is detailed summary of the various routes and facilities included on each of these maps.

Table 5 . Overview of Routes on Map 1a: Existing Community Trails

Route Name / Description	KM
Existing Off-road Trails	
Off-road trail linkages that have been implemented by the City of Welland.	
Canal Parkway Trail	18
Merritt Island Trail	6.7
Steve Bauer Trail	4.3
Existing On-road Trails	
On-road linkages that have been implemented by the City of Welland.	
Division St from King St to Hellems Ave: Bike lane (south side of the road)	0.4
East Main Str from King St to Hellems Ave: Bike lane (north side of the road)	0.3
East Main Street from railway to Wellington Street: Urban shoulder	1.1
First Avenue from Quaker Road to Woodland Road: Bike lane	1.0
Fitch Street from S Pelham Road to Prince Charles Drive North: Bike lane	1.8
Fitch Street from Prince Charles Drive North to First Avenue: Signed route	0.2
Niagara Street from Price Avenue to Norway Avenue: Buffered bike lane	0.1
Niagara Street from Norway Avenue to Riverbank Street: Bike lane	0.9
Ontario Road from King Road to Southworth Street: Bike lane	1.2
Rice Road from Woodlawn Road to Thorold Road: Paved shoulder	1.0
Riverside Drive from Lincoln Street to City boundary: Paved shoulder	2.0
Thorold Road from Rice Road to Niagara Street: Bike lane	1.4



Route Name / Description	KM
Wellington Street from East Main Street to Lincoln Street: Bike lane	1.0
Conceptual Trail Routes	
As part of the City’s Parks, Recreation and Culture Master Plan, staff investigated opportunities for new trail routes and linkages to support existing infrastructure with considerations given to connecting destinations and identifying linkages through future residential areas.	
Various trails throughout the City	37
Scenic Cycling Routes	
Scenic cycling routes represent “loop rides” that have been identified by the Niagara Freewheelers Bicycle Touring Club (with funding support from Healthy Living Niagara) and further promoted by the Region. Scenic bike rides include primarily include on-road routes, inclusive of Regional and local with no existing cycling infrastructure, as well as off-road trails.	
Within the City of Welland there are 39 cycling routes including routes that are fully containing within the City and routes that cross into adjacent municipalities. The following is a list of the 39 cycling routes:	N/A



Route Name / Description		KM
1. An Easier Alternative Route to Port Colborne	21. Near Sherkston	
2. Bethel	22. Pelham Country & Towns	
3. Blue Star	23. Port Colborne in the Spring	
4. Cooks Mills Industrial Zone	24. Port Colborne Marina	
5. Dain City	25. Port Colborne - West of the Canal	
6. Exploring The Cooks Mills Area	26. Port Robinson	
7. Ferry to Attercliffe	27. Riding Through Bethel	
8. Ferry to Port Colborne	28. 8Stevensville	
9. Ferry to Port Colborne - 2008	29. Stevensville Castle and Nigh's Chocolates	
10. Ferry to Ridgeway	30. The Ridgeway Ramble	
11. Ferry to Ridgeway - 2009	31. The Thorold-Welland Loop	
12. Ferry To Welland	32. Through Chippawa	
13. Fonthill to Ridgeway	33. Through Douglastown	
14. Fonthill to Thorold	34. Uppers and Back	
15. Fonthill To Thorold 2	35. Welland	
16. Gasline	36. Welland - Crystal Beach - Port Colborne	
17. Humberstone Marsh	37. Welland River Ride	
18. Market Street Cafe	38. Willoughby Marsh	
19. Marshville Pioneer Festival	39. Willowdell and Back	
20. Merritt Island		

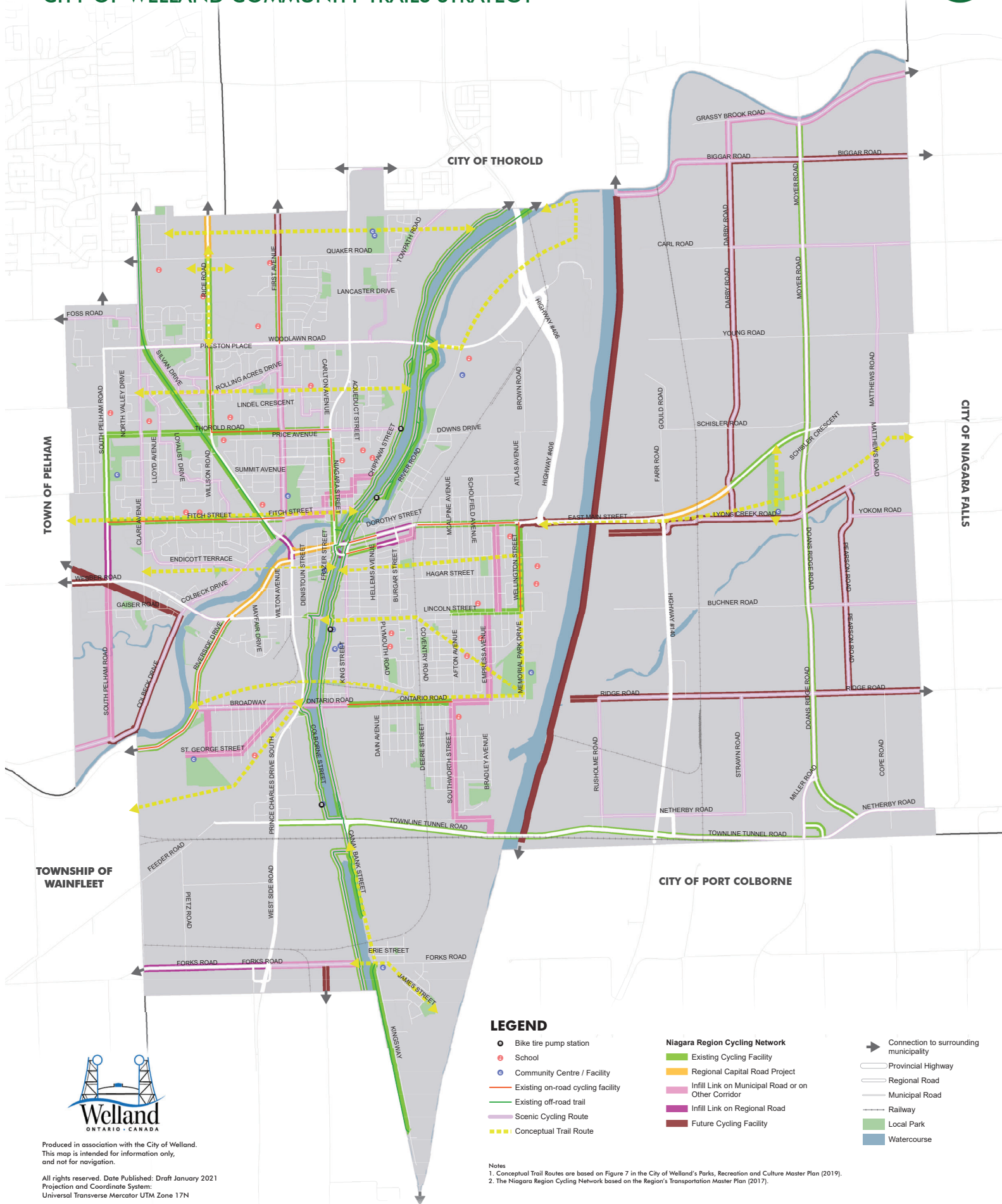
Niagara Region Strategic Cycling Network

Routes that were identified as part of the Region of Niagara Transportation Master Plan which include both regional and local roadways where cycling improvement have been identified for consideration but without specific facility recommendations.

Existing cycling routes	33.8
Infill Link on Municipal Road or on Other Corridor	19.6
Infill Link on Regional Road	3.6
Future Cycling Facility	32
Regional Capital Road Project	3.8

MAP 7A. EXISTING COMMUNITY TRAILS

CITY OF WELLAND COMMUNITY TRAILS STRATEGY



LEGEND

- Bike tire pump station
 - School
 - Community Centre / Facility
 - Existing on-road cycling facility
 - Existing off-road trail
 - Scenic Cycling Route
 - Conceptual Trail Route
-
- #### Niagara Region Cycling Network
- Existing Cycling Facility
 - Regional Capital Road Project
 - Infill Link on Municipal Road or on Other Corridor
 - Infill Link on Regional Road
 - Future Cycling Facility
-
- Connection to surrounding municipality
 - Provincial Highway
 - Regional Road
 - Municipal Road
 - Railway
 - Local Park
 - Watercourse

Notes
 1. Conceptual Trail Routes are based on Figure 7 in the City of Welland's Parks, Recreation and Culture Master Plan (2019).
 2. The Niagara Region Cycling Network based on the Region's Transportation Master Plan (2017).

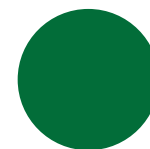


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Section 3.0 . EXISTING CONDITIONS



Trails are meant to accommodate all forms of human powered transportation including primarily walking and cycling. Though not typically considered a “trail”, sidewalks are considered part of any municipal active transportation network as they provide the most visible pedestrian “facilities” that provide connectivity for people walking. Sidewalks are typically found in urban or suburban setting where there is an “urban cross section” meaning that there are curbs on the road. They provide a dedicated space for pedestrians and people who use mobility aids which should not be permitted for use by cyclists through municipal by-laws.

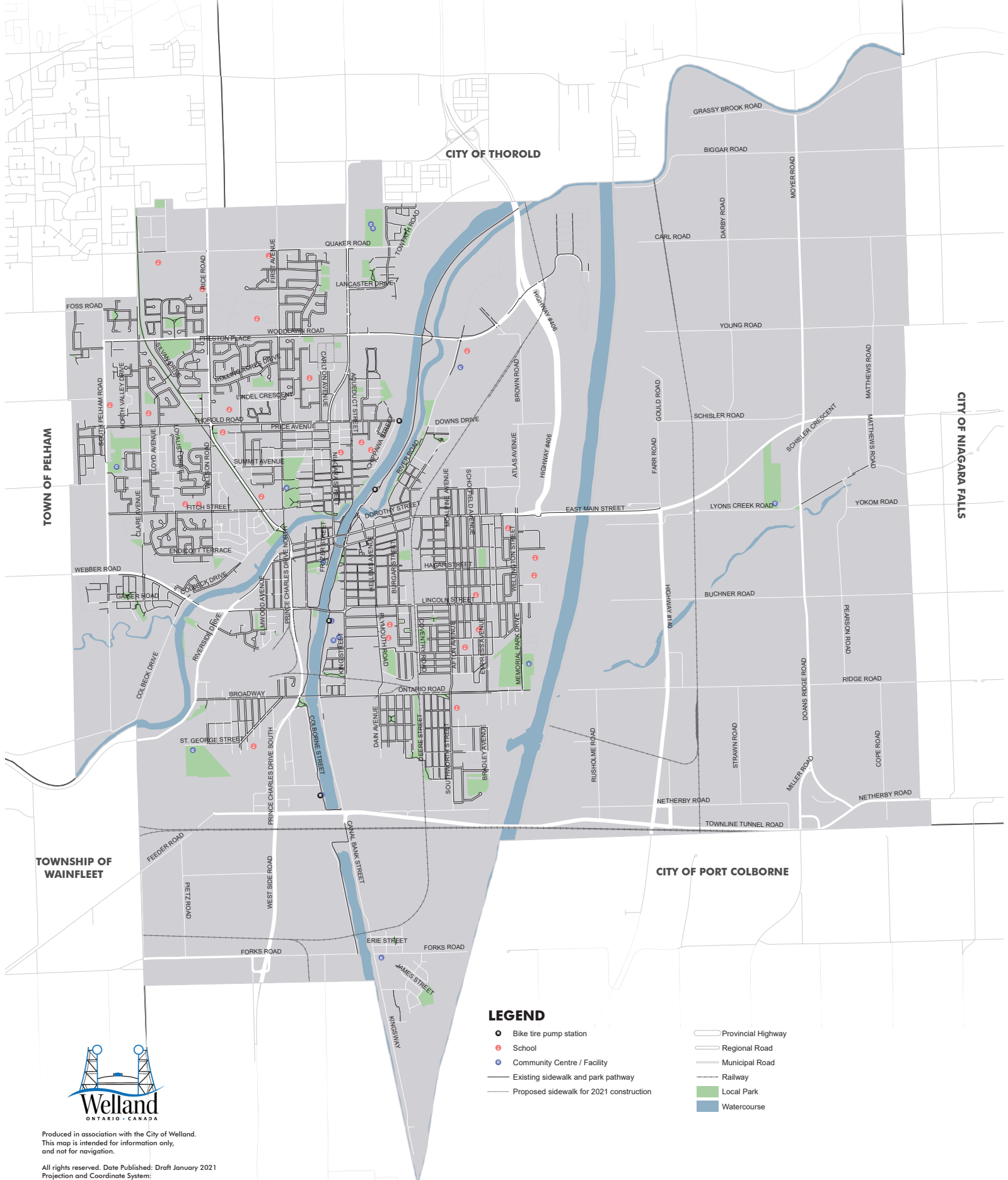
The City of Welland has a robust and well-connected system of sidewalks due to its primarily urban nature. Through the municipal capital budgeting process, proposed sidewalks have been identified for implementation for the 2021 construction cycle.

Table 6 . Overview of Routes on Map 1b: Existing Sidewalks

Route Name / Description	KM
Existing	
Existing sidewalks and park pathways	353
Proposed Sidewalks – 2021 Construction	
Abbey Road from Niagara Street to Gram Avenue	0.2
Abbey Road from Gram Avenue to Carlton Avenue	0.2
Gram Avenue from Woodlawn Road to Abbey Road	0.3
Forest Road from Gram Avenue to Carlton Avenue	0.2
Carlton Avenue from Thomson Road to Forest Road	0.3
Edgewood Avenue from Forest Road to Abbey Road	0.2
Maplepark Drive from Clare Avenue to Lloyd Avenue	0.2
Memorial Park Drive from 50 Memorial Park Drive to North Park entrance	0.5

MAP 7B. EXISTING SIDEWALKS

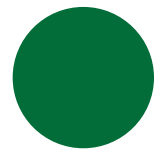
CITY OF WELLAND COMMUNITY TRAILS STRATEGY



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3.2 EXISTING DEMAND

The exiting conditions demonstrates how people using active transportation are currently being accommodated through trails; however, this doesn't always align with the existing walking and cycling patterns within the City i.e. the existing demand. To better understand the existing walking and cycling demand, a free mobile application and social media service, Strava, was used. Using GPS, individuals are able to track active travel trips and share their speed, time, and highlights from their trips to users with whom they are connected. Strava also plots its data in heatmaps that identify popular routes among its users, which are available on its website. While these heatmaps only identify relative popularity of on- and off-road routes, user counts are not publicly available, they can be used as a way to identify route preferences among its users.

The Strava heat map for cycling activity in Welland as illustrated in **Figure 3**, identifies a number of key on- and off-road routes that are frequented by its users. The Stop 19 Pathway (Steve Bauer Trail), Welland Canals Parkway Trail, and Merritt Island Trail demonstrate the highest frequency of use, thus the greatest popularity. The frequently used on-street routes are generally regional arterial and local collector roads, including east-west corridors such as Woodlawn Rd, Thorold Rd, Finch St, West Main St, Lincoln St, Broadway, and Ontario Rd and north-south corridors such as Clare Ave, First Ave, Riverside Dr (south of Lincoln St), Prince Charles Dr, Denistoun St, and King St. Cycling activity is also documented at a high rate at all roadway bridges that cross the Welland Canal and Welland River. Some rural and local roads in residential communities also demonstrate cycling activity, however, they are not at the same level of popularity as off-road multi-use trails and regional roads.

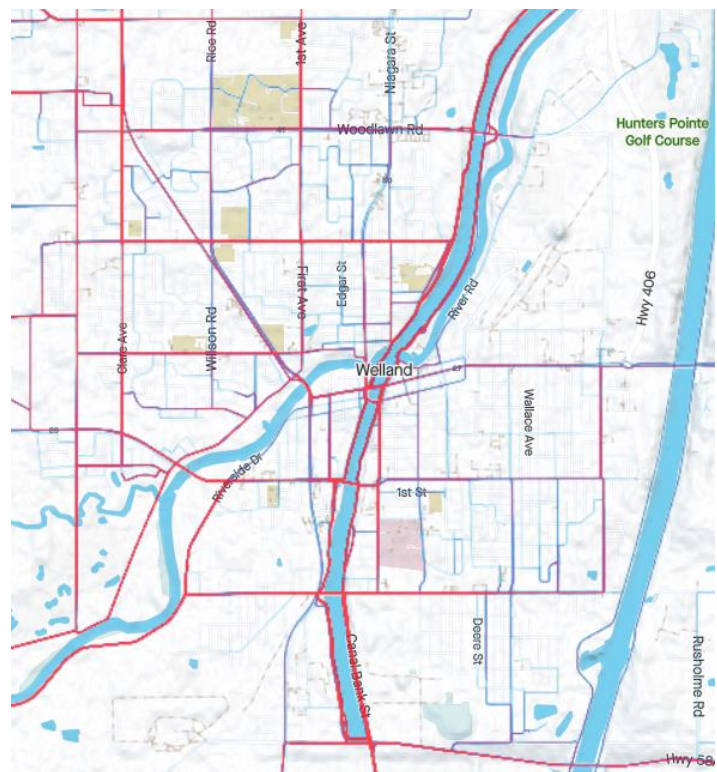
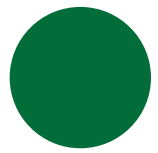


Figure 3 . Heat map of cycling activity in Welland (Strava, 2021)

Section 3.0 . EXISTING CONDITIONS



Compared to cycling, Strava shows considerably more walking activity through documented trips as shown in **Figure 4**. While off-road trails are also popular among users who walk, there is noteworthy activity on arterial, collector, and local roads throughout Welland.

There is particularly high pedestrian activity in the central-northwest communities in the City. There is also a relatively higher degree of activity within Niagara College for walking than there is for cycling.

Rural roads demonstrate lower pedestrian activity compared to urban and suburban roadways, potentially due to a lack of infrastructure and motor vehicle speeds.

As noted above, the information gathered through Strava is not considered statistically valid and does not represent formal “counts” of existing walking and cycling behaviour within the City. The information combined with some of the socio-demographic and commuting behaviour dissemination areas identifies pockets where there are either fewer trips currently occurring and / or greater need to support a transportation system that uses an equity lens. The information will be considered and used when identifying the infrastructure improvements within Task 2 and 3 of the work plan as well as the identification of encouragement and educational programming in Task 4.

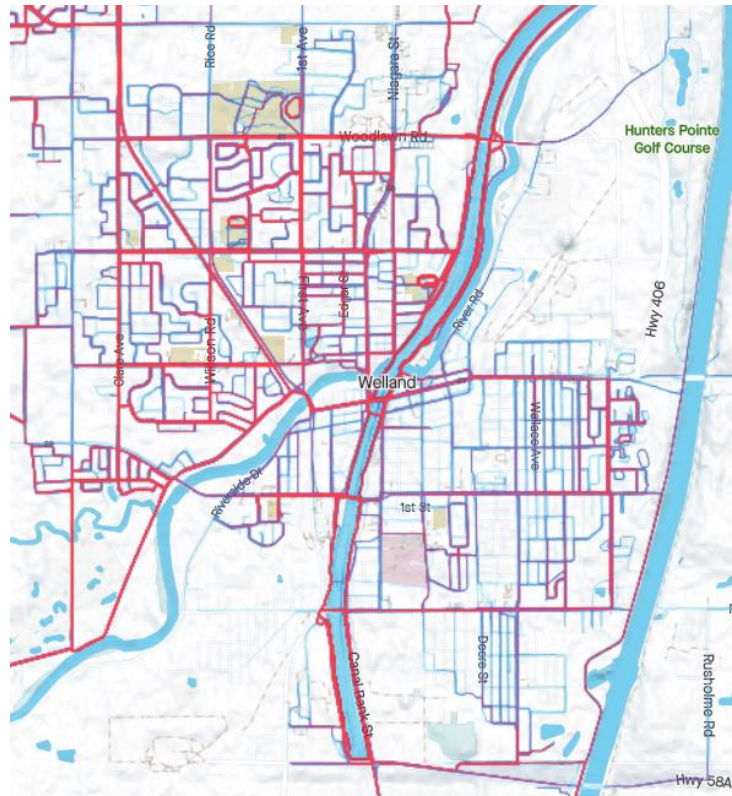
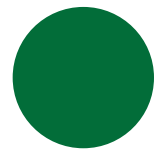


Figure 4 . Heat map of pedestrian activity in Welland (Strava, 2021)



3.3 INVESTIGATION & DOCUMENTATION


The existing conditions mapping, and preliminary information related to walking and cycling demand provides a geo-spatial interpretation of the current trail conditions; however, it doesn't necessarily provide an understanding of the current context and conditions in which the existing and planned trails are occurring. To gain a better understanding of context specific conditions, a detailed field investigation was completed on January 28th, 2021.

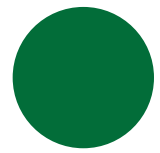
The purpose of the investigation was to review and document conditions which may influence future improvements to the existing trails network or warrant the identification of a new trail linkage within the City of Welland. To document the conditions in a consistent manner, a google form was created which included a set of conditions and characteristics that were intended to be investigated. For each corridor, trail or roadway that was reviewed, images of the conditions were documented on camera, with a waypoint and using the google form. The information has been submitted to City Staff as a geotagged KML file and has been designed as a tool to be used by City staff in two possible ways:

- As a communication tool internally and externally to illustrate the current conditions and potential improvements; and
- As an asset management tool to be updated and maintained with additional photos as the conditions are improved or altered.

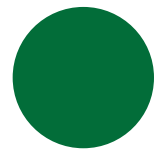
A summary of some of the key findings are documented in **Table 7**.

Table 7 . Select field investigations and preliminary observations

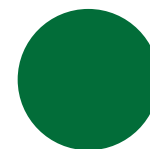
FIELD INVESTIGATION PHOTO	OBSERVATIONS
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Segments of off-road multi-use trails feature pedestrian-scale lighting and amenities, such as benches — Wide asphalt surfaces (>3.0m) provide space for passing by all active modes — Snow clearing and ice treatment to accommodate a bare-pavement surface conditions help facilitate active transportation in the winter



FIELD INVESTIGATION PHOTO	OBSERVATIONS
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Multi-use trails along the Welland Canal do not include pedestrian-scale lighting in some sections – Trail entrances are limited to major intersection crossings creating long segments with limited rest spaces – Safety could be enhanced by installing emergency telephones
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Desire lines from some sidewalks and trails highlight informal paths created by residents or visitors, reinforced by multiple paths – Consideration may be made to create formal, paved paths to improve access – Consideration should be made toward preserving environmentally sensitive locations to not disturb local ecosystems and ecological functions
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Jersey barriers and bollards with reflective panels have been placed at the entrances of natural areas to limit access by users, particularly motor vehicles – These features may not support streetscaping and urban design objectives but likely serve a temporary purpose – There is an opportunity to enhance entrances of natural areas and soft surface pathways using coordinate design features
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Trails head signage is provided for major multi-use trails – Not pictured, additional regulatory signage for trail adequate and safety between people walking and cycling are prominent at entrances – Not pictured, trail maps are provided for some trails to assist with wayfinding – particularly along the Welland Canal Trail



FIELD INVESTIGATION PHOTO	OBSERVATIONS
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Not all multi-use trails had not received the same level of winter maintenance before field investigations
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Midblock crossings of multi-use trails do not feature pavement markings to delineate pedestrian or cycling crossing locations – Many are not yield or stop controlled, requiring trail users to wait for gaps in traffic before safely crossing
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Sidewalks on some local roads have limited widths and no buffer – Snow storage is placed in the curb or atop sidewalk, reducing pedestrian clearway – Consideration should be made in the future to add a boulevard buffer and or widen the sidewalk to improve comfort for pedestrians walking next to busy, multi-lane roadways
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Newer sidewalks next to multi-lane roads feature a boulevard buffer for enhanced comfort and snow storage
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Universal accessibility considerations are demonstrated at many intersection crossings by presence of tactile walking surface indicators (TWSIs) and curb ramps – It should be noted that these are not uniformly applied but appear to be implemented at newer/reconstructed crossings



4 BACKGROUND REVIEW.

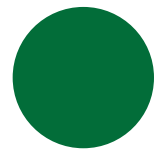
The CTS is being developed to align with existing trail and active transportation supportive policies and plans from all levels of government. The intent of the strategy is to review plans, policies and guidelines at the local, regional, and provincial levels were assessed to determine their capacity to support the achievement of the overall vision and goals of community trails in Welland. Where support is lacking, opportunities to improve or enhance these documents – through the required planning approvals processes - are identified. The background review consisted of a policy and plan review, key terms assessment, an exploration on potential policy gaps and enhancements as well as an assessment of existing design standards. The outcomes are documents in the following sections.

4.1 POLICY STRUCTURE & REVIEW

The Welland Community Trails Strategy will be one document in a structure of planning policy tools, guides, and plans that direct trail planning, design and implementation. This structure consists of local, regional, and provincial policies which have varying impacts depending on their scope of statutory influence. As a lower-tier municipality, Welland is impacted by plans and policies adopted by the City of Welland (local), the Region of Niagara (regional), and the Province of Ontario. The City of Welland is required to develop and implement plans with Ontario’s planning policy structure, which include six tiers as illustrated in **Table 8**.

Table 8 . Six-tier policy structure in Ontario

Provincial Statutes	Provincial legislation that must be enacted and upheld without deviation or interpretation.
Provincial Policies	Provincial statutory documents that outline implementable processes and actions that may be interpreted differently depending on context.
Official Plans	Municipal documents (regional and local) required by the Provincial Planning Act and Policy Statement that outline how municipalities will use land and delegate resources in anticipation for future growth.
★ Functional Master Plans	Long-term municipal planning documents (regional and local) that identify topic-specific goals and actions. These documents have no statutory impact on a community unless further policy is provided in the jurisdiction’s Official Plan.
Secondary Plans	Site-specific direction that adapt and implement the objectives, policies, and land-use designations and overall approach of the Official Plan through local development policies.
Land-Use Controls	How the Official Plan policies are implemented, monitored, and enforced with a requirement to be consistent with the Official Plan.



4.1.1 POLICY AND PLAN REVIEW

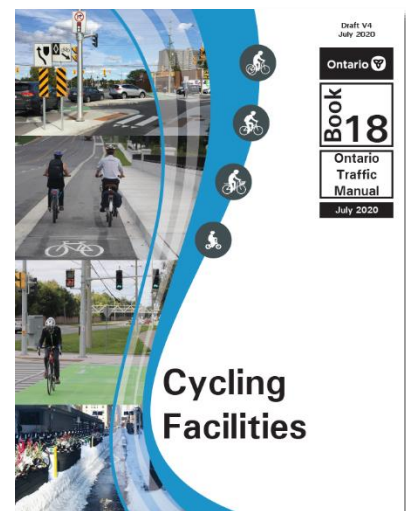
With an understanding of the policy structure within which the CTS is meant to fall, it is important to establish a better understanding of the applicable policies and the contents of those policies and plans relative to trails. Documents that may support or guide the design and implementation of community trails in Welland have been adopted at the local, regional, and provincial levels. It is important to ensure that these documents are understood before advancing with the development of Welland Community Trails Strategy to ensure that it compliments existing policies, guidelines and plans. The following is a summary of relevant policies and plans at the provincial, regional and local level.

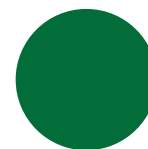
PROVINCIAL PLANS AND POLICIES

ONTARIO TRAFFIC MANUAL BOOK 18 (2021)

The Ontario Traffic Manual (OTM) Book 18: Cycling Facilities was first adopted in 2013 by the Ontario Traffic Council as the province's first roadway design guideline dedicated to cycling infrastructure. In 2018, the Province began the process of updating the document to reflect industry best practices that have emerged since its first release. The most recent update to the manual was released in 2021. OTM Book 18 provides considerable insight on the recommendations for planning and designing cycling facilities in the boulevard and the roadway in rural, urban, and suburban environments.

OTM Book 18 recommends designing cycling facilities for individuals who are 'interested but concerned.' This group includes anyone that is open to the idea of cycling but may be uncomfortable interacting with motor vehicles and sharing the roadway with motorists. Examples may include people with disabilities using adaptive bicycles, a child traveling to school, a senior or low-income individual using a low-cost transportation mode, or tourists discovering a new space. These individuals are the largest group of cyclists and should therefore be considered the 'design user' when planning and design cycling infrastructure. Interested but concerned cyclists have a low stress tolerance and prefer low volume / low speed streets, separated cycling facilities, or off-road facilities. OTM Book 18 also recommends adopting an All Ages and Abilities (AAA) approach when developing cycling infrastructure.



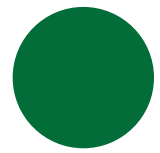


MINIMUM MAINTENANCE STANDARDS

Ontario Regulation 239/02, the Minimum Maintenance Standards for Municipal Highways (MMS), recommends maintenance practices for roadways in Ontario. The MMS is not prescriptive and serves as a set of maintenance standards for municipalities that do not have their own local maintenance standards established. While the original MMS pertains to general traffic lanes alone, it was amended in 2018 to include recommended maintenance practices for active transportation facilities in 2018. This includes distinct sections and guidance for cycling facilities in the roadway (bike lanes and cycle tracks) and pedestrian/multi-use facilities in the boulevard (sidewalks and multi-use pathways). Municipalities are encouraged to clear cycling facilities to the best of their abilities, however, they have the discretion to decide if some or all cycling facilities will be maintained in winter months.

The recommended winter maintenance practices for cycling facilities between the curb, as well as cycle tracks in the boulevard, is to strive toward bare pavement conditions through snow clearing operations. If bare pavement conditions cannot be achieved, practitioners should strive toward a $\leq 2.5\text{cm}$ snow depth because this is the maximum snow depth that can be functionally cycled upon using conventional bicycle tires. Snow clearing operation deployment times to address snow accumulation on cycling facilities is context-specific. The MMS identifies level of service standards (maximum snow accumulation thresholds) and snow clearing deployment timelines (maximum number of hours after thresholds are met) based on operational characteristics of the roadway (motor vehicle operating speeds and traffic volumes). Practitioners should consult the MMS to identify appropriate snow accumulation thresholds for each roadway. During severe winter storms, municipalities have the discretion to declare 'significant weather events' when clearing cycling facilities is impractical and may monitor weather until it is reasonable to begin snow clearing operations again. The removal of ice on cycling facilities should be performed in conjunction with ice removal operations on adjacent through lanes.

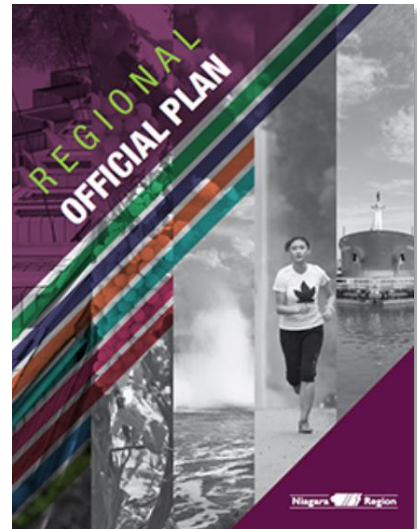
For in-boulevard facilities such as sidewalks and multi-use pathways, MMS recommends that municipalities should strive to maintain a minimum 1.0m wide pedestrian clearway at a snow depth $\leq 8.0\text{cm}$ within 48 hours of snow accumulation ending. These standards do not apply, however, to in-boulevard cycle tracks, which should be maintained to the same standard as cycling facilities between the curb. During severe winter storms, municipalities have the discretion to declare 'significant weather events' when clearing in-boulevard facilities is impractical and may monitor weather until it is reasonable to begin snow clearing operations again.



REGIONAL PLANS AND POLICIES

NIAGARA REGION OFFICIAL PLAN (2014)

The Niagara Region's Official Plan (ROP) is a long-term planning documents that guides physical, economic, and social development in the communities of Niagara Region. The ROP identifies growth opportunities, policy objectives, and implementation strategies to achieve its desired long-term goals. Transportation is a key section of the ROP and it outlines a set of general objectives and policies specific to improving mobility for different modes. Regarding general transportation guidance, the ROP notes that the Region must plan and implement a sustainable (multimodal, safe, and efficient) transportation system that manages future needs of its growing population. The ROP expresses the Region's interest in reducing greenhouse gas missions and improving social equity through improved active transportation and public transit.



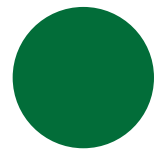
General transportation objectives in the ROP relevant to active transportation include:

- **Objective 9.A.1** - Promote and support for a multimodal transportation system to enable the movement of goods and people of all ages and abilities to jobs, housing, school, cultural destinations, public service facilities, recreational and tourist opportunities, and other major trip generators, especially in strategic growth areas.
- **Objective 9.A.4** - Create and enhance interconnected active transportation systems and programs.
- **Objective 9.A.5** - Support the implementation of complete streets at regional and local levels.
- **Objective 6.A.6** - Encourage the most cost-effective and environmentally appropriate modes of sustainable transportation to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

ROP policies related to active transportation in local area municipalities include:

- **Policy 9.D.1** - The Niagara Region and local municipalities will ensure that comprehensive active transportation networks are integrated into transportation systems to enable safe and convenient inter- and intra-municipal travel for active transportation users.
- **Policy 9.D.2** - The Niagara Region will prioritize the implementation of the Strategic Cycling Network as identified in the Niagara Region's Transportation Master Plan to advance the implementation of the Niagara Bikeways Master Plan as shown in Schedule E2.
- **Policy 9.D.4** - The Niagara Region will support local municipalities in implementing sections of the Strategic Cycling Network that are within their jurisdiction.
- **Policy 9.D.7** - The Niagara Region supports the re-purpose of abandoned rail and other linear corridors, including hydro corridors, for off-road trails and recommends that local municipalities consider various means to protect and/or acquire such corridors. The Niagara Region will require

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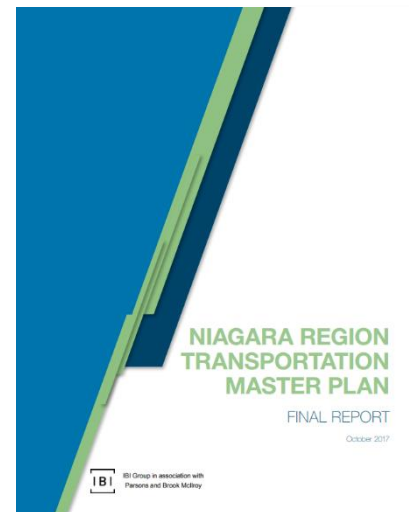
early pre-consultation with relevant stakeholders, including TransCanada Pipeline or its designated representative, in the acquisition of abandoned rail and other linear corridors.

ROP policies related to complete streets in local area municipalities include:

- **Policy 9.E.3** - Local municipalities shall include policies within Official Plans that ensure that a complete streets approach is used in the design, refurbishment, or reconstruction of their planned or existing street network.
- **Policy 9.E.4** - In the absence of local complete street guidelines, local municipalities shall refer to the Niagara Region's Complete Streets Design Guidelines for the design, refurbishment or reconstruction of their existing and planned local street network.
- **Policy 9.E.5** - Complete streets elements within local jurisdiction shall be maintained by the local municipality.

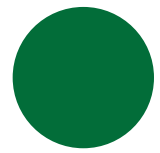
NIAGARA REGION TRANSPORTATION MASTER PLAN (2017)

The Niagara Region Transportation Master Plan (RTMP) establishes a long-term strategy for transportation planning, development, and renewal in Niagara Region for from 2017 to 2041. Two of the six key goals of the RTMP is to 'enhance multi-modal connectivity' and 'improve options for sustainable modes of transportation,' both of which emphasize the importance of investing in active transportation by the Region and its local area municipalities (Welland). One of the ways that the Region intends on achieving these goals is by adopting a Complete Streets approach in the design and redesign of regional roadways. The Complete Streets approach balances the needs of the different transportation modes (walking, cycling, transit, motor vehicles) and their interaction with adjacent land-uses in the design of roadway infrastructure. The Region is currently developing a Complete Streets Design Manual that will be used to guide regional staff and designers through the planning, design, and implementation process for Complete Streets projects. While the document's guidance specifically addresses regional roads, it may also be applied on roads owned by local area municipalities if they have not adopted their own Complete Streets guidance.



The Region recognizes the importance of active transportation as a sustainable and economical mode of transportation in its RTMP. It notes the importance of providing sidewalks on roadways to facilitate safe and accessible pedestrian travel through its regional road network. It also notes that it has worked with local area municipalities to establish a series of region-wide cycling routes that are composed primarily off-road trails, including the Greater Niagara Circle Route that traverses Welland in some sections. While the Region experienced many successes regarding its cycling infrastructure, the RTMP recognizes that there are many opportunities to enhance its infrastructure by filling gaps and adding new facilities that would establish a region-wide cycling network. The RTMP outlines a Strategy Cycling Network that identifies short-term priority projects that will reduce cycling barriers and fill

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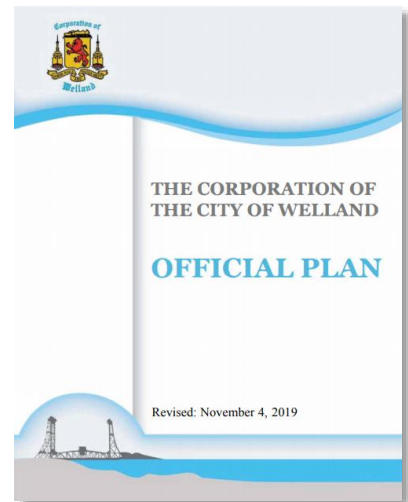
existing gaps in the network. The Strategic Cycling Network includes existing routes in the network, planned capital investment (cycling facilities that are planned for road reconstruction), and key infill corridors (infill links that will fill gaps between capital investments, existing network, and destinations). The RTMP notes that Region currently provides a Bicycle Facilities Grant to assist local municipalities implement cycling facilities on municipal rights-of-way. The annual budget for this program is \$200,000 and the RTMP recommends that the Region increase the annual budget to \$1 million until 2027.

LOCAL PLANS AND POLICIES

CITY OF WELLAND OFFICIAL PLAN (2010, LAST REVISED 2019)

The Official Plan (OP) is a local statutory document that outlines long-term infrastructure, land-use, and development plans and policies for growth in the City of Welland. The document considers the social, economic, and environmental context of Welland and guides development for a 20-year horizon (i.e. 2010 to 2030).

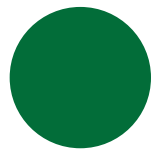
Section 6.4 of the OP addresses transportation infrastructure within the City of Welland. The first planning objective under this section is 'to provide a transportation system which supports a variety of modes.' Noted within this objective is the City's desire to reduce automobile dependence and to develop greater support for multiple transportation modes, including walking and cycling. In subsequent planning objectives, the OP notes that Welland's transportation network should also be safe and accessible.



In the discussion of road design, it is noted that right-of-way (ROW) provisions for people walking and cycling may include sidewalks, bike lanes, and other paved boulevard facilities. The OP states that the 'City shall implement, in a staged program, the development of a continuous and safe system of on-street and off-street cycling trails' but no schedule is provided to outline proposed routes and implementation staging. It is noted that new on-street cycling routes on arterial or collector roads will be designed with a buffer to improve the safety and comfort of people cycling on these roads. Cycling will also be considered in the design of bridge crossings as much as possible. Regarding pedestrian infrastructure, the OP notes that new or reconstruction projects shall provide sidewalks on both sides of arterial and collector roads and at least one side of all local roads, except for cul-de-sacs. Sidewalks are considered essential near transit infrastructure (bus stops), civic/community buildings, and public institutions. It is noted that 'the City will undertake a program of sidewalk reconstruction to upgrade existing walkways and to provide new walkways in established areas' with consideration for safety, accessibility, and lighting. Within Downtown Welland, pursuing opportunities to create and improve cycling and pedestrian linkages between Downtown and its surrounding neighbourhoods is identified as a key planning objective in the OP. These linkages should be designed to be attractive and accessible to users with a wide range of abilities and needs.

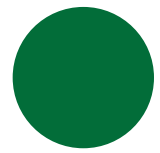
Multi-use trails and boardwalks are the only passive recreational uses permitted in the Core Natural Heritage System, which includes Environmental Protection Areas, Environmental Conservation Areas,

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Natural Heritage Corridors, and Fish Habitat. These facilities are also permitted in open spaces and parks, as well as footbridges, bike paths, and sidewalks.

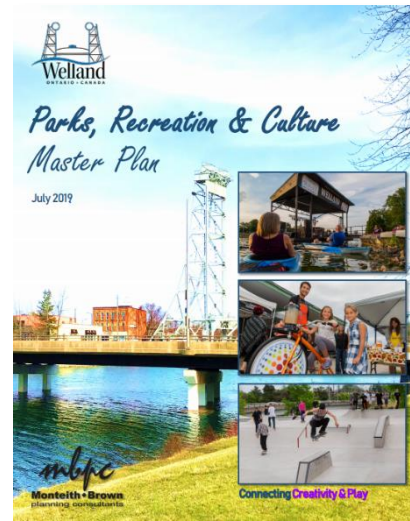
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The OP notes that a pedestrian and bicycle crossing (marked, grade-separated, or crossing with safeguard) be implemented wherever a trail linkage crosses an arterial or collector road. It also noted that the City will encourage public transit by integrating it with pedestrian linkages and trails, which support first- and last-mile transportation. To support the development of trails, the OP states that surplus railway lands may be used for new trails in consultation with relevant railway authorities.

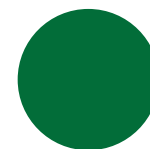
WELLAND PARKS RECREATION & CULTURE MASTER PLAN (2019)

The Parks Recreation and Culture Master Plan (PRCMP) identifies 47 recommendations to improve community recreational services, program, and infrastructure for 10 years (2019-2029). Creating a 'Trails or Active Transportation Master Plan to confirm the feasibility of implementing the conceptual trails network illustrated in [the] PRCMP' is identified as one of the highest priorities. It is noted that that a Welland Trails Map should also be created to assist residents and visitors navigate the network and clearly identify routes. The PRCMP recognizes that the City has three primary trail networks – the Welland Canal Parkway Trail, Merritt Island trail, and Stop 19 Pathway (Steve Bauer Trail) – and a series of internal park pathways.



The document notes that expansions of the existing trail network should strive toward creating safe, accessible, and convenient linkages to key destinations in Welland. The document includes a conceptual network of new trail routes, which emphasizes the importance of establishing east-west linkages to connect residents with the 'Welland Recreational Corridor' (Welland Canal Parkways Trail and Merritt Island Trail). The conceptual network identifies potential linkages to adjacent municipalities (Niagara Falls, Thorold, Pelham, Wainfleet, and Port Colborne). It is also noted in the document that the City's Municipal Standards require the design of every park in Welland to include active transportation facilities (walkways, trails, and bridges) from the parks entrance to any park facilities.

Recommendations to improve the City's trail system were echoed by residents who attended consultation events during the PRCMP development process. Participants of the consultation events expressed a keen interest in expanding walking and cycling trail linkages throughout Welland but particularly the east side of the city. Improved connections to the Great Trail (Trans Canada Trail) and Welland Canal Parkways Trail were also requested during public engagement. Residents made special request that the City ensure that these trails remain suitable for active modes and assistive mobility devices.



4.2 KEY TERM ASSESSMENT

A key term assessment is a policy-review method that identifies the applicability and effectiveness of policy documents to address specific topics. For the Welland Community Trails strategy, the primary topic for review for related specifically to trails and active transportation.

The assessment involved recording the recurrence of key terms in local policy and plans – the Welland Official Plan (OP) and the Welland Parks, Recreation, and Culture Master Plan (PRCMP). Key terms were grouped into two categories: primary and secondary terms. An overview of the intent of each of the categories and the terms that were identified is provided in **Table 9**.

Table 9 . Summary of Primary and Secondary Terms for Assessment

PRIMARY TERMS	SECONDARY TERMS
<p>Primary terms include those that demonstrate baseline support for community trails and active transportation in Welland. The primary terms selected for this assessment reflect the specific modes and infrastructure related to active transportation.</p>	<p>Secondary terms include those that demonstrate a shift from baseline support to a more developed approach to community trails and active transportation. The secondary terms selected reflect transportation and community objectives that enhance or are enhanced by community trails and active transportation.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Trails – Cycling – Bike – Walking – Pedestrian – Sidewalk – Active Transportation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Equity/Equitable – Multi-modal – Complete Streets – Connectivity – Accessibility/ – Accessible – Sustainability/ – Sustainable – Safety – Comfortable/ – Comfort

Both sets of terms were searched in the local plans and policies reviewed in the best practices review. Local policies and plans were the only documents assessed in the key term search because they have the greatest level of impact and control of community trail development in Welland. The frequency of primary and secondary key terms highlights effectiveness of these local policy and planning documents to address trails and active transportation growth in Welland.

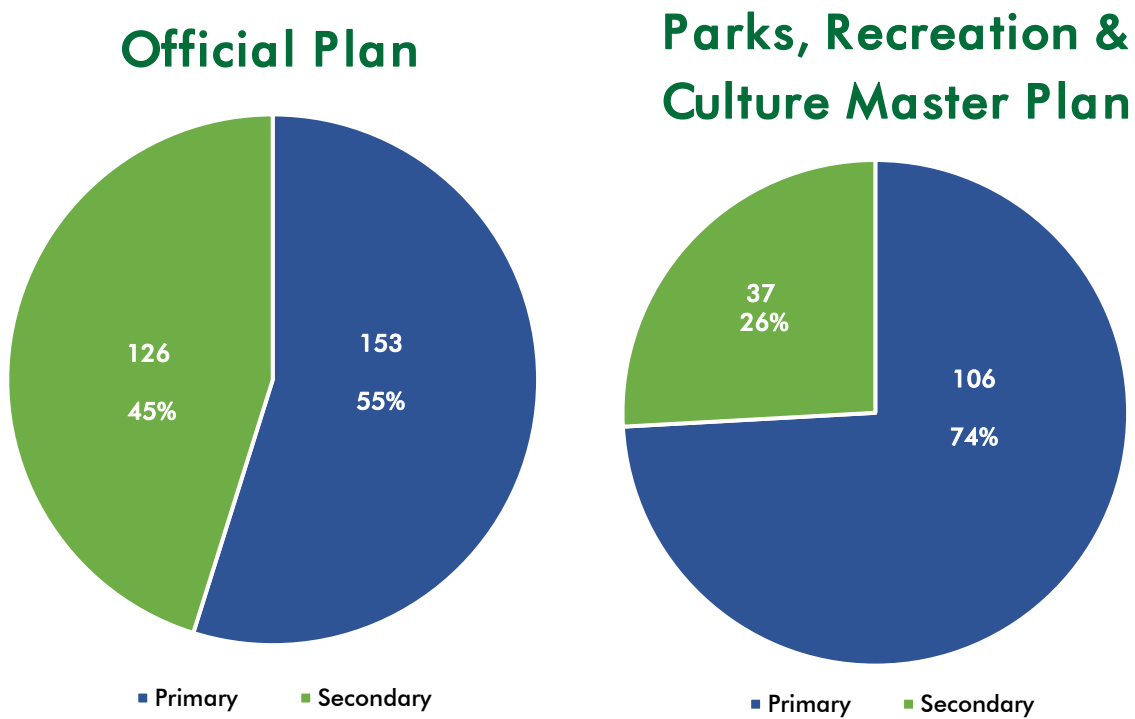
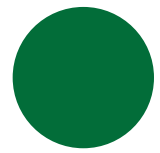
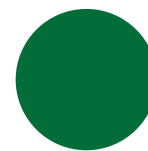


Figure 5 . Key Term Assessment Results

A more fulsome overview of some of the outcomes of the policy scan and key term assessment is provided in the following section; however, the findings as documented above in **Figure 5** illustrate the greatest amount of support for the primary terms within the Parks, Recreation and Culture Master Plan with also a balanced level of support in the Official Plan. This type of “breakdown” is consistent not only with the intent and purpose of each of these documents but with a well-balanced policy document.

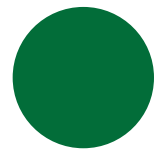
Almost all the terms – barring one (Complete Streets) – were present in one or both documents which demonstrates a strong range of policy references which ultimately enhance the ability to support trails from a policy context in the City of Welland. Considering the equity lens that is being taken for the CTS it is also important to note that equity only occurs once in the Official Plan and while there is wording that alludes to equity-based considerations, there is yet to be distinct policies and plans which provide guidance to address this aspect of planning.



4.3 POLICY GAPS & ENHANCEMENTS

The City of Welland has a strong planning base to build upon for its Community Trails Strategy. Supporting documents at the local, regional, and provincial levels clearly demonstrate an interest and commitment in establishing a safe and comfortable active transportation network that incorporates principles of universal accessibility. The following is an overview of some of the more specific key themes that emerged through the policy review.

- 1 Complete Streets** - Niagara Region makes mention of Complete Streets in its OP and RTMP but it is not referenced in Welland's OP or PRCMP. Complete Streets has relevance to trails and active transportation because this roadway design approach typically involves adding or improving walking and cycling infrastructure. Due to its interest Complete Streets, the Region is in the process of developing a Complete Streets Design Manual. The City of Welland may wish to explore the development of its own Complete Streets policy or engaging meaningfully with the Region Complete Streets Design Manual project to understand how this could support its vision for on-road active transportation infrastructure.
- 2 Conceptual Trails** - The PRCMP identifies approximately fifteen conceptual trail linkages in Welland that would connect its communities to the Welland Canal Recreational Corridor. These linkages focus predominantly on improving east-west connectivity because Welland's existing trails support north-south active transportation. While these east-west linkages would be valuable, the PRCMP does not map the conceptual trails along existing roadways, bridges, hydro corridors, or parks and it does not identify a priority implementation schedule. While these linkages may help with network mapping for the Welland Community Trails Strategy, more detailed mapping on network routes and phasing is necessary.
- 3 Equity** - The OP notes that one of Welland's key transportation planning objectives is creating a responsible transportation system that supports social inclusion. Supplemental policies and discussion do not clearly connect active transportation infrastructure plans with social inclusion/equity. It would be valuable to improve the City's understanding of communities that are underserved by active transportation infrastructure and identify an approach to improve these areas through policy and planning. It is worth noting that the need for accessible infrastructure for all ages and abilities is mentioned in the OP and PRCMP.
- 4 Supporting Infrastructure** - Bike racks, bike repair stations, benches, pedestrian-scale lighting, and other walking/cycling amenities are examples of supporting infrastructure that enhance active transportation facilities. While they may not always be the centre focus of infrastructure projects and plans, these features are integral to encouraging residents and visitors to travel using active modes. The OP notes in section 4.1.2.2.B that streetscape and public realm improvements should be incorporated into road design projects but does not require similar features near trail infrastructure. It would be prudent to re-evaluate Welland's existing strategy for supporting infrastructure, particularly bike parking, to provide adequate end-of-trip facilities for people walking and cycling.



- 5 Transit Integration** - ‘First- and last-mile’ is a term to describe the beginning and end of transit trips, which are typically completed using active modes (walking and cycling). The term is frequently used when discussing transit integration because there is growing evidence that demonstrates how enhanced active transportation infrastructure near transit stops can increase ridership. Infrastructure in this context would include linear facilities (sidewalk, bike lanes, multi-use trails, cycle tracks), crossings (mid-block and intersection multi-use crossings), and supporting elements (bike parking, benches). While Welland’s OP notes that bus stops should be located on sidewalks, trails, or intersections, there is limited discussion on how the City plans to integrate public transit with its active transportation network. It would be valuable to discuss active transportation plans with transit agencies to establish policies and plans that may support both initiatives in Welland.
- 6 Regional Cost-Sharing** - The capital cost of constructing active infrastructure can be expensive. It’s important to ensure that enough proportion of the annual municipal budget covers the cost to implement planned walking and cycling infrastructure. Welland’s OP notes in Section 6.4.2.3.G that ‘the City may provide funding for implementing a cycling trails system by allocating a portion of the City’s budget on an annual basis for this purpose.’ It would be prudent to identify external funding opportunities to identify cost-sharing initiatives that levy the cost of implementation projects. The Region of Niagara, for example, offers two cost-sharing initiatives that should be used to support the implementation of Welland’s trails and active transportation infrastructure. The Public Realm Investment Program provides funding to local area municipalities who are leading public realm / streetscaping projects on regional roads. The Bicycle Facilities Grants offers funding to local area municipalities who are leading cycling infrastructure projects that support the Region’s strategic cycling network.

The intent is for the outcomes of this assessment to be used to inform future policy updates at such as time that the City decides to amend existing or create new policies. This does not include specific policy language but considerations which could help to inform the development of future policies.

4.4 REVIEW OF CITY DETAILS

As noted previously, there are other tools as part of a traditional policy structure which are meant to provide implementation support. Design guidelines and standards are part of those implementation tools and serve as the primary reference for designers and engineers when addressing physical infrastructure.

Details for trails, sidewalks, and on-road bike lanes are described in the City of Welland Municipal Standards, which was last updated in 2013. The Standards describe the recommended materials, minimum widths, depths, and heights, and location for of these facilities on public lands and rights-of-way in Section 6.4: Boulevards and Requirements for Lands to be Conveyed to the City. **Table 10** provides a summary of the on and off-road design considerations as outlined within the existing Municipal standards.

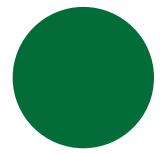
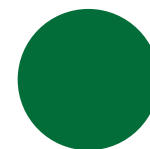


Table 10 . Sidewalk, trail, and bike lanes standards in Welland (City of Welland Municipal Standards, 2013).

	SIDEWALKS	MULTI-USE TRAILS & WALKWAYS	ON-ROAD BIKE LANES
Material	Base: crushed stone Surface: concrete	Base: granular limestone Surface: asphalt	Same structural standard as road base
Minimum Depth	Base: 100mm (standard) 200mm (commercial driveways) Surface: 100mm (boulevards) 150mm (residential driveways / adjacent to curb)	300mm total: 225 granular "A" limestone 50mm H.L.8 asphalt 25mm H.L.3 or H.L.2 asphalt	Same structural standard as road base
Minimum Width	1.5m (residential and commercial)	3.0m	1.5m, delineated on road by pavement markings
Location	Both sides of collector and arterial roads, both sides of industrial subdivisions, one side of local roads, inside of crescents, one side of cul-de-sacs (some conditions)	Unspecified	Unspecified, design to be determined by the City
Other	Minimum depth of concrete at intersections of regional roads and commercial driveways should be 200mm	High chain link fence is required on either side of walkways	

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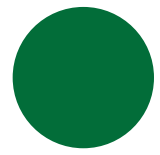
It should be noted that these written standards are not supported by a detailed drawing (except for sidewalks), which, based on input received as well as best practices would be of significant value to civil engineers, landscape architects, and other designers that are implementing this infrastructure in Welland. As part of the development of the CTS, the City will explore – with support from the consulting team – the development of detailed drawings for the following elements to support the design and implementation of community trails:

- Material, size and specifications for multi-use trails (Asphalt, limestone screenings, etc.)
- Wayfinding and trailhead signage
- Pedestrian and bicycle crossing markings (midblock and intersection crossings)
- Trail and pedestrian realm furnishings (benches, trash cans, etc.)
- Trail access controls (gates, bollard, boulders etc.)
- Slope safety fencing/rails
- Pedestrian lighting

The suggested design details and standards noted above pertain to primarily off-road trail facilities. These standards will be developed based on best practices as well as provincially and nationally accepted guidelines and standards including but not limited to Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) and universal accessibility (Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act – AODA).

For the purposes of establishing a consistently design on-road network, the CTS and the City should adopt the most up to date design guidelines and standards as accepted by municipalities of a similar scope and scale and at the provincial level. Provincial guidelines that are considered the most applicable and will be applied throughout the CTS development process include Ontario Traffic Manual Book 18: Cycling Facilities, Ontario Traffic Manual Book 15: Pedestrian Facilities, Ministry of Transportation Ontario Bikeways Design Guidelines, and Transportation Association of Canada Geometric Design Guide for Canadian Roads. As the City proceeds identification of preferred routes, facilities and design directions, these documents will be reviewed and applied within the Welland context.





5 PRELIMINARY SWOT ANALYSIS.

One of the key outcomes of Task 1 of the Welland CTS was a preliminary strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) analysis. Through discussions with City staff at the kick-off meeting and stakeholders through a series of in-depth interviews a high-level SWOT Analysis has been completed and will be refined as the project advances.

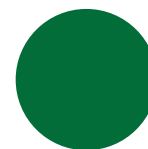
The rationale for identifying strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats is to provide initial understanding of the issues that the CTS will aim to resolve or mitigate and the opportunities that could be leveraged or explored to improve the overall interest in and culture of trails use and active transportation. Gaining a stronger understanding of the existing conditions and the history of trails in Welland helps our project team to contextualize the work being done to develop the CTS and ensures that our recommendations are context sensitive and applicable to the City.

5.1 PURPOSE & PROCESS

To complete the preliminary Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) Analysis, Key Stakeholders within the community were identified and were contacted to participate in an in-depth, candid interview. Nine interviews were conducted with a total of eleven participants, resulting in a much stronger understanding of the opportunities and challenges facing the City of Welland as it continues to grow and become a better place for trails and active travel use.

Interviews were conducted during the first 3 weeks of February, 2021 and were transcribed and recorded by the project team. Interviews were confidential, ensuring that respondents could be candid and honest in their assessments of the City's strengths and weaknesses. The questions that were asked of each participant were as follows:

- 1 What is your vision for the future of Trails and active transportation in Welland?
- 2 What priority infrastructure improvements would you identify if you had the power to implement them?
- 3 Who do you feel the City's current trails and active transportation system is serving well? Who do you feel is being left behind?
- 4 What has Welland done well in recent years with regards to Active Transportation and Trails? How can the City build on those successes?
- 5 Have there been any failures, in your opinion, relating to Trails and Active Transportation in recent years? What can the City learn from these mistakes?
- 6 What are some of the existing programs or events in place to educate people in Welland about active transportation or encourage them to use the trails? Who has played a role in bringing those forward?
- 7 What types of programs would you like to see in place to encourage residents and visitors alike to use active transportation more often in Welland?



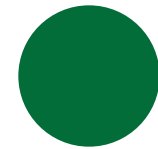
- 8 Who do you think should take the lead in developing these programs (Go through each item they have listed)? How can other partners support their actions?
- 9 Are there actions you have listed that you would identify as priorities for the near term (i.e., within 18 months?) What could your organization do to help move those forward? What other supports would you need to bring that program to fruition?
- 10 Is there anything else you would like to add?

Interview responses were reviewed and some of the key items that emerged are summarized in the SWOT Analysis below.

5.2 OUTCOMES

The Preliminary SWOT Analysis results, presented on the following pages, will be further refined through stakeholder consultation as we move towards the next phase of the CTS Project. The key themes that emerged from the interviews are:

- The City has a strong foundation for the CTS. The historical investment in City’s existing trails system provides a strong starting point for progress as the CTS is implemented.
- Community desire for change and improvement is there, and the City is supportive of those changes, but coordination and resources for trails and active transportation have been low, resulting in discontinuous efforts towards improvement.
- Key trip generators such as downtown, the North Welland BIA (including the Seaway Mall) and Niagara College are not well-served by trails and active transportation infrastructure.
- Safety is a key concern. Whether it is traffic safety, feelings of personal security along existing trails or the lack of lighting contributing to an unsafe environment, safety was an item that came up multiple times during interviews.
- Intra-municipal connectivity is particularly important in Welland – many residents work in adjacent municipalities and many students coming to Niagara College live in adjacent municipalities. These intra-community links will also benefit the City from a tourism and economic development perspective.

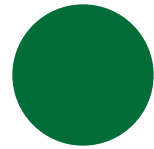


STRENGTHS

- Existing trails form a strong foundation for future investments in Active Transportation
- Welland Canal Trails and Greater Niagara Circle Route serve recreational trail users very well
- Support for Active School Travel Planning efforts
- Strong staff support for trails, active transportation and enhanced quality of life
- Good community engagement, and an enhanced realization of the importance of trails during COVID
- Region of Niagara is a supportive partner, both in Transportation and Public Health
- Niagara College has been a good partner for the City to help encourage students to participate and engage with the community

WEAKNESSES

- On-road connectivity is lacking for people on bikes, making it very challenging to access key destinations like Seaway Mall, Niagara College and downtown
- Signage can be confusing – there are many sign families that don't relate well to one another
- One-way streets downtown create high-speed traffic conditions and an uncomfortable environment for active travel
- Lack of a dedicated promotional strategy to encourage trail use and active travel
- Not many safe options to cross the Canal by active travel
- Lack of a current Active Transportation Committee
- Lighting and safety concerns prevent people from using the trails in some instances

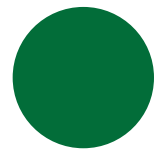


OPPORTUNITIES

- Connections between the BIAs and the City could lead to the creation of new supportive programs or infrastructure – both the North Welland BIA and the Downtown BIA are keen to engage in partnerships that draw people from the trail to their business
- Intra-municipal connections could be strengthened to make Welland the heart of the region’s trail system. Connections into Thorold, Niagara Falls and Pelham could establish Welland as a key tourism destination in Niagara Region
- Niagara College is a major trip generator in Welland, and there is an opportunity to better connect to the campus to the surrounding trails through a connection to both the Steve Bauer Trail and the Welland Canal Trail to provide more transportation choice
- Existing Trails already have strong recognition in Welland and a recognizable brand. Increased resourcing for programmatic support of Active Transportation could make a significant shift in transportation patterns possible.
- Tourism products like the Welland Canal, the Greater Niagara Circle Route and the adjacent Bridge-It Route position Welland to be a major centre for cycling and trails tourism in Niagara Region, especially for guest who want to find an experience that is outside of busier cities like Niagara Falls.
- Existing partners are ready to participate and support the City in deploying programs and projects like a trailhead project, bike valet, cycling and trails promotions and more. The City merely needs to develop a strategy to rally that support behind.

THREATS

- Stakeholders repeatedly highlighted feeling unsafe on trails or using active transportation in Welland. Whether due to lighting, human factors or environmental factors, real and perceived safety will need to be considered as the City moves forward.
- Staff resource capacity is a challenge to the implementation of any new programs – staff are largely already operating at or above capacity, so additional work will require additional staffing resources to ensure its success.
- Trails may start to get busier as more people use them, which could produce conflict between user groups. There may need to be consideration given to expanding and widening popular trails to maintain separation between users.



5.3 RATIONALE FOR IMPROVEMENT

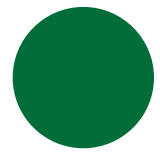
Welland is ready for improvements and enhancements.... and here's why!

The City's existing assets are already strong

The Trails system, existing sidewalks and cycling infrastructure lay an excellent foundation upon which the CTS can be built. What the SWOT Analysis also illustrates is the myriad ways that Welland's existing trail system and active transportation infrastructure are not being maximized. This may be in part due to the lack of connectivity within the network and a lack of ongoing resource support to grow trails and active transportation use in the community. Welland is well positioned to grow as a trails and active travel destination – by closing key gaps in the network and developing new resources to support community partnerships, the City could begin to see significant shifts in its residents' transportation habits.

Connectivity is one of the strongest determinants of transportation behaviour

If a route features a section that feels unsafe, cautious riders are likely to turn around and not attempt to ride that way again. Interviewees unanimously highlighted the need for enhanced connectivity between Welland's on and off-road active transportation infrastructure. This will require investments, but each gap closed moves the City closer to a truly connected network, which will unlock significant active transportation potential in town. Moving beyond the City limits, connecting with Welland's neighbouring municipalities is also crucial. Building upon the links through the GNCR can help residents and visitors travel seamlessly from Welland into Niagara Falls, Thorold and Port Colborne to enhance Welland's position as a tourism hub along the GNCR.



Creating and promoting a highly visible brand for the City's active travel and trails efforts has the potential to shift the dynamic

Developing a wayfinding and signage strategy and creating a community marketing campaign to accompany that strategy would help to boost awareness of the City's assets and help people to choose safe, comfortable routes when they are walking, cycling or wheeling. A community marketing campaign that highlights active transportation routes, particularly trails, may be an opportunity to attract new businesses, residents, and visitors – supporting community and economic growth.

Investing in public spaces that feel safe, welcoming and joyful

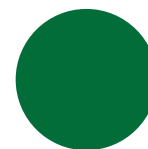
Another way that Welland could enhance its active transportation portfolio is by exploring the opportunity to designing public spaces with amenities that are considered inviting while also generating potential active and passive programming opportunities. Numerous interviewees mentioned places that feel unsafe along the trails or in public spaces in Welland, which could prevent people from walking, cycling or wheeling in those spaces. Public spaces that are visible, clean and cared for can create a feeling of comfort and safety, and can bring dignity to spaces that have previously felt neglected. These types of spaces are vital to a welcoming trails environment.

Partner organizations within Welland are ready and willing to support the City's efforts to develop more support for trails and active transportation.

From BIAs wanting to build new trailheads with their beautification and marketing budget to tourism companies wanting to bring more people into the City to dine, shop and stay as they ride the Greater Niagara Circle Route to students who would like to serve as ambassadors to show their classmates safe routes to Niagara College, Welland is full of partners who want to support the City to make positive change.

Staffing resources

Both from an availability and financial perspective proves to be the greatest barrier -the challenges that each of these stakeholders identified in bringing their ideas and their support forward was limited capacity among City Staff to make something happen. This is not to point the finger at staff – it is common for active transportation and trails to slip between the cracks in a municipal organization, especially since it touches so many different departments. But absent a clear direction regarding who they should talk to about helping to bring new events and programs to life, stakeholders often ended up not talking to the right person, or not reaching out to the City at all. For the City to take advantage

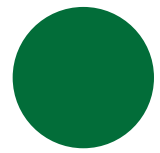


of all the willingness and energy in the City at large, there is a need for there to be a central resource who can channel those efforts within the community towards a coherent goal – to become a more active Welland.

Residents are ready and willing to walk or bike to their destinations

More than 90% of respondents to the online survey reported walking once a week or more, with 56% of respondents cycling once a week or more. When it comes to community destinations, residents are willing to walk for an average of 8 minute to get to work or school, 10 minutes to get to shops and services or 12 minutes to get to parks or trails. Based on an average walking speed, this means that most residents are willing to walk between 800m and 1.2km to access destinations in their community.

Residents also expressed a desire to cycle to more of their destinations, with residents being willing to ride for between 9 and 12 minutes to access work, school, shops, parks and leisure destinations. Even at a relatively slow cycling pace, this means that most residents would be interested in accessing amenities within 2-2.5km of their homes by bike, putting most of the urban area of Welland in reach for many residents.



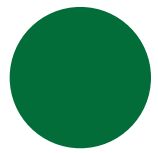
6 NEXT STEPS & CONSIDERATIONS.

Technical Memo #1 is a valuable resource that will be referenced in future phases of the Welland Community Trails Strategy project. It establishes a vision and goals for community trails, summarizes the socio-economic profile of the community, identifies opportunities to enhance the existing trail network, and reviews the existing planning and policy context for community trail development at the local, regional, and provincial levels. It also summarizes preliminary stakeholder consultation for this project as well as consultation completed in previous studies by the City. This information is critical in establishing a planning foundation for future improvements to community trails in Welland. This section describes future considerations and next steps for the Community Trails Strategy project.

The background review process has highlighted opportunities and challenges in Welland's existing trail network and a significant number of key considerations when it comes to developing not only the network but also the policies, strategies and actions associated with it. Future considerations that have emerged from the background review process include:

- East-west connections linking residential communities to existing north-south trails (e.g. Steve Bauer Trail, Canal Parkway Trail) have been identified as a priority in previous local plans. Consideration should be made toward identifying on- and off-road opportunities that establish comfortable and accessible east-west connections for a range of users and abilities.
- The Welland Municipal Standards do not include detailed drawings for off-road trails. Creating a new detail for trails may assist the City in establishing design consistency moving forward.
- Existing trails are being used for recreational purposes in the winter, however, snow clearing is inconsistently applied (based on field investigations). Consideration should be made for establishing clear winter maintenance procedures for active transportation facilities and posting this information publicly on the City's website.
- End-of-trip facilities (bike racks) should be considered for implementation at trail entrances, trip generators (on- and off-road), and near transit stops to encourage cycling.
- Consideration should be made to add pedestrian-scale lighting and emergency phones on off-road trails to enhance safety.
- Cost-sharing initiatives at the regional level should be reviewed and leveraged where possibly to levy the capital cost of proposed active transportation infrastructure.
- The availability and capacity from a resource perspective may need to be addressed to ensure that the strategies can be implemented once identified.
- The foundation of support at the local level is evident with the potential to be harnessed and used to support future implementation of the plan – if there is sufficient buy-in.
- Consistency, connectivity and clarity are the most critical considerations along with framing this strategy as a way to embrace a more dynamic, healthy and sustainable future for the City.

Section 5.0 . **PRELIMINARY SWOT ANALYSIS**



The step in the project is to develop a proposed community trails network of on- and off-road active transportation facilities in Welland. The network will be developed by identifying missing linkages, amenity opportunities, transit integration opportunities, and assessing the feasibility of routes. The network development process is iterative and will include consultation with City Staff, community stakeholders, and the public. Network development will also consider the information reviewed and evaluated during the background review process, which is documented in Technical Memo #1.