

Atlas Steels c. 1940s



Valbruna ASW c. 2020s

# WELLAND'S Industrial Renaissance

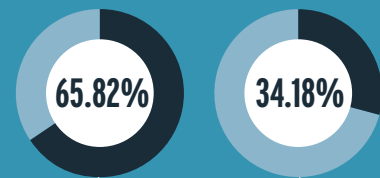


TABLE OF CONTENTS

- 03 Message from the Mayor**  
Are you ready to dive into Welland?
- 04 Welland – the Place to Be!**  
The industrial renaissance in the heart of Niagara
- 06 Atlas Transformed**  
Valbruna ASW modernizes specialty steel production
- 08 Industry Evolves with the Times in Welland**  
Linamar chooses Welland for giga-casting revolution
- 10 Advanced Manufacturing Thrives at Bosch Rexroth**  
Canadian Innovation meets German engineering
- 12 From Welland to the Oilfields**  
Welded Tube carries on Welland's industrial heritage
- 14 From Harvesters to Homes**  
Brownfield remediations lead to residential boom
- 16 Welland's New Manufacturing Landscape**  
The city attracts many new manufacturers
- 18 Welland Industry Over the Years**  
Highlights spanning from "Merritt's Ditch" to today

2022

✓ 1045 Permits Issued  
✓ 943 New Dwelling Units



New Dwelling Units  
IN THE BUILT-UP AREA

New Dwelling Units  
IN THE GREENFIELD AREA

2023

✓ 398 Permits Issued  
✓ 474 New Dwelling Units

JANUARY TO JUNE 27, 2023

+4,800,000  
Commercial/Industrial Space

EXPECTED GROWTH BY 2031

POPULATION  
55,750  
2021 Census

80,844  
2031 Census

+11,805  
Dwelling Units

MESSAGE FROM THE MAYOR



Welcome to the vibrant and welcoming City of Welland. We are dedicated to fostering strong relationships with our community and investors to achieve intelligent and attainable development.

Welland is experiencing exponential growth, and we're excited about the future. We're attracting modern, innovative, and diverse industries,

From parks and playgrounds to housing developments and retail spaces, many are now calling Welland the heart of Niagara. With our beautiful and accessible recreational canal, our city boasts one of the more unique features in the Niagara Region. Our canal waterfront lands are developed with innovative, functional, and adaptive features benefitting the entire community.

Welland's growth isn't restricted to housing units or population; it encompasses strategic policy approaches to enhance the quality of life for our residents of today and the tens of thousands we will welcome in the near future. Initiatives such as the Welland Community Trails Strategy, corporate rebranding, and Official Plan updates all author new chapters of our growing city.

With a strategic commitment to redevelop the canal lands and waterway, invest in our financial management and sustainability practices, and focus on job creation, community engagement, and health and well-being, the City of Welland continues to focus on setting itself apart from other municipalities in Niagara. Our goal remains to create a unique, memorable experience for those who live, work, play, and invest in our city.

In the following pages, you'll find out precisely what makes Welland a truly remarkable community. And, once you're done reading about it, I invite you to come out and see the city for yourself. You won't be disappointed.

Are you ready to dive into Welland?

*Frank Campion*

Frank Campion  
Mayor





# Welland

## The place to be!



Like many Canadian cities, Welland faced challenges in the 1990s. A number of the city's prominent factories closed down or downsized considerably from their post-war peaks.

Free trade, exchange rate fluctuation, factory automation, off-shoring: all these factors ganged up to contribute to the rise of brownfields across Ontario.

But like a phoenix, Welland is back, having re-blossomed into a vibrant and thriving city, attracting businesses, investors, and talented individuals from far and wide.

A key driver for Welland's economic growth has been its strategic location. The city benefits from its proximity to major markets such as the GTA, Western New York, and the U.S. Northeast. Not only are Welland's manufacturers close to their customers, they have excellent transportation access, by road, rail and water.

Welland also offers abundant land availability, with both brownfield opportunities and new shovel-ready land. And the city boasts a robust and skilled workforce, enhanced by its location in the heart of the Niagara Region. The broader Hamilton-Niagara gateway has a population well over 1 million, a huge labour pool to draw from.

Not too long ago, GE took notice of Welland. After an extensive site selection process to identify the ideal location for its new \$265 million "Brilliant Factory", the Fortune 500 multinational honed in on Welland. This was in 2016, and since then word has spread quickly among manufacturing interests, entrepreneurs, and economic development professionals. Welland is definitely the place to invest.

This edition of Made in Welland showcases many of these stories. We take a look at legacy industrial sites

transitioning into nimble, successful enterprises. We also take note of many manufacturers establishing or expanding in town. And we'll explore several old industrial properties now cleaned up and transitioned into modern residential and commercial use.

The city's economic success can be attributed to its focus on diversification. Welland has worked diligently to attract a wide range of industries, including advanced manufacturing, healthcare, logistics, and information technology. By fostering a business-friendly environment and investing in infrastructure, the city has become an attractive hub for entrepreneurs and established companies alike.

Many of these new ventures have taken advantage of one of three attractive Community Investment Plans (CIPs), offering incentives for brownfield remediation, commercial area revitalization and private sector investment.

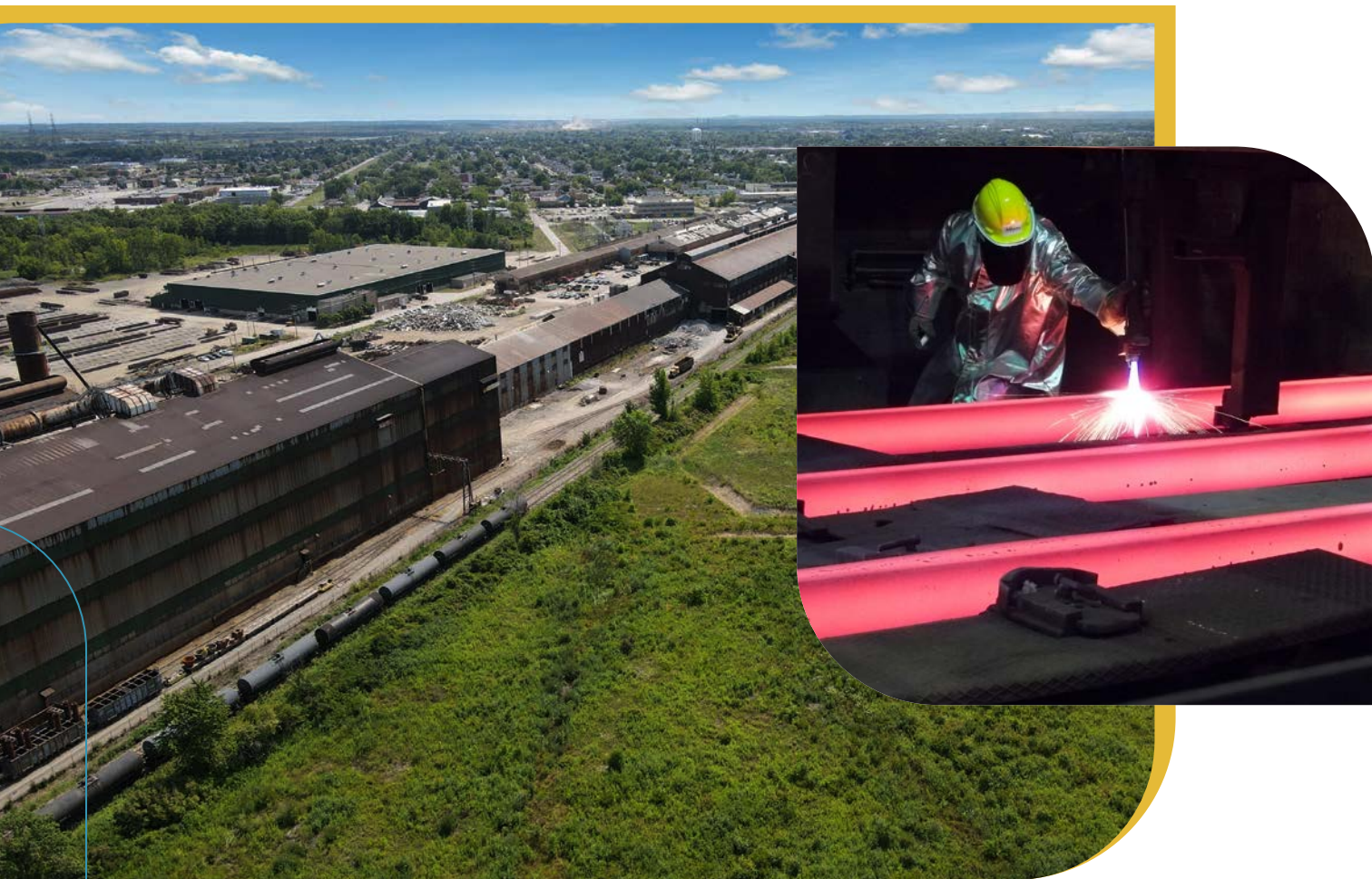
In the following pages, you'll read about Welland's past and Welland's present. But we're most excited by its future. By 2031, the city is expected to reach a population of over 80,000, from its 2021 census count of 55,570 people.

11,805 new dwelling units are projected to accommodate this population growth, and 4.8 million additional square feet of commercial and industrial space is expected to take advantage of the growing and well-seasoned workforce.

Welland's success story is a testament to the power of strategic planning, collaboration, and a forward-thinking mindset. By embracing change, attracting diverse industries, nurturing innovation, and investing in its community, the city has experienced an economic renaissance. **W**



# ATLAS TRANSFORMED



## Welland's second century of steelmaking

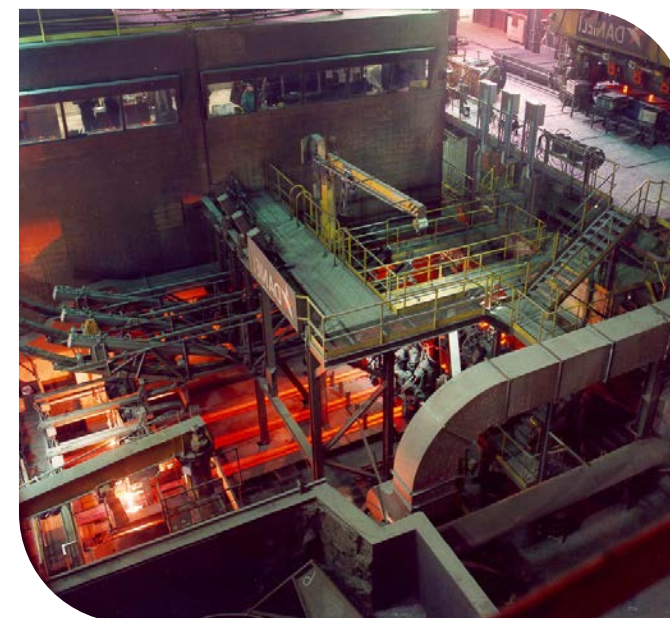
Atlas Steels used to dominate Welland's landscape, and not just because of its enormous mile-long row of plants. With a workforce of over 3,000 at its peak, the company's presence brought prosperity to the community and consolidated Welland's position as an industrial powerhouse. By the end of the Second World War, Atlas was Canada's largest specialty steel plant, and the post-war boom kept the molten steel flowing for several decades.

The economy has changed since then, as has steelmaking. Atlas went through its struggles with downsizing, ownership changes and asset transfers over the years, even closing temporarily in the early 2000s.

The trend, however, is now clearly in an upward direction. Italy-based Valbruna ASW purchased the Atlas site in 2019 and is rolling out \$80 million in upgrades by 2027. This includes the replacement of key 1970s-era plant features, some which are already completed:

- A 70-ton electric arc furnace, improving versatility, efficiency and environmental sustainability.
- A new baghouse with state-of-the-art filtration – anticipated to reduce emissions by up to 90 per cent.

The investment is a vote of confidence for the company's highly-skilled, 130 person-strong workforce, as well as for the City of Welland as an industrial hub. **w**



## Old Atlas Brownfields, repurposed!

With 750,000 square feet of production area on 76 acres, Valbruna's footprint is sizeable. Small chunks of former Atlas lands, however, have recently been transitioned to new purposes:



### Storage Guyz

Atlas' iconic stainless steel administrative building at 27 Centre Street is the new home for Niagara's first three-storey storage facility, thanks to an investment by Storage Guyz Inc. The climate-controlled facility, featuring 367 storage units, is one of six state-of-the-art centres the company operates in the Niagara, Haldimand and Norfolk areas.



### Fire Department Headquarters

The south end of the Atlas property fronted on East Main Street, one of Welland's most important thoroughfares. It proved to be a perfect location for the city's new fire department headquarters – and the cornerstone of the department's modernization strategy.

With over 21,000 square feet of space, an ideal central location, and state-of-the-art energy-efficiency features, the new fire HQ allows the city to decommission several older stations. Remarkably, the expected energy savings will repay the construction costs in as little as 8-10 years.



### Salit Steel / StelCrete

One of the first major industries to locate Atlas' old site was Salit Steel, whose StelCrete division manufactures pre-assembled reinforcing and structural steel components. The Welland plant is one of 20 locations across Canada and New York State.



**Valbruna ASW is Canada's only producer of stainless steel, nickel alloys and other specialty steel.**



# INDUSTRY EVOLVES WITH THE TIMES IN WELLAND



## Linamar brings 21<sup>st</sup> century manufacturing to historic industrial zone

Wayne Gretzky once famously said “I skate to where the puck is going to be, not where it is.”

The same approach applies to Welland’s economic development strategy, and the approximately 250 acres of brownfields east of Canal Bank Road are proof in point. Thousands of workers once worked at Union Carbide and Page–Hersey, the two major industries in the area, producing electro-metals and steel pipes respectively. From the

early 1900s and even well into the 1980s, these plants were humming.

Industrial demand has changed since then, and a new generation of plants is emerging out of the land and infrastructure along Canal Bank Road.

What’s particularly notable is how one of the 21<sup>st</sup> century’s most promising economic shifts is at the heart of transformation in south Welland: vehicle electrification.



## Linamar & Giga-Casting

Linamar Corporation recently announced its plans to launch a new state-of-the-art, 300,000 square foot giga-casting facility in a redeveloped area that once comprised both Union Carbide and Energex Tube lands (Energex being a successor to the original Page Hersey property).

Don’t know what giga-casting is? You’re probably not alone, considering that Linamar will be the first Tier 1 automotive supplier outside of Asia to invest in the technology. Giga-casting involves the production of extra-large die-cast aluminum parts, which can help auto manufacturers reduce the cost of certain manufacturing processes by up to 40 per cent, notably by eliminating the need for numerous welds – often well over 100 per car. Experts consider it a critical advance in the effort to rollout affordable EVs to market.

The Linamar plant, equipped with 6,100-ton pressure die casting machinery, is expected to open early in 2025, creating approximately 200 new jobs.

## Linamar's Welland plant will be the first Tier 1 giga-casting facility outside of Asia.



## RECLAIMING Synthetic Graphite


Remediation of brownfields can sometimes generate significant salvage income, and there is considerable potential on Welland’s old Union Carbide lands.

Over the course of its decades of manufacturing electrodes, ferro-alloys and carbon products, the company had amassed thousands of tons of leftover synthetic graphite. Not having any use for it, the company buried it on site, a common industrial practice back in the day.

In the mid-2010s, the overlooked landfill was discovered under a forested area by redeveloper King and Benton. What was



worthless in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, may in fact have value in the 21<sup>st</sup>. That’s because it’s a major input for EV batteries – in fact, a typical lithium-ion battery has 15 times more graphite than lithium.

As a result of this modern-day gold strike, ReGen Resource Recovery was created with a goal of studying the composition of the graphite and the feasibility of extracting it. 



# ADVANCED MANUFACTURING THRIVES AT BOSCH REXROTH

## Welland serves as the Canadian HQ for a global leader in state-of-the-art factory systems

Heavy industry started pouring into Welland beginning in the early 1900s, securing the city's position as an industrial hotbed.

While steel, chemicals and textile dominated the local employment scene, by mid-

century Welland also started witnessing the emergence of more specialized manufacturing. The evolution since 1961 of Basic Structure Steel Fabricators Ltd. demonstrates how advanced manufacturing successfully took root in Welland.



Originally serving the machinery needs of local heavy industry, Basic Technologies (as the company was eventually renamed) grew a reputation for supplying quality hydraulic equipment, branching out to drive and control systems as well. Basic's capabilities grew exponentially when it became an agent for German-based Rexroth. In 2001, it was acquired by the equipment and engineering giant, becoming Bosch Rexroth Canada with the Welland facility serving as the Canadian headquarters.

From its Welland base, Bosch Rexroth engineers and manufactures hydraulics, pneumatics, electric drives and controls, and linear bearings, and also excels in assembly technology.

Innovation is paramount at Bosch Rexroth, as it seeks to drive the digital transformation of the Factory of the Future. Among its most exciting recent initiatives is ctrlX Automation, which incorporates smartphone in-app programming to facilitate shop floor processes.

The technology is designed to interface with the company's portfolio of linear robots for various factory applications, significantly reducing the engineering time for automation integration.

170 of Bosch Rexroth Canada's nationwide contingent of 300 employees operate out of the 130,000 square foot Welland facility. In turn, the highly trained team of engineers and technicians contribute and are supported by the parent company's 32,000 strong workforce, across 80 countries.

It's a Made in Welland success story, spanning six decades! 🏭

## Advanced manufacturers take notice of Welland

When GE selected Welland as the site for its "Brilliant Factory" gas engine plant in 2016, it was a vote of confidence for the city's proficiency with advanced manufacturing – a credit to its workforce, its transportation assets, and its business-friendly environment. The plant is operated today by Innio.



IN THE  
LAST FEW  
YEARS,

**Bosch Rexroth  
Canada has  
undertaken  
several local  
and regional  
investments  
to strengthen  
its competitive  
position.**

### Welland Expansion

5,500 square feet of docking were recently added to the Welland facility, as well as a material staging area, HVAC upgrades, and improved plant workflow thanks to a new transportation corridor.

### Burlington Customer Experience Centre

Last year, the company cut the ribbon in its new Customer Experience Centre in Burlington. The 11,500 square foot centre is designed to showcase Bosch Rexroth applications and technology, as well as to facilitate customer consultation with sales and engineering experts. It even features state-of-the-art AV equipment to link customers with the company's model "Factory of Future" in Ulm, Germany.



# FROM WELLAND TO THE OILFIELDS

## Welded Tube leverages rail access to build on Shaw Pipe legacy

Welland's industrial sector powered Canada's war effort in WWII, and afterwards it shifted to new economic and market trends.

Alberta's post-war oil & gas boom can credit Welland for helping supply the vast pipe infrastructure needed to extract and deliver product to world markets.

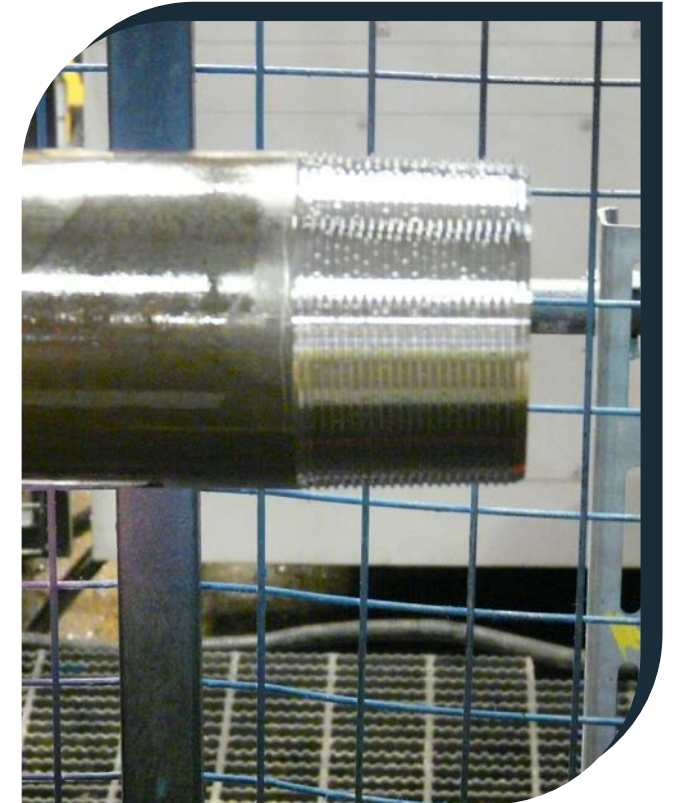
In the late 1950s, two large pipe manufacturers had located along a 2-km rail spur leading to a CN main line: Welland Tube and Shaw Pipe Protection. The latter would coat pipe supplied by the former. Both closed in the early 2000s.

While the Welland Tube facility would transition to different sectors (food recycling, locomotive maintenance, and construction materials), Shaw Pipe's ultimate successor continues in pipe manufacturing.

Following a \$50 million investment in 2010 to retrofit the old facility and add 40,000 new square feet, Welded Tube of Canada specializes in pipe heat treating and is licensed to produce to American Petroleum Institute (API) specifications. Welded Tube has grown considerably since taking over Shaw Pipe's facility. The plant has a capacity today of 170,000 tons per year of multiple sizes and grades.

Its workforce has also grown from an initial 25 employees to around 250, and it is now one of Welland's top manufacturing employers. It's also among the largest within Welded Tube's overall enterprise, which has two other facilities in Ontario, and one in New York State.

Welded Tube's direct rail access is an important competitive advantage when it comes to shipping product to customers thousands of kilometres to the west. Whether customers are up the QEW, or across the continent, or beyond, Welland manufacturers have excellent market access by road, rail and seaway. ✎



## Alberta oil and gas flow through specialty pipes – Made in Welland!

### Diversification at the C.N. Spur

Across from Welded Tube, new enterprises have set up shop at the old Welland Tube property, and manufacturing has diversified. The largest facility is panels.ca, which now supplies the residential construction industry in Ontario, rather than the oilfields of Alberta.

**Panels.ca** designs and produces prefabricated framing systems to help builders with high quality, cost-effective building components. Its 100,000 square foot facility features an automated cutting system, cranes, machines and materials to fabricate wall, roofing, and flooring systems.





# FROM HARVESTERS TO HOMES

## Dain City's new landscape after a century with John Deere

As you can tell from the previous pages, Welland has been very successful in transitioning old brownfields to new industry and advanced manufacturing.

The city's other approach has been equally beneficial: converting brownfields to residential. The John Deere factory in Dain City, along the banks of the old canal, represents one of the most ambitious transformations in recent memory.

The John Deere plant, opened in 1910 and expanded over the years, eventually growing to a massive 750,000 square feet of production space on around 185 acres of land.

In 2009 after nearly a century of operations in Welland, spurred in part by an unusually high Canadian dollar, the Illinois-based multinational closed the plant to consolidate manufacturing across other North American facilities. It was a bitter pill to swallow at the time, but 10 years later the narrative would change drastically.

Empire Communities recognized the inherent value of the property and jumped on the opportunity to open up a vast area for residential and mixed-use development. The homebuilder purchased the site and invested heavily in remediation, at a total cost exceeding \$200 million –with the assistance of Brownfield CIP incentives of \$38 million.

Fast forward just four years, and the property is unrecognizable from its industrial heyday. A vibrant neighbourhood has emerged and is rapidly growing next to greenspace and the canal.

Nearly 2,000 new housing units are envisioned over the course of many future phases of development. With Welland's population projected to increase by over 25,000 between the 2021 and 2031 censuses, Empire Communities' foresight is an important catalyst in the city's future development.

## OTHER RESIDENTIAL TRANSFORMATIONS



### Waterways Condos

📍 119 Lincoln Street

This former Imperial Oil property has been fully remediated and repurposed by Rankin Construction to feature a new 30-unit condo development, expected to open in 2024.

It's a prime location for homebuyers, as it overlooks parkland, trails, as well as the Welland Recreational Waterway.

When combined with future development on the adjacent property at 115 Lincoln Street, the overall initiative is valued at \$39 million (including \$7.6 million in Brownfield CIP incentives), and is expected to add 123 new dwelling units to the city.



### The Grand Canal

📍 439 King Street

A new residential landmark along the banks of the Welland Recreational Waterway, The Grand Canal is a 130-unit, full-service retirement residence on redeveloped land. The \$23.5 million project benefitted from approximately \$2.5 million in incentives from two separate CIP programs.

Thanks to its combination of location, amenities, services and value, the Grand Canal is being very well received in the community, winning a local Readers' Choice award in 2022, its first full year of operation.



### Plymouth Cordage

📍 110 First Street

The 114-suite Plymouth Cordage Retirement Residence is another residential project on an old industrial site. Plymouth Cordage was an early pioneer in Welland's industrial heritage, expanding from its initial presence in 1905 into a massive factory for manufacturing rope. The company was a critical supplier during both world wars, but eventually closed in 1969.

The Welland General hospital now sits on a large part of the original Plymouth site, but tucked away in the north end of the vast property is a newer 89,000 square foot retirement home. Acquired in 2021 by Levante Living, the new owners chose to keep the Plymouth Cordage name to honour the area's heritage.

## PUBLIC-PRIVATE Partnership

Empire Communities is proud to give back to the community where they build, and its public-private partnership initiatives with the City of Welland are achieving many benefits for local residents:

- Empire Sportplex, behind the Welland International Flatwater Centre. Featuring tennis, pickleball, volleyball and basketball courts
- Forks Road Bridge replacement
- Neighbourhood parks in the Empire Canals community





# NEW MANUFACTURING LANDSCAPE

## Community Improvement Plan

Gateway: Niagara Gateway Economic Zone & Centre CIP

Brownfield: Brownfield CIP

D/H&W: Downtown and Health and Wellness CIP

While legacy industry in Welland has witnessed a remarkable turnaround, the city has also been busy attracting new manufacturing business, thanks in part to the availability of zoned land.



### Kit Steel



Kit Steel is a leader in the rebar steel industry, with the capacity to cut, bend, and fabricate steel rebar to customer specifications. It serves all facets of the construction market: commercial, residential, industrial and institutional.

- 100 DOWNS DR.
- GATEWAY
- \$8.2 MILLION
- 12,787 SQFT
- 19



### Fonthill Lumber



Fonthill Lumber is a high-volume lumber supplier catering to the residential building industry. Its new site encompasses three buildings that cover an array of lumber supply functions, notably a mechanic shop, warehouse and manufacturing facility.

- 7 WOODLAWN RD.
- GATEWAY
- \$18.5 MILLION
- 95,532 SQFT
- 74

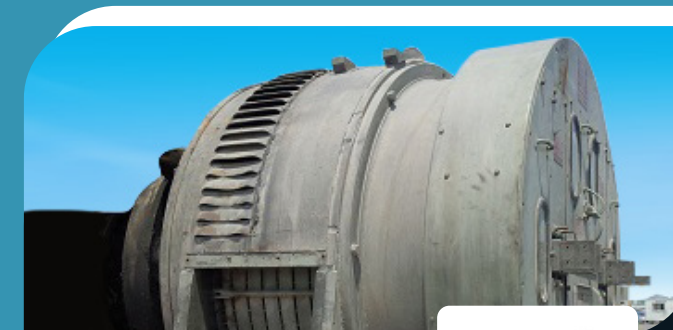


### Northern Gold



This Port Coquitlam B.C.-based manufacturer of health breakfast and snack foods specializing in granola expanded its Enterprise Drive facility in 2019, only three years after initially setting up shop in Welland.

- 316 ENTERPRISE DR.
- GATEWAY
- \$21.1 MILLION
- 74,415 SQFT
- 25 (EXPANSION)



### Upper Canada Railway Services



Upper Canada Railway recently secured the last remaining site at Welland's Enterprise Highway 140 Park, where it manufactures freight cars and passenger coaches for the locomotive industry.

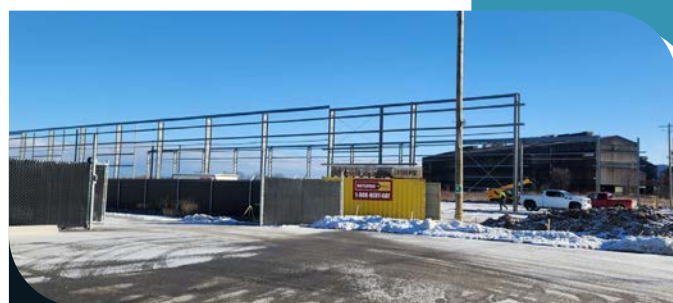
- 361 ENTERPRISE DR.
- \$202,200
- \$1.5 MILLION
- 20,000 SQFT
- 30



### Aluminum Surface Technology

AST treats metal parts to resolve wear, corrosion, mold release / non-stick, friction, gauling and cosmetic appearance. Growing market opportunities for aluminum finishing, especially in the EV industry, were the catalyst for the company's expansion into Welland.

- 460 RIVER RD.
- XXX
- XXX
- 40,000 SQFT
- XX



### Multi-Tenant Flex Building

Expected to open in the fall of 2023 in Welland's River Road Industrial Park, this new building will be available to a wide range of tenants, ideal for businesses seeking from 1,500 to 24,000 of prime industrial space, near Highway 406.

- 150 DOWNS DR.
- \$704,600
- \$6.1 MILLION
- 36,000 SQFT
- 112



### Vision Greens



Vision Greens grows, harvests and packages a variety of lettuces and other greens, from its state-of-the-art vertical farming facility, using up to 95% less water and 95% less land versus a traditional crop farm. A 10,000 square foot expansion is being planned.

- 392 ENTERPRISE DR.
- \$324,000
- \$1.73 MILLION
- 10,625 SQFT
- 34



### Devron Sales



Devron is an industry leader in stormwater management products for the construction, drainage and environmental industries. With an emphasis on sustainable solutions, Devron can scale to meet any project size.

- 412 ENTERPRISE DR.
- GATEWAY
- \$1.9 MILLION
- 11,500 SQ FT
- 25





1833

The Welland Canal, started in 1824, is extended all the way to Lake Erie, across the land where Welland would eventually emerge.



1906

Massachusetts-based Plymouth Cordage becomes the first major industrial company to open a plant in Welland, manufacturing rope product.



1910

John Deere opens a plant in the Welland's Dain City area. Five years later it would become the Canadian headquarters of the agricultural machinery giant.



1928

New owners purchase a small factory north of East Main St. From here steel giant Atlas Steel would emerge, employing 3,000 workers in its heyday.



1961

The census this year reflects Welland's burgeoning manufacturing economy. The city's 36,079 residents are more than double the number from the previous 1951 census.



1973

The Welland Canal Bypass opens, the 4th route over the canal's history. The new route defines the community's new geography.



2016

GE Canada announces its selection of Welland as the location of its new "Brilliant Factory", moving production of its Waukesha gas engines from Wisconsin to Ontario.



2023

Linamar Corporation announces it will build a state-of-the-art 300,000 sq.ft. plant on former Union Carbide lands, where it will "giga-cast" key aluminum parts for the EV industry.



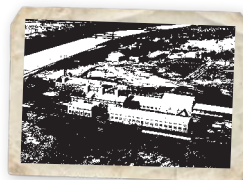
1858

On land steeped in the rich history of the First Nations such as the Hatiwendaronk, the Haudenosaunee and the Anishinaabe, Welland is officially incorporated.



1909

The Page-Hersey Iron Tubes and Lead Company opens in the south end of Welland, taking advantage of its proximity to the canal.



1914

Union Carbide opens a factory near the Page-Hersey plant, where it would manufacture electrodes and electro metal alloys.



1930

Welland's iconic Main Street vertical lift bridge opens. When the Welland Canal Bypass opened four decades later, it no longer needed to lift, yet remains the city's central landmark.



1961

Basic Structure Steel Fabricators opens on Prince Charles Drive. Specializing in hydraulic equipment, it would eventually become part of the Bosch Rexroth multinational enterprise.



2010

Welded Tube acquires the old Shaw Pipe facility. After major retrofitting and expansions, it would become Welland's second largest manufacturing employer.



2019

Valbruna ASW acquires a large part of the old Atlas Steel site. The only producer of specialty stainless steel in Canada, it continues Welland's strong history of steelmaking.



# The Corporation of the City of Welland

## LINA DECHELLIS

Manager, Economic Development

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