

WELLAND

the good life



2024 EDITION

MW made in
Welland

W CITY OF
Welland

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Welland's *good* LIFE

BY THE NUMBERS



WELCOME

to the vibrant community that is Welland!



As the Chief Administrative Officer of the City of Welland, I am honoured to introduce you to our dynamic city, a place where opportunity and growth go hand in hand with a high quality of life. With a strategic location in the heart of Niagara, Welland is a city on the rise. It offers unparalleled access to major markets and a supportive environment for businesses of all sizes.

Welland's unique blend of industrial heritage and modern innovation makes it an ideal destination for entrepreneurs, investors, and companies looking to expand. Our steadfast commitment to economic development is evident in our robust infrastructure, skilled workforce, and forward-thinking policies that foster a business-friendly atmosphere.

We take pride in our community's resilience and adaptability, which have been critical to our continued growth and prosperity. Welland's rich natural features, with the Welland Canal at its heart, not only provides a picturesque backdrop but offers significant logistical advantages for businesses involved in manufacturing, transportation, and trade.

In Welland, we believe in the power of collaboration and are dedicated to supporting businesses through every stage of their journey. Whether you are a startup seeking resources, an established company looking to scale, or an investor exploring new opportunities, you will find a welcoming and proactive partner in the City of Welland.

I invite you to explore what Welland offers and discover why more businesses are calling our city home. Together, we can build a thriving future that benefits all.

Thank you for considering Welland for your business ventures. We look forward to working with you and contributing to your success. We're ready when you are.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rob Axiak".

Rob Axiak
CAO

Legend

The City of Welland is undertaking a long-term strategic plan built around four key priorities. These pillars are the basis for this issue of Made In Welland:

-  **Economic Growth**
-  **Health & Well-Being**
-  **Environmental Stewardship**
-  **Livability**

Welland has MOMENTUM

From a new home construction boom to joining the EV industrial revolution, there's a lot going on in Welland, Ontario.

The city is experiencing an industrial renaissance, as many early- and mid-20th century plants are being transformed into production facilities geared to the modern economy. (Look for last year's issue of Made in Welland for a fascinating look at many of these transformations.)

Linamar Corporation's new state-of-the-art facility is rapidly taking shape on the old Union Carbide and Page-Hersey lands along Canal Bank Road. The 280,000 sq.ft. plant will

be the first Tier 1 automotive supplier outside Asia to feature giga-casting, an advanced production technology key to EV manufacturing. It's the largest business investment currently underway in Welland, but also one of many in recent years: INNIO's half-million sq.ft. Waukesha natural gas engine facility; Valbruna ASW's specialty steel mill; Steelcon's steel beam and joist plant; Fonthill Lumber and Trusses; and more.

The industrial boom mirrors the city's population boom, which is expected to nearly double between the 2021 and 2041 census periods – when Welland will surpass the milestone of 100,000 people.

**EXPECTED
20-YEAR
GROWTH**
(2021-2041)



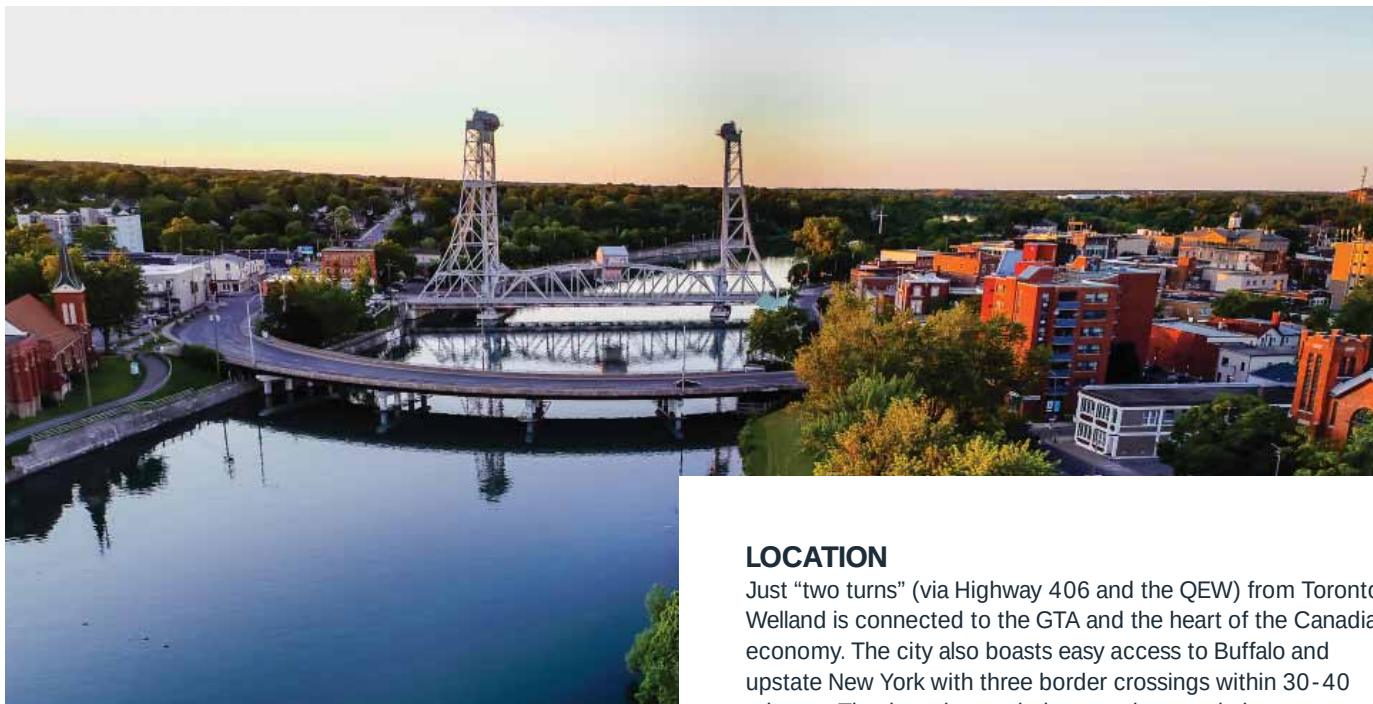
POPULATION:
55,750 to
103,000



**+22,420
HOUSING
UNITS**



**COMMERCIAL
GROWTH**
+4.8 million sq. ft.



Behind the growth: Welland's 3-L's

LOCATION

Just “two turns” (via Highway 406 and the QEW) from Toronto, Welland is connected to the GTA and the heart of the Canadian economy. The city also boasts easy access to Buffalo and upstate New York with three border crossings within 30-40 minutes. Thanks to its proximity to major population centres, Welland has excellent access to air, rail, and highway logistics, not to mention water transportation along the Welland Canal.

LAND

Unlike many municipalities in and around the GTA, Welland has room to grow for both residential and commercial development. Moreover the city actively promotes several Community Improvement Plans (CIPs) to encourage business investment in employment lands and remediated brownfields, as well as for other job creating initiatives.

LIVABILITY

Welland offers an ideal mix of city convenience, recreational amenities, and natural surroundings. Cost of living is a major draw for families moving to Welland, notably with a House Price Index (HPI) among the lowest in the Niagara Region (\$600,000 as of June 2024).

OPEN FOR *business*

Municipal leaders and City Hall staff share a professional “can-do” attitude in encouraging economic development. We’ve had impressive results in expediting the approval process:

Holiday Inn Express

51,700 sq.ft. Hotel
4.5 month turnaround

Canadian Tire Expansion

120,000 sq.ft. Expansion
15 week turnaround

150 Downs Drive

36,000 sq.ft.
Multi Unit Industrial
3 month turnaround

Innio

500,000 sq.ft.
Manufacturing Facility
8 week turnaround

Fonthill Lumber

96,000 sq.ft.
Manufacturing and
Warehouse Facility
2.5 month turnaround
(Sawmill/ Woodworking
Plant)

Linamar

280,000 sq.ft.
Manufacturing Facility
4 week turnaround
(Conditional Permit)

Upper Canada Railway Service

20,000 sq.ft.
Manufacturing Facility
2 month turnaround

BUILDING COMMUNITIES

and community

The Niagara region is growing exponentially because of its proximity to the GTA, its lifestyle, and the availability of land to support residential development. All three advantages define Welland in a nutshell, and as a result the city is on the radar for developers, realtors, and homebuyers alike.

The large developments behind Welland's residential boom share two common threads: an ideal location, and future-focused civic planning supported by innovative Public-Private Partnerships (PPP) between local government and developers.

Warbler Place Urban Village

205 LANCASTER DR, WELLAND

Welland's Seaway Mall, the second largest indoor shopping mall in Niagara, is the site of Warbler Place Urban Village, a 1,300-unit walkable, master-planned residential development by Elevate Living.

Plans involve mixed housing types, including approvals for four high-rise buildings up to 16 storeys, townhouses, stacked towns, and mid-rise condominiums. The development is destined to become a community hub in the amenity-rich Niagara Street corridor, and will attach directly to the Seaway Mall itself. Residents can take advantage of the mall's retail stores, restaurants, services, community events and entertainment (which includes a Cineplex Odeon cinema).

www.warblerplace.com



Lock and Quay

RECREATIONAL CANAL – WEST SIDE

A massive \$1.5 billion development spearheaded by developer LIV Communities, Lock and Quay is set on an idyllic site near the west shore of the recreational canal, from Woodlawn Road north to Merritt Road.

With 150 acres of property, including increasingly rare waterfront views, Lock and Quay will eventually be home to 3,800 to 4,500 new housing units, primarily a mix of townhouses, stacked towns and apartments.

The development will also contain mixed-use elements and a commercial block that features outdoor patio areas with canal and park views. In addition, the development will include a pedestrian bridge linking Lock and Quay to Merritt Island (the city's pre-eminent nature and recreational area – see page 13), and from there to the downtown core.

Empire Communities

DAIN CITY

This former John Deere site in Welland's Dain City area was acquired by Empire Communities for a total of \$201 million (including remediation costs), paving the way for nearly 2,200 new housing units. This redevelopment project benefitted from the Brownfield Community Improvement Plan with an estimated \$38 million in tax increment grants, brownfield tax assistance programs, and building fee grants.

Homebuilding is well underway, and the new community is steadily emerging along the quaint east side of the recreational canal, just across from the docks of the South Niagara Rowing Club.

Not only is Empire Communities partly funding a number of neighbourhood parks, the developer was a key contributor to Welland's newest sports facility, the Empire Sportsplex (see page 11), and is also providing sizeable financial support towards the replacement of the Forks Road bridge.

www.empirecommunities.com



OPEN FOR HOMEBUILDING!

Welland broke ground on 868 new housing units in 2023, exceeding its provincial housing target by 176 per cent.



HEALTHCARE

Advances for a healthy community

Recruiting family doctors to the city

Across Canada, public healthcare grapples with the ongoing challenge of doctor shortages, and Welland is no exception. However, thanks to a proactive recruitment approach coupled with the community's appealing lifestyle, strides are being made in addressing this issue.

Last summer, the City approved a \$1 million incentive plan designed to bring 10 new physicians to the city, when they set up or take over an existing practice. The program is run in conjunction with a dedicated Niagara Region Physician Recruitment specialist working to bring doctors to the broader Niagara community.

Early results are promising, with eight new family physicians now practicing in the city with more to come.

Innovative models of care

Welland has been at the forefront of innovative approaches to primary care, and the Welland McMaster Family Health Team stands out in this regard.

Focused on a team approach, the organization consists of a multi-disciplinary collection of healthcare professionals: nurse practitioners, registered nurses, social workers, dietitians, occupational therapists, pharmacists, physiotherapists, and other specialists.

Together they collaborate to enhance primary care access throughout the community, delivering comprehensive support to patients, families and caregivers alike. Presently, the Family Health Team boasts affiliation with 11 family physicians from two local medical practices, as well as McMaster University's faculty of medicine.



Niagara College

Over 11,000 students study full time at either Niagara College's main campus in Welland or its nearby campus in Niagara-on-the-Lake. Starting this year, RN nursing students are now among the student body, thanks to a new Honours Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BScN) degree program.

The four-year program will graduate its first cohort of future Registered Nurses in the spring of 2028, helping to meet the growing demand in the healthcare workforce, locally and across the province.

Niagara College is among the first Ontario colleges to offer a BScN program independently (i.e. without a university partner) following provincial amendments to the Nursing Act in 2020. The new program builds upon Niagara's reputation for healthcare training, having offered programs for practical nursing and PSWs for many years.





FLATWATER, *fitness and fun*

Welland's not-so best-kept secret

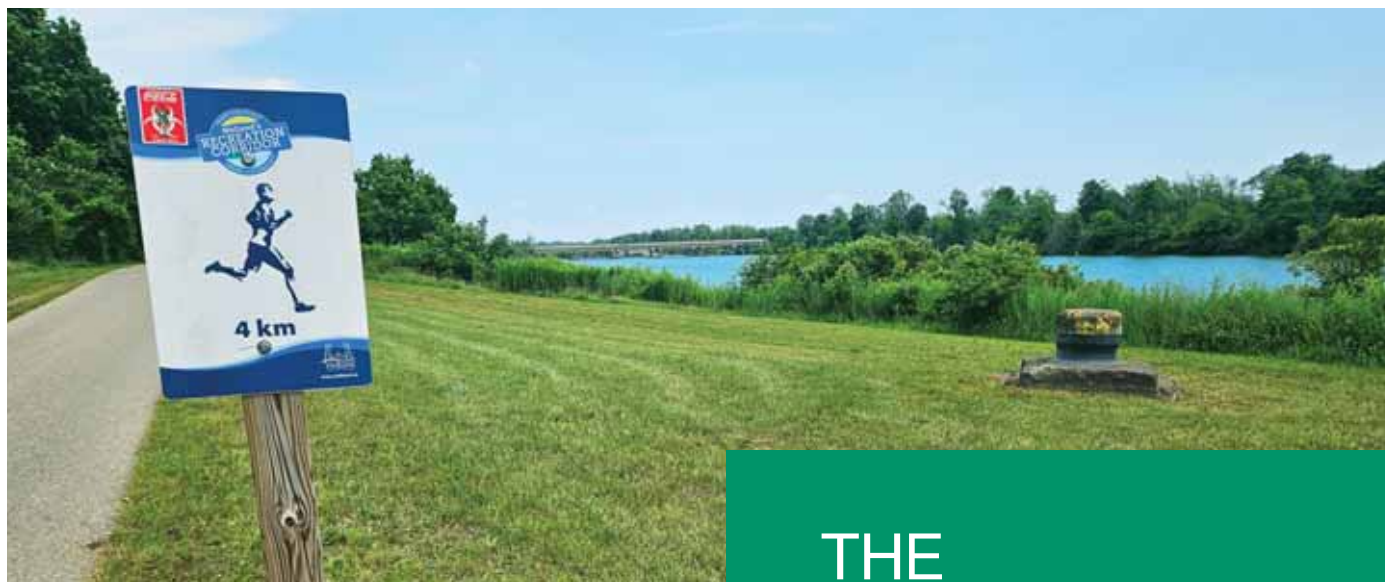
What sets Welland apart from almost every other city is its recreational waterway. When the St. Lawrence Seaway rerouted the Welland Canal for larger ships in 1972, it left behind an unparalleled legacy for the city's residents: the Welland Recreation Canal.

It's a 12-km stretch of quiet waterway that crosses through the heart of the city. Free from motorboat traffic, it's ideal for all kinds of water activities: rowing, kayaking, canoeing, paddle-boarding and more.

Its modest depth contributes to relatively still waters, which in turn makes it the perfect venue for certain competitive watersports. The Welland International Flatwater Centre (WIFC) is the jewel of the waterway, a facility set on 411 acres of parkland near the south end of the city.

The WIFC has attracted international events, notably the 2015 Pan American Games and more recently the 2024 Can American Club Crew Championship for dragon boat. The facility is also home base for a number of Olympic-calibre athletes, thanks to a state-of-the-art indoor training tank.

You don't have to be a world-class athlete to take advantage of Welland's world-class waterway. There are rowing and canoe/kayak clubs for serious paddlers, but on any given day you'll see people casually plying the waters. Rental facilities are available for families looking for a fun day under the sun – Rec Rentals @ the Docks, at the Rotary Club Park.



Trails ideal for exercise and scenery

Welland's 12 kilometres of recreational waterway boast a remarkable by-product: 24 kilometres of trails! Both sides of the old canal feature paved trails for walking, hiking, rollerblading and cycling. These paths are part of a Lake Ontario-to-Lake Erie trail route that follows the entire length of the Welland Canal.

In 2021, the City launched a study towards an extensive 20-year master plan for a Community Trails Strategy, one which will build upon the existing network and enhance connectivity between neighbourhoods and popular destinations, both recreational and commuter.

THE RECREATIONAL SCENE

in Welland involves more than the great outdoors on and along the water. City residents can enjoy a number of sports facilities throughout town: hockey rinks, a curling club, a baseball stadium and more. Two state of the art facilities, constructed in the past decade, are of particular note:

Youngs Sportsplex

With four tennis courts, an indoor FIFA-regulation soccer field, and five outdoor fields, Youngs Sportsplex also offers an indoor golf driving range. The facility hosted several events during the 2022 Canada Summer Games. The Welland Ball Hockey Club is also right next door.

Empire Sportsplex

A multisport facility featuring courts for tennis, pickleball, basketball, and beach volleyball. The sportsplex opened in 2022 to rave community reviews, and it even won a provincial design award from Parks and Recreation Ontario.



Empire Sportsplex



Youngs Sportsplex

Welland families have a great affinity for their Welland Jackfish baseball team, which plays in Canada's top league, the Intercounty Baseball League. A ballgame at the Welland Stadium is a fun and affordable summer outing for fans of all ages. The team won last year's championship for their first time!





Celebrating GREENSPACES

Work hard, play hard. It's a way of life that inspired past generations of Wellanders who forged a prosperous industrial centre while working to preserve and enhance green surroundings for families to enjoy. Their legacy thrives today, with 400 acres of parkland gracing neighbourhoods across the city, along with many other natural amenities.

Welland loves its parks

The City's recent Love My Park initiative was a comprehensive initiative to encourage community engagement and foster a sustainable future for Welland's extensive park assets.

By soliciting input on community aspirations and people's connection with their neighbourhood greenspaces, Love My Park sought to cultivate a sense of stewardship for the city's 14 parks and three parkettes. The initiative comes on the heels of notable upgrades at several community parks:

- In partnership with Canadian Tire's Jumpstart charity, the City installed an accessible splash pad at the Rotary Club Park along the recreational canal.
- Maple Park, in the city's west end, also benefited from considerable amenity upgrades. Over \$6.5 million in funding was allocated to rebuild the aging outdoor swimming pool at Memorial Park.



Merritt Island – an oasis in the heart of the city

This 25 hectare urban wilderness park, managed by the City of Welland, is actually an island sandwiched between the Welland River and the now inactive third phase of the Welland Canal. It is home to a beautiful 4.2 km tree-lined trail perfect

for walking, jogging, hiking, biking, or rollerblading, with many benches along the way. Tucked-away side trails extend along the river side, popular spots for local anglers and birdwatchers alike. Merritt Island is also a great destination for family picnics, with ample parking and a playground near the island's entrance.

What's remarkable about Merritt Island isn't just its seclusion so close to Welland's downtown core, but the fact that it's actually human-made. An artificial island created when the old canal was dug alongside the Welland River, it was designated as a municipal park in 1980, and enhanced over the years as the pre-eminent destination for the city's nature lovers.

Building a sustainable **COMMUNITY**

Welland prioritizes a sustainable and a high quality of life for residents by investing in environmental initiatives. The City is fortunate to partner with a strong network of committed residents and organizations when launching impactful initiatives.

A notable example of community engagement is the City's Green Advisory Committee (GAC), a volunteer committee established to advise Council on matters of green initiatives and the city's urban forest. The GAC has been actively involved in local events and in developing recommendations to further Welland's environmental conscious.

5 GREEN GAME CHANGERS

Thank you to the many residents and participants for inspiring environmental stewardship through these five local initiatives!

Earth Day Extravaganza April 20

Environmental organizations from across Niagara take the lead in hosting Earth Day activities at the Welland Farmers Market. In addition to providing helpful everyday tips and information, the Earth Day Extravaganza is the linchpin behind two major community improvement events: a Community Clean-Up throughout Merritt Island, and a free tree giveaway available to all residents.

1

Pollinator Gardens

Our winged friends – bees, butterflies, and birds – are crucial for pollinating more than 70 per cent of food crops, as well as encouraging biodiversity. In conjunction with the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority, the City recruited a small army of volunteers to plant a new native pollinator garden at Sparrow Meadows Park, one of Welland's newest neighbourhood greenspaces.



2



3

Encouraging Electrification

City Hall unveiled new charging stations on site last fall, and is currently working on additional funding for two additional charging stations. With the addition, City Hall will have the capacity to charge eight vehicles simultaneously. The City itself currently operates a fleet of six EV vehicles with an additional vehicle being added this year.

Tulip Giveaway

Welland is known as the Rose City, but we love our tulips too! One of the spring's most popular events is the annual tulip giveaway. Last year, over 12,000 free tulip bulbs were distributed to residents, helping blanket neighbourhoods across the city with bright colours.



4



5

Tree Planting

With funding from Tree Canada and the LCBO, and the help of local volunteers, the City plants several hundred trees annually to help increase Welland's tree canopy. The TD Friends of the Environment Foundation also contributes funding. Last year 20 native tree species were involved to promote biodiversity, and plantings focused on areas affected by the Emerald Ash Borer blight, notably in Dain City and Rotary Park.

A vibrant scene of a canal filled with hundreds of people on colorful inflatable floats. In the background, a large metal truss bridge with two tall towers spans the water. The water is a deep blue, and the sky is clear. The floats are in various shapes, including swans, flamingos, and simple tubes. People are seen relaxing and socializing on the floats.

EXCITING *(and eclectic)* EVENTS

With no shortage of community events, there's always lots to do in Welland. It's no surprise that the Recreational Canal is the inspiration for some truly unique events.

The Floaties Take Over!

Imagine 1,800 people frolicking in the canal waters on colourful tubes. Not just plain tubes, but also flamingoes, ducks, unicorns, and any other creature you can think of. It's a sight that you'll only experience in Welland, during one of the summer's most anticipated events, the Canadian Tire Welland Float Fest.

It's free to all participants, with floaties launching from the Lincoln Street Docks and fanning out across and along the canal for nearly a kilometre. A huge team of volunteers, lifeguards, live performers, artisan vendors, and corporate supporters ensure that the day is fun-filled for all.



Concerts on the Canal

The Recreational Canal is also a perfect venue for a vibrant music scene, thanks to the floating stage at Merritt Park. The Concerts on the Canal series showcases original Canadian talent, great tribute bands and local artists over the course of six performances throughout the summer.

On average nearly 3,000 music lovers take advantage of the free concert opportunity while enjoying the refreshing breeze along the canal.



Rose Festival

For over 60 years, the Welland Rose Festival has been a beloved event in the community every June. It includes various activities such as art exhibitions, live concerts, a street dance, park activities, food trucks, a treasure hunt, a fishing derby, sports tournaments, and more. And of course, there's the traditional Grande Parade featuring colourful floats, incredible bands, talented performers, and unique characters.

EVENTS FOR EVERY SEASON

Mark your calendar! Here is a sample of twelve exciting events taking place throughout the year in Welland:

January: Winter Wonderland
February: Family Day Celebrations
March: March Break Skates
April: Earth Day at the Market
May: South Niagara Invitational Regatta
June: Rose Festival Grande Parade
July: Canadian Tire Welland Float Fest
August: Welland Afro-Caribbean Festival
September: Dain City Family Day & Fireworks
October: Welland Zombie Walk
November: Santa Claus Parade
December: Christmas Market

There are so many community events in Welland that it's impossible to list them all here. Make sure to visit www.welland.ca/events for a full listing and for specific dates for the events above.

MORE TO DO NEARBY

Welland's location in the heart of Niagara gives residents the opportunity to participate in a host of additional events – including several world-renown activities:

Niagara Grape & Wine Festival

Shaw Festival

New Year's Eve Fireworks over Niagara Falls



Welland's CULTURE RICH Tapestry



EXPLORE MORE!

Two excellent resources for learning more about Welland's cultural heritage:

Welland Museum

Featuring exhibits on local heritage, including displays on Welland's industrial history, indigenous cultures, and early settlers

Welland Public Library

Hosting regular events and programs related to arts and culture, such as author readings, art exhibitions, and workshops

Multicultural & Proud!

The land where Welland emerged is steeped in the rich history of the First Nations, such as the Hattiwendaronk, the Haudenosaunee, and the Anishinaabe (including the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation), who stewarded the land for centuries.

In recent history, first as a canal city and then as an industrial centre, Welland attracted francophones from Quebec and Northern Ontario, along with immigrants from across Europe and beyond, each bringing their traditions and enriching the local landscape.

Today, Welland actively supports its multicultural communities, ensuring their voices are heard and their heritages celebrated. This commitment to inclusivity fosters a dynamic city where the past inspires a welcoming present.



Arts & Culture in Welland

Welland is home to various arts groups and organizations, including community theatres, art galleries, and music groups.

Bank Art House

A community creative space, and the home of Femmes Du Feu Creations which presents active aerial circus work.

Canal Side Players

A community theatre group that has been entertaining the Niagara region since 2012.

Visual Artists of Welland

A busy and thriving group of artists who bring beauty and inspiration to the community.

Bridge District Concert Hall

A venue built by artists and with a focus on delivering the absolute best intimate performance experience in the Niagara area.

Taking Art Outdoors

Welland's creative side is readily on display for all. For decades, Welland has been incorporating public art into its urban landscape.

- Rod Dowling's unique stainless steel sculptures, on display throughout the city, represent Welland's shipping and industrial past.
- The Canoe Art Project is a unique initiative involving local artists using traditional canoes as their canvases.





Photo credits: Cover photo, page 5, page 13 (2nd photo), page 16: Anthony Gallaccio

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