

Town of Whitby

Staff Report

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Report Title: Update on Provincially Owned Employment Lands

Report to: Committee of the Whole

Date of meeting: June 9, 2025

Report Number: CAO 13-25

Department(s) Responsible:

Office of the Chief Administrative Officer

Submitted by:

Sarah Klein, Deputy CAO

**Acknowledged by M. Gaskell,
Chief Administrative Officer**

For additional information, contact:

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1. Recommendation:

1. That Report CAO 13-25 be received for information.

2. Highlights:

- This report provides an update on provincially owned employment lands within the Town of Whitby.
- As a part of Economic Development staff's ongoing business attraction efforts, there is a need to have a high-level understanding of the development potential of these provincially owned lands. A significant portion of these lands are strategically located along Highway 412 and Highway 407.
- This report identifies six priority sites with a total of 108.31 acres of developable Provincially owned employment lands. Of these, two sites totaling 51.01 acres provide the most opportunity in the immediate future and will be Economic Development's staff focus with MTO for development opportunities.
- Recent projects by the Town of Whitby, such as the new firehall on Des Newman Boulevard, situated on provincially owned lands, indicate that the Province is open to development opportunities.

- The recent removal of Highway 407 tolls in Whitby has further increased development interest in these lands.

3. Background:

The Economic Development division continues to provide updates regarding the availability of the Town of Whitby's employment lands that are critical for facilitating economic growth and job creation.

In recent years, staff have noted and discussed the limited supply of large parcels of serviced employment lands in Whitby. In CAO Report 01-20, staff identified 76.7 hectares (190 acres) of provincially owned developable lands located along Highway 412 and Highway 407. These lands represent a significant opportunity for development, subject to being declared surplus and subsequent availability for municipal or private sector investment.

Staff have maintained ongoing discussions with the Provincial Ministry of Transportation (MTO), which maintains ownership of vacant provincially owned parcels within the Town of Whitby. In 2023, the MTO real estate team indicated that there could be less provincially owned employment land available than originally anticipated. This reduction is attributed to several factors:

- Potential future use requirements by the provincial government;
- Site-specific constraints such as access limitations and parcel configurations;
- Environmental constraints, including the updated Lynde Creek floodplain mapping by the Central Lake Ontario Conservation Authority (CLOCA), which has significant implications, given the creek flows through a substantial portion of the identified provincial lands. The most recent update was completed in April 2025.

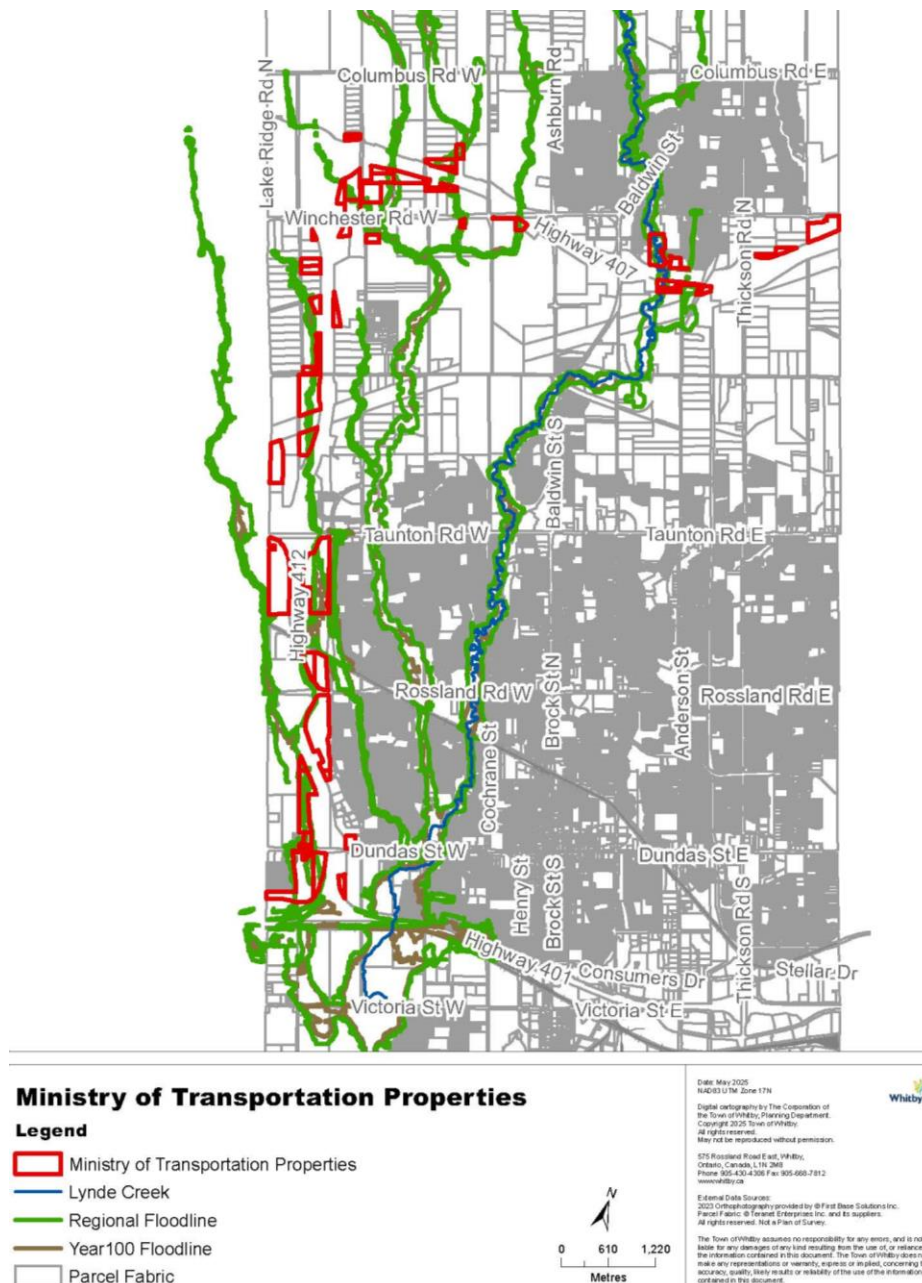
In addition, the Town of Whitby is engaged in its five-year Official Plan Review, which will provide updated policy direction and guidance regarding employment land designations and their future use. This review will also consider recent amendments to the 2024 Provincial Policy Statement, which introduces new restrictions on certain employment areas and influences the Town's long-term planning framework and strategic growth objectives. It is important to note that the entire MTO land area encompasses approximately 595 acres, the majority of which is situated in the Greenbelt and therefore, not able to be developed for employment areas.

This report will provide an update on the current development potential of the MTO lands located outside the boundaries of CLOCA or Greenbelt areas in order to identify parcels of developable land that Economic Development can explore for investment inquiries and opportunities.

4. Discussion:

Figure 1 highlights Ministry of Transportation (MTO) properties located primarily along the Highway 412 and Highway 407 corridors along with the recently updated Lynde Creek Floodplain mapping. The total area of all MTO lands shown in red amounts to approximately 595 acres. After subtracting land within the Provincial Greenbelt Plan area as well as land within CLOCA's regulated area, approximately 179 acres remain as potentially developable.

Figure 1



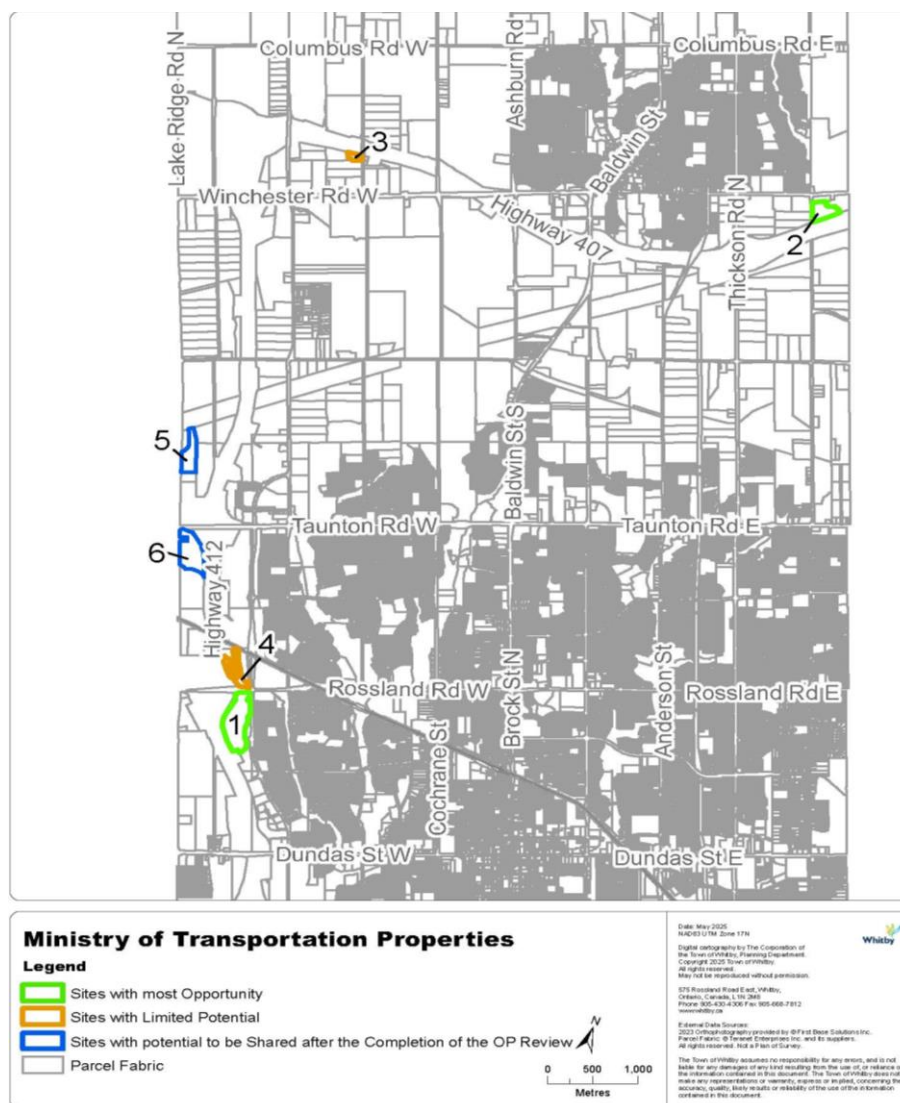
To narrow down and identify development potential for larger tracts of land, staff applied specific criteria to determine developable parcels, where feasible. Criteria included parcels larger than 10 acres, locations outside of CLOCA regulated areas and the Greenbelt, and proximity to recent or planned development activities, such as the new Town of Whitby's Firehall #6.

The result was a selected group of MTO surplus lands (108.31 acres) that fall into the following categories:

- Most Opportunity
- Limited Opportunity
- Potential Opportunity (pending completion of the Official Plan Review)

Figure 2 identifies six MTO Properties with the highest development potential.

Figure 2



Most Opportunity

The combined total potential developable area for sites with the most opportunity is approximately 51.01 acres(ac) once all the greenbelt and CLOCA areas are removed.

Property	Recommendation/Notes
Site 1: Rossland Road West and Des Newman Boulevard • 38.84 acres developable • This site spans a total of 52.91 acres • Designated Prestige Industrial in West Whitby Secondary Plan • Some CLOCA reg. area and some new Lynde Creek floodplain along the northwest edge 	Entire parcel designated Prestige Industrial. Small areas affected by the new Lynde Creek Floodplain and CLOCA. Services are in the area but would need to collaborate with Regional Works to confirm timing/cost related to servicing.
Site 2: 5945 Garrard Road • 12.17 acres developable • This site spans 21.56 acres • A significant portion outside of greenbelt but some additional CLOCA regulated area • Designated Prestige Industrial, Natural Heritage System and Natural Hazard in Brooklin Secondary Plan 	Approximately 15 acres designated Prestige Industrial with some CLOCA reg. area. Services are in the area but would need to collaborate with Regional Works to confirm timing/cost related to servicing.

Limited Opportunity

The combined total potential developable area with limited opportunity sites is approximately 13.75 acres once all the greenbelt and CLOCA areas are removed.

Property	Recommendation/Notes
Site 3: 6292 Country Lane • 2.80 acres developable • This site spans 11.49 acres • 6 acres outside of the greenbelt, but some CLOCA regulated areas • Designated Prestige Industrial in Brooklin Secondary Plan (area outside of greenbelt) 	Limited potential, less than half the property is outside of the Greenbelt and CLOCA reg. area. Servicing constraints.
Site 4: 1100 Rossland Road West • 10.95 acres developable • This site spans 26.82 acres • Small portions designated Prestige Industrial in West Whitby Secondary Plan, majority designated Environmental Protection • Access issues, CLOCA regulated area 	Very limited potential, there are access issues due to grade separation as well as environmental issues.

Potential Opportunity (pending completion of OP Review)

The combined total developable area for sites with potential opportunity is approximately 43.55 acres once all the greenbelt and CLOCA areas are removed. The OP Review is expected to be complete by 2026.

Property	Recommendation/Notes
Site 5: Lake Ridge Road (north of Taunton Road) • 16.57 acres developable • The site spans 21.28 acres • Some CLOCA regulated areas • Outside of current urban boundary • Employment Area in Envision Durham 	Future potential, after the completion of OP Review. Servicing may be an issue.
Site 6: 945 Taunton Road West • 26.98 acres developable • The site spans 58.47 acres • Approximately 38 acres outside the Greenbelt • Outside of current urban boundary • Designated Employment Area in Envision Durham (area outside of greenbelt) 	Future potential, after the completion of OP Review. Servicing may be an issue.

While numerous smaller parcels are available, the primary focus of this exercise was not directed toward these areas. Economic development staff remains open to these smaller redevelopment opportunities should a suitable investment opportunity arise.

Next Steps

Until the completion of the Official Plan review in 2026, economic development staff will focus on the sites with the most opportunity – 51.01 acres. In particular, the MTO parcel located at the southwest intersection of Rossland Road West and Des Newman Boulevard. The Town of Whitby's new Fire Station #6 will be located on these lands. With the recent addition of the Whitby Health Clinic, located just south of this site, the next 3-5 years may present opportunities for professional, scientific, and technical industry sector companies, as well as other development opportunities.

During this exercise, economic development staff spoke with the MTO real estate team to discuss the municipality's interest in releasing particular sites. Staff will share the findings of this report with MTO and formally request that the lands with the greatest development potential be declared surplus to enable future development opportunities. In addition, this report will be shared with Invest Ontario, which has expressed an interest in large tracts of land for development inquiries. On the advocacy side, this report will be shared to highlight the significance of employment land potential, and how it aligns with provincial growth and job creation. The report's findings will also inform the department's work in supporting the private sector and stakeholders in the development of industrial lands across the Town of Whitby.

5. Financial Considerations:

The release of these MTO lands offers significant development potential and economic development opportunities for Whitby and Durham region. Further, any disposition of and subsequent development of surplus MTO-owned lands would result in a productive use for these properties and incremental property tax revenues.

6. Communication and Public Engagement:

Not Applicable.

7. Input from Departments/Sources:

The economic development team continues to work closely and collaborate with Planning and Development. Planning staff reviewed and provided the mapping for this report.

8. Strategic Priorities:

The information in this report supports the Town of Whitby's Community Strategic Plan, specifically Strategic Pillar 3: Whitby's Economy. It addresses the following Objectives:

- 3.1. Accelerate progress, create jobs, and drive local economic growth
- 3.2 Attract and retain businesses and industry

Specifically, Action 3.1.2 focuses on expanding Whitby's commercial and industrial tax base.

9. Attachments:

Attachment 1: Figure 1 - MTO Properties in the Town of Whitby

Attachment 2: Figure 2 - Six MTO Properties with Development Potential