

Region of Waterloo
Planning, Development, and Legislative Services
Commissioner's Office

To: Regional Council
Meeting Date: September 25, 2024
Report Title: Land Assembly – Due Diligence Impacts

1. Recommendation

For Information

2. Purpose / Issue:

At Council's request, to provide an update on the removal of the crop in July 2024, during the due diligence process associated with the Wilmot land assembly efforts.

3. Strategic Plan:

This update aligns with the Region of Waterloo's Growing with Care Strategic Priority 1.4, to make land available across the region appropriate for affordable housing, shovel-ready employment lands and other supportive infrastructure designed for families and future needs.

4. Report Highlights:

- The Region of Waterloo is currently engaged in the assembly of employment lands to create a large-scale, shovel-ready site that is attractive to a major employer. This initiative aims to secure a generational investment that will result in thousands of well-paying local jobs and further economic prosperity in Waterloo Region. This initiative aims to secure generational investment that will result in thousands of well-paying local jobs and further economic prosperity in Waterloo Region.
- This site is being assembled for future investment from a major employer. This land assembly is not occurring for any business/end user in particular at this time, yet on-going due diligence must continue to ensure the site is shovel-ready and can be promoted for industrial investment once the entirety of the parcel is acquired.
- Regional staff are continually in conversation with industry leaders and various levels of government about possible future investment. Over the last 3 years, \$10

billion in potential investment and over 14,000 jobs from businesses considering Waterloo Region were lost, as different communities were chosen to invest in.

- As part of the due diligence process, detailed on-site technical analysis is required. This occurs once an agreement of purchase and sale has been secured. The Region of Waterloo announced on July 18, 2024 that land assembly efforts were progressing and the Region was approaching one-third of the site having been acquired at that time.
- In July 2024, in order to conduct an archeological assessment as part of the due diligence process, immature feed corn crop was required to be removed from a site recently acquired by the Region. The crop was estimated to be 10-16 weeks from harvest at the time of its removal. Due diligence timelines did not allow for a delay to allow the crop to reach full maturity.
- The option of delaying the removal of crops was pursued by the Region. Unfortunately, due to various requirements of the parties associated with the land assembly process, it was not possible to delay the removal.
- Various options for the use of the immature corn crop were investigated as part of the due diligence process, yet none were found to be viable.
- Due diligence timelines and requirements are included in negotiation conversations with landowners, which remain confidential. These negotiations are ongoing, with a focus on fair and equitable deals.

5. Background:

In 2020, the Provincial government put out a call to communities across Ontario to create shovel-ready land to attract investment. At the same time, the Region of Waterloo engaged both the local and global business community to better understand current needs and potential future opportunities for Waterloo Region. It was clear, Waterloo Region lacked an inventory of large-scale, shovel-ready land which is essential for businesses to invest or expand in the region.

Over the last few years, this community has lost several investments from major employers as a result of being unable to accommodate land requirements.

To meet this need in Waterloo Region, the Region of Waterloo is assembling land in Wilmot Township to create a large-scale, shovel-ready site that is attractive to a major employer. This initiative aims to secure a generational investment that will result in thousands of well-paying local jobs and further economic prosperity in Waterloo Region.

Land assembly efforts have been ongoing in Wilmot Township. The Region of Waterloo

announced on July 18, 2024, in a public news release that land assembly efforts were progressing and the Region was approaching one-third of the site having been acquired at that time. Detailed on-site investigations began then, to further complement previous due diligence.

As part of the land assembly process, the Region must take several steps to bring the site to a state of investment readiness. This includes land acquisition, various due diligence activities, and on-site investigations, which include invasive and non-invasive technical studies.

These studies may include, but are not limited to, topographic surveys, natural heritage studies, environmental impact studies, wetland analysis, arborist assessments, species at risk studies, archaeological assessments, hydrology studies, geomorphic assessments, contamination studies, grading and earthworks analysis, and erosion threshold assessments.

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Prior to the removal of the crop, the Region made multiple efforts to arrange for the completion of the technical work without disruption before or after crops were planted or harvested, but all efforts were not viable. The Region also explored various uses for the premature crop, including speaking to multiple livestock feed producers and a biofuel company.

A number of these studies require the completion of the work within pre-established deadlines the Region is subject to through various agreements. As is the case with all real estate transactions at the Region of Waterloo, the details, including timelines and the requirement to complete various due diligence activities, are confidential.

The Region continues to advance the land assembly in Wilmot Township. Negotiations with landowners are ongoing, with a focus on fair and equitable deals. On-site investigations and further due diligence work will continue throughout the remainder of the land assembly process. This includes making every possible effort to avoid removing any future crop prematurely. Notification will be provided to Council prior to the commencement of any future due diligence work.

6. Communication and Engagement with Area Municipalities and the Public

Area Municipalities: Regional staff work closely with Wilmot Township staff on the site assembly, specifically the due diligence work required to ready the site for a future job

creation opportunity. Given the confidentiality requirements the Region is subject to, engagement with the public remains limited at this time.

7. Financial Implications:

N/A

8. Conclusion / Next Steps:

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9. Attachments:

N/A

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