

TO: His Worship Mayor Michael Morden **MEETING DATE:** April 16, 2019
and Members of Council **FILE NO:** 2016-195-CP

FROM: Chief Administrative Officer **MEETING:** Workshop

SUBJECT: Employment Land Use Suitability Assessment: Yennadon Lands

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

At the May 1, 2016 Council meeting, staff were directed to initiate a process to redesignate 13 subject properties generally located at 128th Avenue and 232nd Street (hereafter referred to as the Yennadon Lands) towards an employment land use designation. The direction was in keeping with the City's Commercial & Industrial Strategy: 2012-2042, and could facilitate the creation of a unique opportunity for a campus-style business park in the future, which may include a technology hub.

Specifically, the properties in this subject area were identified as a potential location (See Figure 1: "Site 2") for future employment uses in the Commercial & Industrial Strategy, with the Strategy recommending that planning for the additional supply of employment land should begin now in order to best satisfy future demand in an increasingly competitive region. This area could eventually serve the needs of the technology sector, light manufacturing companies, and professional offices; all of which offer a high employment density.

In order to facilitate employment uses on the Yennadon Lands an amendment to the Official Community Plan (OCP) would be required to change the land use designation from Agricultural to some form of employment designation as per Section 6 of our OCP. A possible amendment to include the area in the City's Urban Area Boundary could also be a consideration. Such an employment redesignation process would be similar to those undertaken recently in 2017, through which Council expanded the employment nodes located at 256 Street north of 128th Ave and along the Lougheed Highway east of 240th Street.

To assess the suitability of the Yennadon Lands for an employment future, a high-level site and land use analysis examined certain environmental characteristics such as known watercourses, topography, significant tree areas, and other natural features. Potential impacts identified by the assessment, should the area be redesignated, include site access and circulation by employment-generated traffic and the interface between the existing agriculture and suburban residential land uses and those potentially more intensive land uses associated with an employment future.

Noting these inherent challenges, the Commercial & Industrial Strategy noted that a mixed employment campus-style business park could be a suitable form of development, with a key focus on restricting heights while also encouraging built forms and uses that are in keeping with the surrounding residential context.

The opportunities and challenges afforded by this area would require new policy development and a planning process to undertake early and ongoing consultation with the community and stakeholders.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 1) That the employment redesignation process and consultation strategy for the Yennadon Lands, as outlined in the report titled “Employment Land Use Suitability Assessment: Yennadon Lands”, dated April 16, 2019, be endorsed;
- 2) That the process for in-stream rezoning applications in the Yennadon Lands, as outlined in the report titled “Employment Land Use Suitability Assessment: Yennadon Lands”, dated April 16, 2019, be endorsed; and
- 3) That, in respect of Section 475 of the Local Government Act, requirement for consultation during the development or amendment of an Official Community Plan, Council must consider whether consultation is required with specifically:
 - i. The Board of the Regional District in which the area covered by the plan is located, in the case of a Municipal Official Community Plan;
 - ii. The Board of any Regional District that is adjacent to the area covered by the plan;
 - iii. The Council of any municipality that is adjacent to the area covered by the plan;
 - iv. First Nations;
 - v. Boards of Education, Greater Boards and Improvements District Boards; and
 - vi. The Provincial and Federal Governments and their agencies.

and in that regard it is recommended that the only additional consultation to be required in respect of this matter beyond the early posting of the proposed Official Community Plan amendments on the City’s website, together with an invitation to the public to comment, is the undertaking of the consultation process as described in the report titled “Employment Land Use Suitability Assessment: Yennadon Lands”, dated April 16, 2019.

BACKGROUND:

In 2012 (and updated in 2014), G.P. Rollo & Associates prepared the “Commercial & Industrial Strategy: 2012-2042” (the Strategy). The Strategy evaluated the City’s current supply of industrial and commercial lands, including whether the current supply was meeting the existing needs of the City. The final component of the Strategy projected future demand for commercial and industrial lands throughout the City. Strategy #4 specifically identified the lands located at 128th Avenue and 232nd Street (the Yennadon Lands) as a potential location for employment activities (see Figure 1: “Area 2” on the following page).

On October 5, 2015, Council endorsed the Commercial and Industrial Strategy Implementation Plan Matrix. As part of the immediate term horizon (2015 to 2016), a review of potential employment land locations outlined during the preparation of the Strategy was identified.

On April 18, 2016, Council received for information an update on the status of the potential future employment sites. Through that discussion, Council requested staff report back on the suitability of the Yennadon Lands, towards outlining possible implications stemming from any future land use redesignation

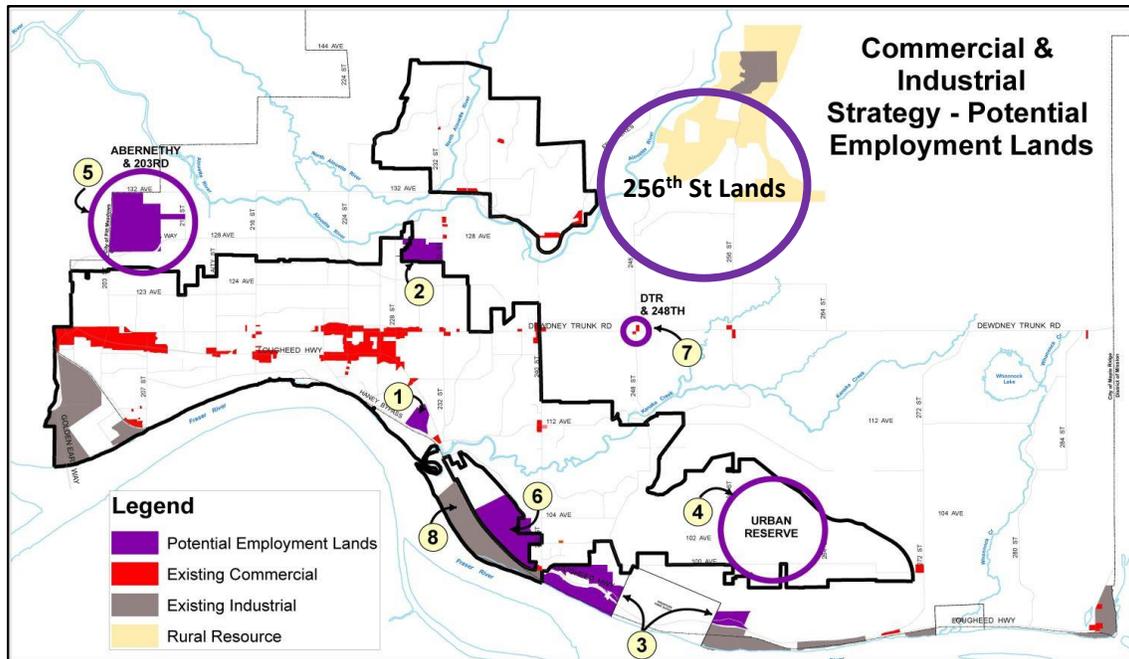


Figure 1: Potential Employment Lands

On May 10, 2016, Council in keeping with Strategy #4 of the City’s Commercial & Industrial Strategy directed staff to redesignate the 11 subject properties located at 128 Avenue and 232 Street to facilitate future employment opportunities under the following motion:

That staff be directed to prepare an Official Community Plan Amending Bylaw to designate the lands identified in Strategy #4: 232 Street / 128th Avenue in the Commercial & Industrial Strategy: 2012-2042 (August 2014) “Industrial” for “Mixed Employment” use, allowing for a small amount of land along the western edge of the area to be designated “Urban Residential”, to complete the 126B Avenue, 127 Place and 127th Avenue road network and provide a transition between existing residential and future employment land uses.

DISCUSSION:

This report presents the results stemming from a high-level site and land use assessment intended to investigate the suitability of the Yennadon Lands for the sensitive infill of future employment activities as per the Commercial & Industrial Strategy: 2012-2042.

a) Site Description:

The Yennadon Lands are comprised of 13 properties. They range in size from 0.5 ha (1.5 acres) to 4 ha (10 acres). The total land area is 25.4 hectares (63 acres). The subject properties are located outside of and adjacent to the City’s Urban Area Boundary, but are within the Region’s Urban Containment Boundary.

The existing uses on the lands range from single family use to vacant underutilized lands, according to BC Assessment data. The properties abut urban single family development on the west and south boundaries; Agricultural Land Reserve to the east and north, and suburban single family lots on the north side of 128 Avenue. A historic commercial node is located within a 200-400 m distance of the subject properties as does Yennadon Elementary School.

Currently, the subject properties are designated *Agricultural* in the OCP and are zoned RS-3 (One Family Rural Residential) and RS-2 (One Family Suburban Residential). All of the properties, except one property located near the northeast corner of the area, are located outside the Agricultural Land Reserve.



Figure 2: Yennadon Lands Located at 128th Avenue and 232nd Street

b) Site Assessment:

The following section outlines the current site conditions and characteristics of the 13 subject properties.

Access:

The road network fronting the subject properties are currently designated as a collector road (128 Avenue) and an arterial road (232 Street). These road designations will provide adequate access to these lands, however the roads are not constructed to the City standard and would require upgrading as a condition of any future development. The area also affords good proximity to Abernethy Way.

Unlike the recent employment lands assessment processes that involved the existing 256th Street industrial area and the industrial lands around the Loughheed and 240th Street area, there is currently a general absence of industrial related traffic in this area. This observation suggests that any employment-related redevelopment could present an increase in possible traffic impacts.

To minimise the transportation interface between the residential properties to the west and the proposed employment lands, the existing road pattern for 127 and 126 Avenues and 127 Place should be completed but not interconnect with the proposed employment land road network.

Watercourses:

Coho Creek and its tributaries bisect four subject properties underpinning the consideration of a *Conservation* land use designation. Additionally, it is estimated that approximately 5 hectares (11 acres) are impacted by streamside and enhancement protected areas. This requires riparian area setbacks which will impact the overall developable area of these properties. Pursuant to Section 8.9 of the OCP, a Watercourse Protection Development Permit application will be required for all developments and building permits within 50 metres of the top of bank of all watercourses and wetlands. As part of that permitting process, it is likely that the areas to be protected would require redesignation towards a *Conservation* land use designation.

Topography, Floodplain and Natural Features:

The topography of the site is generally flat. As a result, the subject properties may be susceptible to localized flooding due to a high water table and soil composition. Specifically, in times of heavy rain events, water may not be able to infiltrate into the ground and may result in pooling of water.

Pursuant to Section 8.10 of the OCP, a Natural Features Development Permit application will be required for all future development and subdivision activity or building permits to ensure the preservation, protection, restoration and enhancement of the natural environment, and for development that is protected from hazardous conditions.

Significant Trees and Forested Area:

There are portions of the sites that would require clearing and tree removal. A Tree Cutting Permit will be required under the Tree Protection and Management Bylaw. Further investigation through a Tree Management Plan will be required to determine potential retention areas for significant tree clusters, especially on the periphery of the sites and around conservation boundaries. In addition, appropriate studies, mitigation, and coordination measures will be required to manage tree retention and tree removal areas on site, including tree replacement requirements. These requirements will need to be addressed by the developer as part of any future redevelopment applications.

Stormwater Management:

Future development of the Yennadon Lands would need to demonstrate compliance with the City's stormwater management requirements with respect to 3 tier on-site source controls using Provincial and Metro Vancouver design standards. The emphasis of the Three Tier approach is on management of volumes, runoff rates, and water quality improvements which need to be coordinated with geotechnical recommendations, environmentally sensitive protected areas, and tree retention areas.

Agricultural Land Reserve Interface:

Presently, any future development of the Yennadon Lands will be required to complete an Agricultural Impact Assessment noting their adjacency to the Agricultural Land Reserve. It is also raised that, through the City's Agricultural Advisory Committee, on April 9, 2019 staff presented a draft set of development permit requirements for non-ALR properties that abut the ALR. The intent of such a Development Permit would be the protection of existing ALR lands, and may present further landscaping and subdivision implications to adjacent properties when developed. Further study has been requested by Council and will be the subject of a future staff report.

c) Policy and Zoning Context:

As well as the site conditions and characteristics, consideration for development of the Yennadon Lands must also be understood within the existing policy and regulatory context.

OCP Policies:

The subject properties are located outside of, and adjacent to, the City's Urban Area Boundary. Although employment land uses are permitted outside of the Urban Area Boundary, the associated level of servicing would remain suburban rather than urban. The adjacency of the properties to the existing Urban Area Boundary lends itself to the possible expansion of the Boundary at this location. Such a step would also support the extension of *Urban Residential* along the western edge of the subject lands, as per Council's May 2016 resolution. Staff also note that the potential for an Urban Area Boundary adjustment was contemplated during the previous Regional Growth Strategy review and was therefore designated as general urban by the Region as a result (i.e. the Yennadon Lands are within the Region's Urban Containment Boundary).

The proposed land use redesignation of the Yennadon Lands to an employment future is supported through the recommendations of the Commercial Industrial Strategy and the existing industrial policies in the OCP. OCP policies 6-41 and 6-42 speak to identifying additional employment lands within the City, and sets out compatibility criteria used to determine feasibility of new employment land. Specifically, the subject properties align with the intent of the current OCP policies for inclusion as employment lands, as the lands are generally flat, have access to an arterial and collector roadways, and servicing runs adjacent to the properties.

Commercial & Industrial Strategy:

The Commercial & Industrial Strategy: 2012-2042 identified that, in an effort to foster ongoing growth amongst the City's approximately 7,700 industrial-based jobs, an additional 69-93 hectares (170-230 acres) of industrial lands by 2040 would need to be redesignated. As noted earlier, Strategy #4 identified the lands located at 128th Avenue and 232nd Street as a possible location for future employment activities, such as a light industrial/office park or campus. It was envisioned that a campus style of development was needed to blend in with the surrounding residential uses, noting that any future employment uses would be restricted to ones that can be contained within a building and would not create noise, odour, or other negative impacts.

Beyond the lands at 128th Avenue and 232nd Street, the Strategy further recommends that planning for the creation of any additional employment land should begin now in order to best satisfy future demand for such lands in an increasingly competitive region, especially given the amount of currently designated, but underutilized industrial land already in Maple Ridge.

Zoning Bylaw:

Any future employment development in this area would also be required to undergo a municipal rezoning process, at which time the applicant would need to undertake more detailed studies of the area. Such studies as identified above may include, but not be limited to, geotechnical assessments, servicing and infrastructure studies, significant tree and habitat assessments, etc.; all to ensure that any future proposed land uses do not negatively impact existing soils, groundwater, and habitats. As well, future applicants may also be required to obtain a development permit to regulate the form and character of new buildings.

The existing Industrial Development Permit Guidelines could be used to inform re-development, however, more tailored development permit guidelines could be prepared after a monitoring period.

Regional Policies:

The Regional Growth Strategy (RGS), titled “Metro Vancouver 2040: Shaping Our Future”, manages growth by establishing growth boundaries throughout the region.

The subject properties are located within the Region’s Urban Containment Boundary, but are located outside of the Region’s Fraser Sewerage Area, which delineates properties that are able to connect to the regional sanitary system. An application by the City, to the Greater Vancouver Sewerage & Drainage District Board, would be required to achieve regional approval to include the subject properties within the Fraser Sewerage Area should Council wish to facilitate more intensive employment activities.

Metro’s RGS aims to protect the region’s supply of industrial land and promote its efficient use. Given that approximately 23% (275,000) of the region’s jobs are accommodated on industrial lands. Metro has also published a Regional Industrial Lands Strategy (RILS), intended to establish a vision for the future of industrial lands across Metro Vancouver to the year 2050.

PLANNING ANALYSIS:

Based on the above high-level site and land use evaluation, it is estimated that there is approximately 20 hectares (52 acres) of net developable area outside of the streamside and enhancement protected areas, representing just over 80% of the gross site area. This developable area may be expanded based on site-specific proposals and associated technical evaluation and study. However, as mentioned above, several of the properties are impacted by watercourses and may be impacted further by the outcomes from either an Agricultural Impacts Assessment or an Agricultural Development Permit, if approved later by Council. Appropriate access management and the internal road system could further limit development, noting the need to ensure that transportation impacts upon adjacent properties are sensitively addressed.

With these insights, and as per the criteria identified in the OCP, the Yennadon Lands appear suitable for a more intensive land use than agriculture. Additionally, the policy context supports the future use of the subject properties for employment purposes based on needs identified in the Commercial and Industrial Strategy.

Further, the adjacency of the Urban Area Boundary to the subject properties provides an opportunity to extend the Boundary to include the Yennadon Land as part of any redesignation process, although it is recognised that employment land uses are supportable (at a lower levels of intensity) locally and regionally both in a suburban and rural context, as evidenced in other parts of the City.

Yet, unlike other areas of the City where similar employment land use redesignations have recently been conducted, it is noted that this area would not be an expansion of an existing employment node. Instead, the introduction of employment activities to the Yennadon Lands would represent a new land use direction. As such, the Yennadon Lands are rather unique in both the opportunities it presents, but also the challenges that will need appropriate consideration.

Specifically, and like other infill mixed-employment areas in the City, the interface conditions between the existing and any future development would necessitate a sensitive transition to the less intensive suburban and rural context.

Equally, any future redevelopment of this site would require non-residential building forms that foster compatibility with the surrounding neighbourhoods. Part of this would involve identifying an appropriate mix of employment uses that generate suitable levels of job creation while still affording an appropriate transition to the surrounding uses.

On the matter of transition, as per Council's May 2016 resolution, the western side of the Yennadon Lands are to be completed as residential, which will clarify the treatment of that edge. However, it will be necessary to determine the extent to which the Urban Residential types of development extends into rest of the Yennadon site. Such considerations are underscored in light of the community's interests in the area, as expressed in regards to previous development applications, which have favoured low-intensity activities such as live-work uses, residential forms of development, and retaining the area as natural open space.

NEXT STEPS – EMPLOYMENT LAND REDESIGNATION AND CONSULTATION PROCESS:

In light of the outcomes and questions raised through the initial assessment of the Yennadon Lands, Staff recognises the benefit of further discussion and engagement with stakeholders, the community and intergovernmental agencies towards identifying an appropriate land use concept for these Lands. To help facilitate such discussions, staff have outlined below an employment land redesignation process that mirrors those undertaken previously in 2017 for the lands located at 256 Street north of 128th Ave and along the Lougheed Highway east of 240th Street.

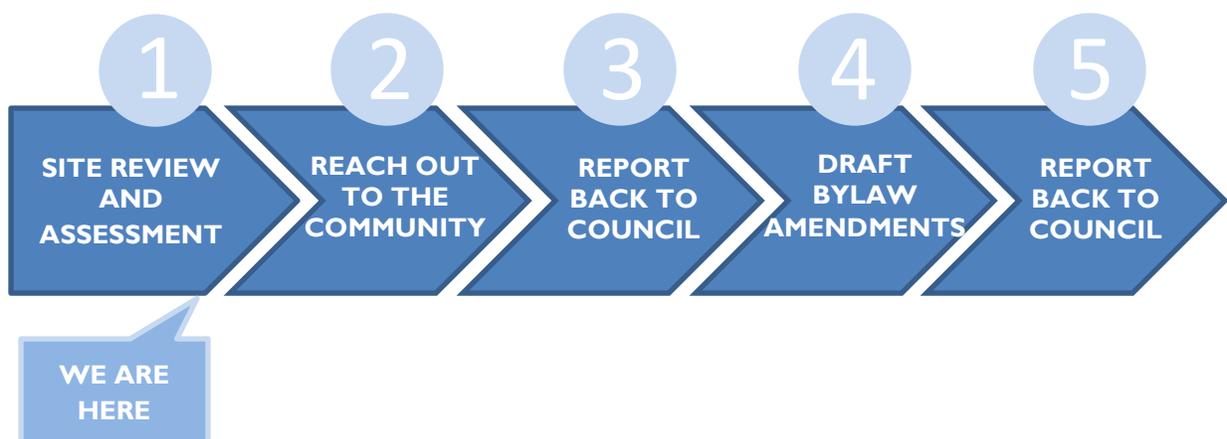


Figure 3: Yennadon Lands Employment Land Redesignation Process

In terms of the intergovernmental discussions, the *Local Government Act* Section 475 provides the framework to guide consultation for OCP amendments. Council must consider if consultation should be early and ongoing with one or more persons, organizations and authorities. Specifically with:

- i. the board of the regional district in which the area covered by the plan is located, in the case of a municipal official community plan;
- ii. the board of any regional district that is adjacent to the area covered by the plan;
- iii. the council of any municipality that is adjacent to the area covered by the plan;

- iv. first nations;
- v. boards of education, greater boards and improvement district boards;
- vi. the provincial and federal governments and their agencies.

Given the identified challenges inherent to these lands, but in recognition of the employment potential in this general area, further dialogue with the land owners, the wider local community and stakeholders is warranted. For the subject lands, the following consultation and communication process is proposed:

1. Small Group Workshops – small-group discussion with the land-owners in and adjacent to the Yennadon Lands, as well as real estate and market professionals;
2. Charrette – creative design exploration of the Lands to facilitate possible land use concepts;
3. Community Open House – opportunity for City-wide residents to review and identify community interests and comments;
4. Survey and social media input – to provide online and in-person surveys along with social media opportunities will be made available to augment the input received.

In addition to the above, interdepartmental referrals will be sent to the Engineering Department for comments on traffic and servicing, Finance Department for consistency with the Five Year Financial Plan, the Parks, Recreation and Culture Department for comments related to the Parks Master Plan, and Economic Development for consistency with the Economic Development Plan.

It is anticipated that following the consultation and communication process, the feedback received will be the subject of a future report to Council.

CURRENT DEVELOPMENT APPLICATIONS:

Since Council's 2016 resolution relating to these Yennadon Lands, numerous development enquiries have been received. There is one outstanding rezoning application for portions of the Yennadon Lands. Application 2013-028-RZ for two properties (12640 228 Street and 22870 127 Place) was received March 28, 2013 and proposed rezoning to the RS-1b (One Family (Medium Density) Residential) zone to permit single family development. This application has been held in abeyance due to the Commercial Industrial Strategy and its implications for this area. In addition, a new application has recently been submitted for the property located at the corner of 128th Street and 232nd Avenue, to facilitate the rezoning of the property to a commercial use.

Through the processed employment land redesignation process, clarity on the policy future for this area will assist in setting out preferred land use directions for land owners and applicants. However, until such time and consistent with past practices of Council, it is recommended that any new applications or applications that are in-stream, but have not yet been referred to a Public Hearing, be deferred until such time as the employment land redesignation process and any potential OCP amendments are presented at Public Hearing and given third reading.

The exception to the above would be for any applications that are in keeping with the existing OCP designation and zoning, which may proceed through to completion, subject to the satisfaction of the application requirements.

ALTERNATIVE RECOMMENDATION:

Staff has prepared a high-level assessment that suggests that the Yennadon Lands are suitable in the long-term for employment activities. However, in light of the land use interfaces identified above and in the present absence of any other employment activities in this area, Staff provide for Council's consideration an alternative direction.

Specifically, staff offer as an alternative recommendation the option not to investigate further a redesignation of the Yennadon Lands for employment future.

That the lands identified in Strategy #4: 232 Street / 128th Avenue in the Commercial & Industrial Strategy: 2012-2042 (August 2014) not be redesignated to "Industrial" for "Mixed Employment" use.

INTERDEPARTMENTAL IMPLICATIONS:

The Economic Development Department believes the Yennadon Lands can provide a unique opportunity for a campus-style business park, which may include a technology hub. It can be designed sensitively to fit in with the surrounding neighbourhood and provide complimentary services and amenities for residents as well as employees. This area can serve the needs of technology, light manufacturing companies, engineering and emerging companies which have a relatively higher proportion of employees per acre than the existing Maple Meadows business park. A mix of employment uses would not preclude the possible accommodation of recreation employment opportunities, including public and private recreation facilities.

The site offers good connectivity via Abernethy Way and the potential to extend, at a manageable cost, the City's fibre optics infrastructure for businesses that may locate here. Proximity to a diversity of housing types and surrounding recreation would also be viewed as an attractive feature for a business park and technology hub in this location.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS:

The ongoing pursuit of employment lands, and specifically at 128th Avenue and 232nd Street, is anticipated in the Planning Department 2019 Work Program. While it is expected that much of the planning work will be completed in-house, outside consultant resources will also be required to assist with the engagement efforts and the creation of the land use concepts. Such consultant work will be accommodated through existing internal budgets.

CONCLUSION:

In response to direction from Council, staff has undertaken a high-level assessment of the long-term suitability for employment generating land uses to be accommodated on the various properties, located generally at 128th Street and 232nd Avenue, referred to the Yennadon Lands in this report. The direction was provided as part of an ongoing and proactive attempt to create new employment lands within the City towards meeting anticipated future demand. From the assessment, the Yennadon lands are seen as generally suitable to employment activities, noting that about 20% of the site could be impacted by watercourses and other environmental considerations.

The report also identifies that unlike other attempts to expand existing industrial areas elsewhere in the City, the current absence of industrial activity around these Lands presents unique land use considerations should the designation be changed to accommodate future employment uses.

Acknowledging these inherent challenges, but in recognition of the possible opportunities afforded by these lands, a proposed employment land redesignation process is presented. The area provides a unique opportunity for a campus-style business park, which may serve the needs of the technology sector, light manufacturing companies, and/or engineering and emerging professional companies, which all have a relatively high proportion of employees per ha/acre. Key to this process is early and ongoing engagement to further investigate appropriate land use concepts for the Yennadon Lands. The results of the consultation process along with the results from intergovernmental and interdepartmental referrals will be presented back to Council for further direction. However, in light of land use interfaces and the present absence of other employment activities in this area, an alternative recommendation has been included in the report.

“Original signed by Brent Elliott”

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