



# The Regional Municipality of Durham Report

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To: Committee of the Whole  
From: Commissioner of Community Growth and Economic Development and  
Commissioner of Works  
Report: #2026-COW-12  
Date: March 11, 2026

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**Subject:**

Project Woodward – Authorization to Sell Regional Lands for Economic Development

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**Recommendations:**

That Committee of the Whole recommends to Regional Council:

- A) That staff be delegated the authority to sell some or all of the properties identified in report [#2023-COW-20](#) to a purchaser(s) that commits to developing and using the lands in a manner consistent with the Region's, and the Municipality of Clarington's, vision to create a clean energy business and industrial park, and for uses substantially consistent with Confidential Attachment #1 to that report;
- B) That the Commissioner of Works be authorized to execute all documents, in a form satisfactory to the Regional Solicitor, associated with the disposition and sale of the subject lands;
- C) That the net proceeds from the sale of land be first used to reimburse the Economic Development Reserve Fund for the early-stage development costs and planned site studies with any remaining net proceeds being allocated at the discretion of the Commissioner of Finance; and

- D) That staff report to Council upon the completion of the sale to provide details of the sale, purchaser(s), and end uses.
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## **Report:**

### **1. Purpose**

1.1 The purpose of this report is to:

- a. provide Committee of the Whole and Regional Council with a status update regarding activities to attract investment to the subject lands; and
- b. to obtain authorization to sell the subject lands on terms and conditions designed to realize the economic development vision for these lands.

### **2. Background**

2.1 In 2020, staff began exploring the future development potential of the subject lands and assigned the name “Project Woodward” in honour of Henry Woodward, the Canadian inventor of the incandescent lamp who later sold his patent to Thomas Edison in 1875.

2.2 At the meeting of May 24, 2023, Regional Council endorsed the recommendations of report [#2023-COW-20](#), being:

- a. That the properties described Firstly as Part Lot 28 Concession Broken Front Darlington, Part 1 on plan 40R-29418, Municipality of Clarington and identified with PIN 266050139; and Secondly as Part of Lots 27 and 28 Concession Broken Front Darlington, Parts 9 and 10 on plan 40R-29418, Municipality of Clarington and identified by PIN 266050114, be declared surplus to Regional Municipality of Durham requirements;
- b. That the Regional Municipality of Durham, as the expropriating authority, approve the disposition of lands without offering the expropriated owners the first chance to repurchase the lands on the terms of the best offer received, therefore approving a waiver of the requirement under s.42 of the Expropriations Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. E.26;
- c. That the plan outlined in Report [#2023-COW-20](#) of the Commissioners of Planning & Economic Development and Works be endorsed, which is to market the lands declared surplus in Recommendation A) of Report [#2023-COW-20](#) to potential buyers, and execute a purchase and sale agreement that obligates the prospective purchaser to develop the lands in a manner consistent with the Region’s, and the Municipality of Clarington’s,

- vision to create a clean energy business and industrial park, and attract users from the clean energy and/or advanced automotive sectors; and
- d. That staff return to Council for approval of the agreement of purchase and sale in the event a suitable buyer is identified.

2.3 Further background on the subject lands, development activities, conceptual planning, and activities to market the lands, are contained in report [#2023-COW-20](#).

### **3. Project Status**

3.1 The project has advanced through three phases:

- a. Phase 1: Development Framework
- b. Phase 2: Surplus Designation, Council Approval, Design and Marketing
- c. Phase 3: Implementation and Investment Attraction

3.2 Following Council approval in 2023, considerable work was undertaken to market the lands for new investment and attract developers and uses that aligned with the vision.

3.3 Avison Young was engaged as the Region's agent to market the lands and list the property on Ontario's multiple listing service.

3.4 Staff have proposed the property in many pitch packages to suitable prospective investors during the site selection process. The property was showcased in the 2024 'Signature Sites' package and distributed to realtors and developers across the Greater Toronto Area at the Invest Durham Realtor and Developer Event. The property was also promoted to senior government investment attraction agencies such as Invest Ontario.

3.5 Until the fourth quarter of 2025, despite intensive promotion activities, Invest Durham received limited serious interest in the property from investors that aligned with the vision. Staff pursued exploratory interest from various parties, but nothing materialized.

3.6 Recently however, staff have been engaged with multiple suitable parties with interest in the lands for advanced energy-related uses. Two prospective investors have shortlisted the site and staff are in active discussions regarding development activities, sale conditions, terms, and construction timelines. The Region has entered into Non-Disclosure Agreements, so limited information can be shared

publicly. The types of uses proposed by these prospective buyers include nuclear energy and life sciences-related uses that would include research and development, advanced fabrication and production, with engineering and office-related uses.

- 3.7 Many environmental studies have already been completed for the property. Staff have recently identified significant potential benefit to advancing additional site studies immediately to improve the investment readiness of the site, and to reduce risk and the pre-construction timeline. The rapid completion of these activities will improve the likelihood of securing a user that aligns with the vision. Staff will commence these activities shortly.

#### **4. Delegated Authorization for Sale**

- 4.1 The recent interest the Region has received is for projects with aggressive timelines to develop and commence construction. Providing advance delegated authority to staff will reduce timing risk and perceived uncertainty for the buyers, improving the likelihood of a sale and improving the Region's negotiating position. For that reason, staff recommend that Regional Council delegate to staff the authority to sell the property, with conditions, at a price that is deemed acceptable and reasonable in the discretion of staff given the constraints and economic development benefits.
- 4.2 Conditions will be imposed on the sale of the property to ensure it is developed in alignment with the Region's vision for the property, including for example: that the site contain certain structures with minimum amounts of advanced manufacturing, office, and/or laboratory space; that end users are organizations that operate within the clean energy and/or advanced automotive sectors; and that the design of the buildings reflect urban design standards acceptable to the Municipality of Clarington.
- 4.3 Staff recommend that the Commissioner of Works be authorized to execute all documents associated with the disposition and sale of the subject lands, provided that a buyer or buyers are identified that substantially meets the Region's requirements and price expectations outlined in Confidential Attachment #2 to report [#2023-COW-20](#), which is reattached to this report for ease of reference as Confidential Attachment #1 (under separate cover).

#### **5. Financial Implications**

- 5.1 Through prior approved annual Business Plans and Budgets, approximately \$193,880 has been spent to-date on early-stage development costs including environmental site investigations, studies and reports, conceptual designs and marketing materials, and the development of a business case. Additional reserve

funds have also been previously committed and remain available for the site studies planned for 2026.

- 5.2 Net proceeds from the sale of land will be first used to reimburse the Economic Development Reserve Fund for the early stage development costs and planned site studies with any remaining net proceeds being allocated at the discretion of the Commissioner of Finance.

## **6. Relationship to Strategic Plan**

- 6.1 This report aligns with/addresses the following Strategic Direction(s) and Pathway(s) in Durham Region's 2025-2035 Strategic Plan:

a. Resilient Local Economies

- R1. Attract and retain quality employers that strengthen key economic sectors, including energy and technology.
- R2. Support the growth of new business startups and small to medium local businesses.
- R3. Develop, attract, and support a skilled and qualified workforce, including youth and newcomers.

b. Strong Relationships

- S3. Collaborate across local area municipalities, with agencies, non-profits, and community partners to deliver co-ordinated and efficient services.

- 6.2 This report aligns with/addresses the following Foundation(s) in Durham Region's 2025-2035 Strategic Plan:

- a. People: Making the Region of Durham a great place to work, attracting, and retaining talent.

## **7. Conclusion**

- 7.1 The Region has recently received serious interest from prospective buyers of the Region's 'Project Woodward' lands in the Clarington Energy Park. These prospective buyers would develop and use the lands in a manner consistent with the Region's and Municipality of Clarington's vision for the lands to be a clean energy and advanced automotive business and industrial park.

- 7.2 Delegated authority to sell all or some of the Project Woodward lands will reduce timing risk and perceived uncertainty for the buyers, improving the likelihood of a sale and improving the Region's negotiating position. If the lands are successfully

sold, staff will report to Council upon the completion of the sale to provide details of the sale, purchasers, and end uses.

7.3 The clean energy sector and its supporting industries carry immense potential for economic growth in the Region. This project is expected to help the Region attract new investment and generate new employment, bringing opportunities for innovation in clean energy generation and associated industries.

7.4 This report has been reviewed by the Commissioner of Finance.

7.5 For additional information, please contact Simon Gill, Director of Economic Development and Tourism, and Marc Dallaire, Supervisor, Corporate Real Estate.

**8. Attachments:**

Confidential Attachment #1: Project Woodward Price Expectation and Negotiation Position (under separate cover)

Respectfully submitted,

Original signed by

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Sandra Austin  
Commissioner of Community Growth and  
Economic Development

Original signed by

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Ramesh Jagannathan, MBA, M.Eng.,  
P.Eng.,PTOE  
Commissioner of Works

Recommended for Presentation to Committee

Original signed by

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Elaine Baxter-Trahair  
Chief Administrative Officer