



PLANNING REPORT

**Commercial and Industrial Land
Township of Puslinch**

Prepared by the Wellington County Planning and Development Department

September 3, 2014

Introduction

As set out in Council Resolution 2013-237, Puslinch Township relies on a mix of residential and industrial/commercial tax base, and Puslinch Council is concerned about the current and future availability of land for commercial or industrial uses. This report, prepared at the request of Council, outlines the availability of land for commercial and/or industrial use in the Township.

Growth Forecasts

Provincial Employment Growth Forecast

The updated employment growth forecasts for Regions and Counties in the *Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe* (the Growth Plan) extend beyond 2031 to 2036 and 2041. The provincial growth forecasts are for Total Employment. In addition to industrial and commercial employment which is mainly accommodated on industrial and commercial lands, Total Employment also includes agriculture, institutional, no fixed place of work, and work at home jobs that do not require industrial and commercial land. As a result, the Total Employment forecast in the Growth Plan cannot be stated in terms of industrial and commercial land needs without industrial and commercial sector forecasts.

County Draft Industrial and Commercial Employment Growth Forecast

The County retained Watson & Associates to prepare growth forecasts that extend to 2036 and 2041 in accordance with the Growth Plan, and separate industrial and commercial employment from other types of employment. Although the work is in the draft stages, the preliminary overall combined industrial and commercial employment land need for the County is:

2011 - 2036 growth (25 years): 1,150 acres needed

Note: 2011 is used as the base for comparison to the Census, and 2036 is used as the target year as that is anticipated to be the next milestone for comprehensive reviews of land needs.

County Employment Land Supply

The current overall supply of designated vacant industrial and commercial lands is 1,530 acres. Examples of large designated employment areas from across the County are shown below:

North Fergus – approximately 130 acres



Mount Forest – approximately 200 acres



Guelph/Eramosa – approximately 200 acres



Drayton – approximately 90 acres



County Employment Land Budget Surplus

The overall combined industrial and commercial employment land need, supply and resulting surplus for the County is set out below

2011 - 2036 growth (25 years):	1,150 acres needed;
	<u>1,530</u> acres designated and vacant
	380 acres surplus

Prior to amalgamation and provincial planning reforms in the mid-1990s, most of the County's 21 local municipalities designated strategic supplies of industrial parcels in order to attract development and provide a range of opportunities. Employment land planning was not driven by growth forecast considerations to the degree that is required today. As a result, the County had a large surplus of vacant industrial lands that has persisted to the present.

Under provincial policy, the County surplus poses an obstacle to designating additional lands in local areas of the County because the supply of designated land should not accommodate more than 20 years of projected need.

Puslinch Employment Lands Supply

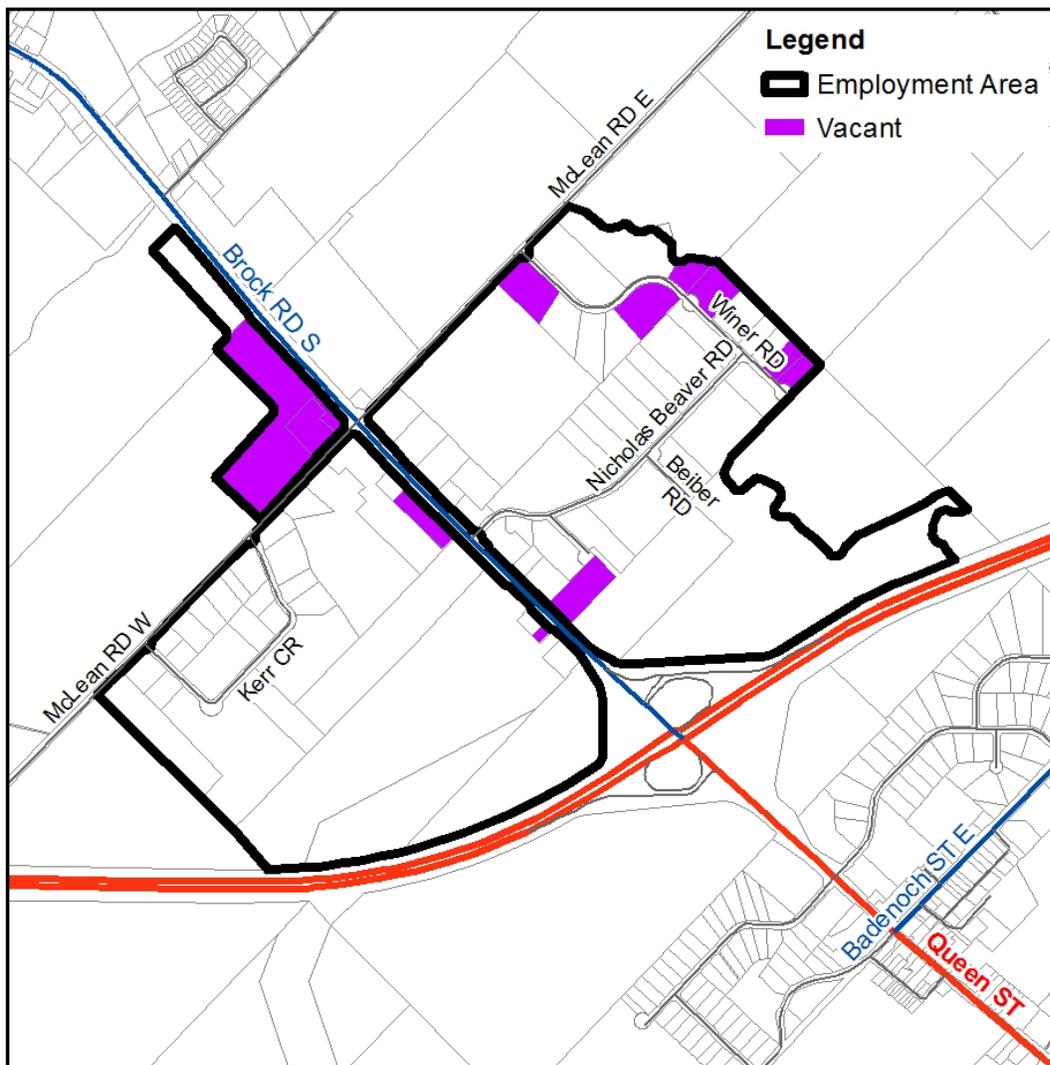
Puslinch Township has four areas that have the ability to accommodate industrial and commercial employment growth, at varying degrees and timeframes, as described below.

Brock Road and McLean Road Area

This area is designated Rural Industrial (Rural Employment Area when OPA 81 is approved), north of Highway 401 and centred on Brock Road.

The overall area is approximately 520 acres. The remaining vacant developable area is 38 acres. The vacant area consists of 11 parcels, most of which are in the 1–4 acre range, and already zoned Industrial. A notable exception is an 18 acre area that is zoned Extractive.

Currently more than 90% built out, this area continues to attract development interest, and is likely to be fully built out in the short term.



Maltby Road/Hanlon Expressway

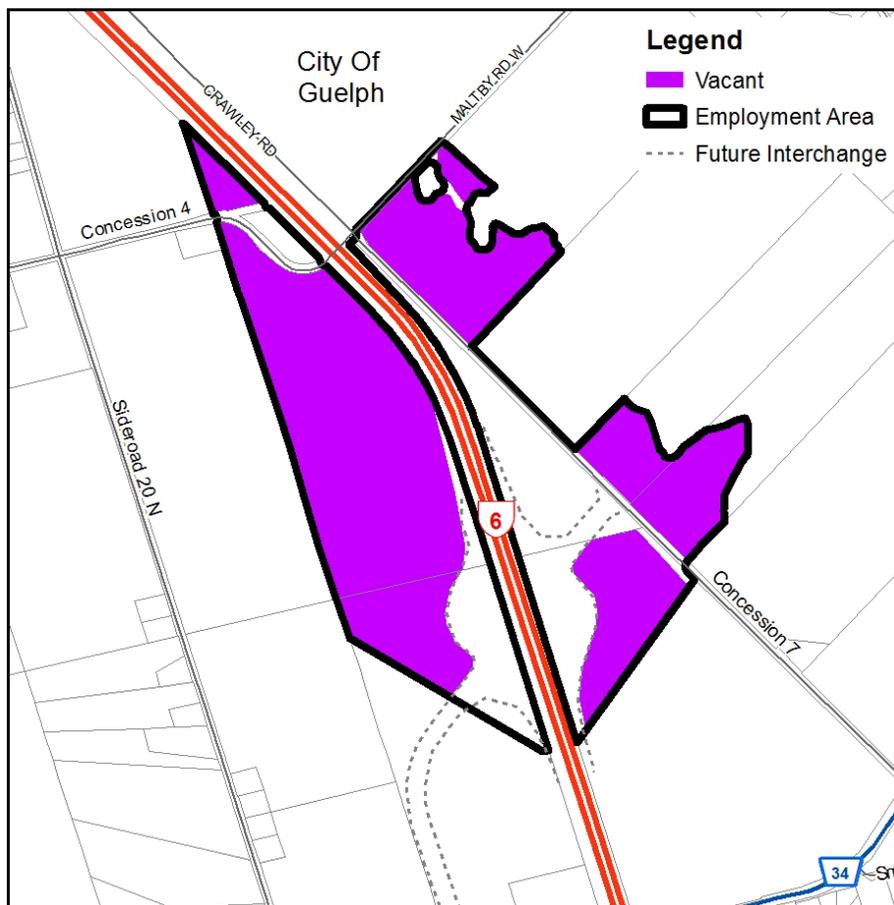
This area is designated Rural Industrial (Rural Employment Area when OPA 81 is approved), and centred on the Hanlon Expressway (Highway 6). Future planned improvements to the Hanlon Expressway include an interchange in this area that will have a major influence on the extent and layout of development.

East Side of Highway 6

The vacant developable area is approximately 52 acres and consists of large parcels that have road access but are zoned for Agriculture. The parcel at the corner of Maltby Road and Concession 7 is the subject of a current rezoning application to allow industrial uses. As the Brock Road/McLean Road area approaches full build out, this area will be increasingly attractive for development.

West Side of Highway 6

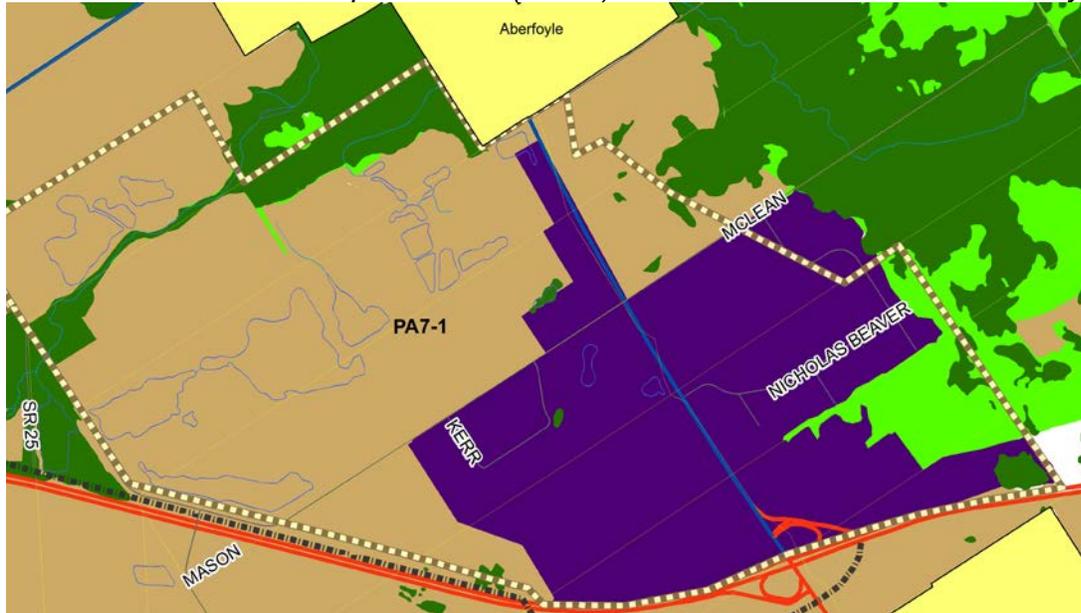
The vacant developable area is approximately 70 acres. None of the lands have been developed for employment uses. In addition to rezoning from Agriculture, development of the lands south of Concession 4 will require a subdivision or condominium plan to establish an internal road and lot pattern suitable for industrial/commercial development. These lands are not expected to be available in the short term. This is consistent with the Puslinch Industrial Policy (Section 9.8.3 in the County Official Plan) which states that “The sequence of development shall be further controlled so that the eastern side of the Hanlon develops first...The area to the west of the Hanlon Expressway will only be considered should no other suitable site be available.”



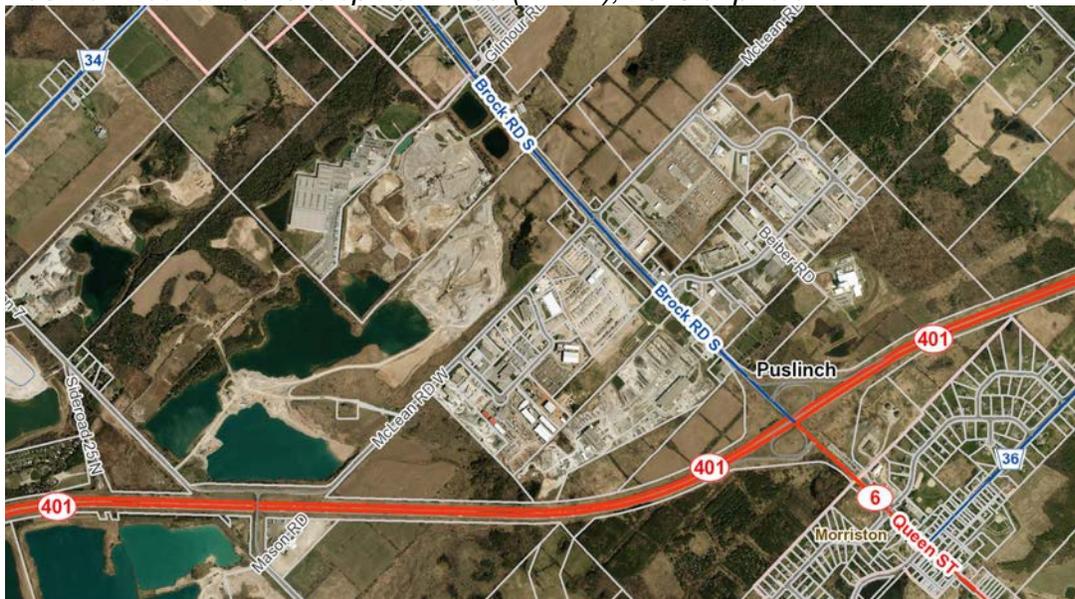
Puslinch Economic Development Area (PA7-1)

As recommended in the *Puslinch Economic Development Strategy (1991)*, this area was established through an Amendment to the Puslinch Official Plan (No. 7) in 1992. The area was carried forward in the County Official Plan as local policy area PA7-1 (the area bounded by the yellow-green dashed line below). The PA7-1 area is an overlay that encompasses the Brock Road/McLean Road Rural Industrial lands discussed above, and Secondary Agricultural Area.

Puslinch Economic Development Area (PA7-1) on Puslinch Schedule of the County Official Plan



Puslinch Economic Development Area (PA7-1), 2010 airphoto



The Secondary Agricultural portion of the PA7-1 area is mostly active gravel pits and related processing uses, and includes the Nestle water bottling facility. Roughly half of the extraction area will consist of ponds and steep slopes, and the area is crossed by Mill Creek.

The local policy allows for industrial, commercial, institutional, recreation or natural areas as after-uses when the extractive or aggregate-related activities have ceased, subject to a secondary concept plan prepared by the proponents.

This policy area is unique: due to uncertain timing of rehabilitation and the wide range of after-uses, it cannot be included in land inventories; and, there are lands outside of the extraction area that can be rezoned without an Official Plan Amendment (Maple Leaf Foods was one example). As a result, the area is not included in the employment land inventory, but there are approximately 30 acres outside the extractive area that could accommodate employment growth if they are rezoned.

Secondary Agricultural Area

Although not normally thought of as employment lands, the Secondary Agricultural Area designation allows small-scale industrial, commercial and institutional uses. The Secondary Agricultural Area forms the majority of the rural land in the Township and is expected to continue to make modest contributions to employment growth.

Summary

Although the surplus of designated employment lands in the County poses an obstacle to designating additional employment land, Puslinch Township does have four existing areas that can accommodate employment growth, at varying extents and timeframes, summarized below:

- The Brock Road/Mclean Road area is expected to be fully built out in the short term.
- Development of the Hanlon Expressway/Maltby Road area has been limited to date. The lands on the east require rezoning to permit industrial or commercial uses (a rezoning application in this area is currently being processed). In addition to rezoning, the lands on the west will need a combination of internal road, land assembly, and lot creation. The future interchange on Highway 6 will affect the configuration of future development.
- Although the timing, configuration and nature of the potential after-uses in the 'Puslinch Economic Development Area' are unclear at this time, this area may accommodate employment growth in the future.
- The Secondary Agricultural Area will continue to provide jobs related to small scale uses.

Recommendations

It is recommended:

That Council receive the Planning Report prepared by the County of Wellington Planning and Development Department regarding the supply of employment lands;

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED,



Mark Paoli, M.Sc., MCIP, RPP
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