

Information guide: Pickering Lands future uses considerations

This guide includes information that will help you provide feedback about the future uses of the Pickering Lands.

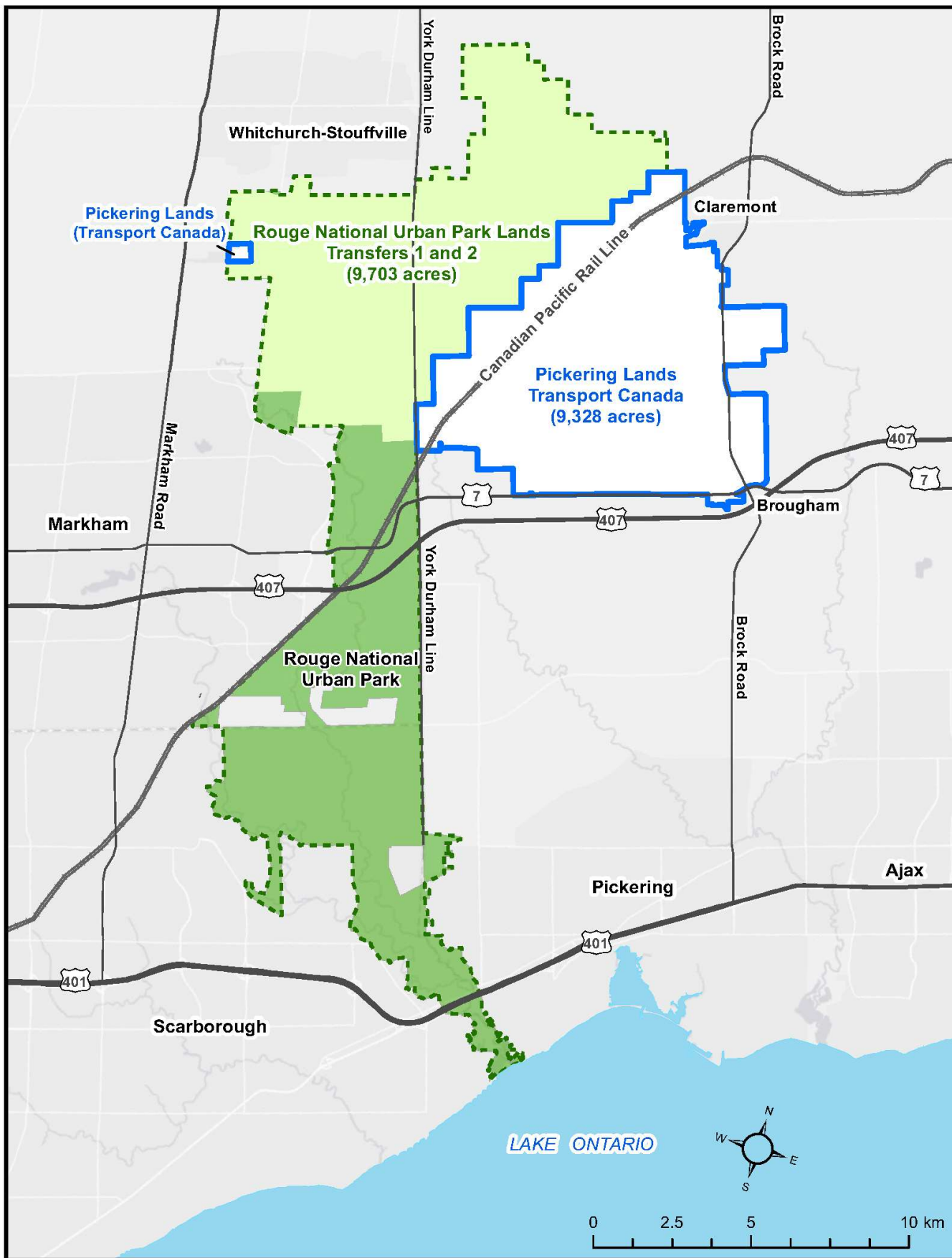
Where are the Pickering Lands?

The Pickering Lands site (Figure 1) is a 9,300 acres parcel of land administered by Transport Canada. The lands are located in the city of Pickering, Ontario, within the Regional Municipality of Durham.

The Pickering Lands are also located within the Duffins Creek Watershed, north of Highway 7 with boundaries that extend west to the York-Durham Line, north to Ninth Concession Road, and east to Brock Road.

The lands administered by Transport Canada reside within the traditional and treaty lands of the Williams Treaties signatories, and adjacent to lands subject to the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation's outstanding claim for unextinguished title to the Rouge River Valley Tract. The lands have been home to many First Nations including the Anishinaabe, Haudenosaunee and Wendat Peoples.

Figure 1 – Map of the Pickering Lands



▼ Text description of Figure 1

The map highlights the location of the Pickering Lands that is owned and managed by Transport Canada. It is 9,328 acres in size.

- To the northwest of the Pickering Lands are the Rouge National Urban Park lands owned and managed by the Parks Canada Agency. It is 9,703 acres in size.
- To the south of the Rouge National Urban Park Lands is the original Rouge Park. The Park extends down to Lake Ontario.
- The map includes major or key roadways and highways, the Canadian Pacific Railway line and Lake Ontario.
- The Pickering Lands is bordered by Highway 7 to the south with some land extending farther south in the Village of Brougham. Brock Road is the general easterly boundary with some land extensions farther east. The Rouge National Urban Park lands to the north and west. The Canadian Pacific Railway line runs diagonally through the Pickering Lands from its northern border to the eastern border.

Considerations for the Future Uses of the Pickering Lands

Transport Canada, as the custodian of the Pickering Lands, is working closely with Parks Canada, Public Services and Procurement Canada, Canada Lands Company, and Housing, Infrastructure and Communities Canada to explore future uses of the lands, including conservation, residential and commercial development and any potential land requirements for federal projects or initiatives that may be identified.

The west, north and east edges of the lands are in the Ontario Greenbelt and the Oak Ridges Moraine, with designations to protect the natural environment. Most of these lands contain Class 1 agricultural soils, and approximately 87% of the lands are currently leased for farming. Other parts of these lands are used for residential and commercial purposes.

The lands also feature many watercourses in the Duffins Creek watershed, which is an important source of freshwater and wildlife habitat. The cultural and built heritage assets on the lands, include an estimated 70 registered archaeological sites and a number of recognized heritage buildings and historic farmsteads.

In this context, the Government of Canada is considering the following:

Potential Expansion of Rouge National Urban Park

The Parks Canada Agency's mandate is to "protect and present nationally significant examples of Canada's natural and cultural heritage." In addition to this, the *Rouge National Urban Park Act* specifically tasks Rouge National Urban Park to "encourage sustainable farming practices to support the preservation of agricultural lands in the park and celebrate the agricultural heritage of the region." "This mandate and legislation – directing Parks Canada to protect nationally significant examples of Canada's natural, cultural and agricultural heritage through its administration of Rouge National Urban Park – provide a framework through which lands for possible transfer to Parks Canada can be considered.

Alto High Speed Rail Canada

Alto is a federal Crown corporation leading the development of the Toronto–Québec City High Speed Rail Network. The project will deliver a highspeed rail system with trains reaching 300 km/h or more across nearly

1,000 km of dedicated track. Once in service, Alto will significantly reduce travel times between major urban centres, provide reliable and frequent service, support economic growth, and help reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The Network will connect Toronto, Peterborough, Ottawa, Montréal, Laval, Trois-Rivières and Québec City.

Alto is undertaking a multiphase public engagement process to help refine the project and ensure it reflects the priorities of communities along the corridor. This includes in person open houses, virtual information sessions, an online consultation platform, and regular collaboration with Indigenous communities as part of Alto's constitutional duty to consult and its commitment to reconciliation. Alto may explore opportunities for environmental restoration and conservation and aims to establish avenues for substantive Indigenous participation within the project. The first round of public consultations will take place from January to March 2026, with a second round planned for late 2026 or early 2027.

Alto is currently studying a corridor that is on average 10 km wide as an early planning tool. This broad study area allows Alto to explore different alignment elements, conduct environmental and technical studies, and gather public input to help refine the corridor. Ultimately, a highspeed rail network requires a much smaller right-of-way—averaging about 60 metres—to support safe operations and maintenance.

Several factors guide the refinement of the corridor currently under study. In Ontario, the corridor area under study includes portions of the Transport Canada administered Pickering Lands, however, it is too early to present route options as consultations, field studies and detailed designs have not yet been completed. As this work progresses, Transport Canada will need

to consider Alto's project requirements as its corridor is refined following Alto's feedback gathered during consultations and the completion of the studies and engineering work.

The feedback gathered from the entire public engagement process will help inform decisions pertaining to the project's development, including the eventual route of the Network.

Further details about upcoming open house sessions can be found at: altotrain.ca/en/public-consultation/open-house.

Further information about the Toronto-Quebec City corridor under study, including a map, can be found at <https://en.consultation.altotrain.ca/reinventing-travel-between-toronto-and-quebec-city>.

Members of the public seeking more information are encouraged to contact Alto at questions@altotrain.ca. For general information, they can visit altotrain.ca.

Residential, commercial and other development opportunities

The Government of Canada is focused on building a stronger, more competitive and prosperous economy, while bringing down costs to make life more affordable.

Housing is a cornerstone of Canada's economic prosperity and social cohesion. Leveraging federal land in support of this objective is a key priority of the Government of Canada. In this context, the Pickering Lands are located in close proximity to major highways, neighbouring communities, and the Greater Toronto Area.

Housing, Infrastructure and Communities Canada, is responsible for building sustainable, climate resilient and inclusive communities for Canadians by providing funding and advice for locally designed and delivered housing and homelessness initiatives as well as new and upgraded infrastructure. As part of its mandate, Housing, Infrastructure, and Communities Canada also addresses challenges Canadians face every day, including access to safe and affordable housing, and inclusive and cultural recreational community spaces.

As the Government of Canada's designated developer, Canada Lands Company is responsible for reintegrating former Government of Canada lands into local communities in a way that maximizes both social and economic value. By leveraging stakeholder and community consultations and its expertise in real estate development and community building, Canada Lands Company ensures that Government of Canada assets contribute to the broader goals of housing supply, economic growth, and social inclusion. Given this expertise and mandate, Canada Lands Company is playing an active role in assessing potential future uses of the Pickering Lands.

Planning and Development in Pickering, Ontario

The Government of Canada has regard for, and will consider where possible, alignment with Provincial and Municipal planning and development with respect to the City of Pickering and the surrounding municipalities and their alignment with potential land use options for the Pickering Lands.

This includes but is not limited to:

- Ontario Provincial Planning Statement, 2024
- Ontario Minister's Zoning Orders
- Durham Region Official Plan
- City of Pickering Official Plan
- City of Pickering Innovation Corridor Prestige Employment Lands
- Planned infrastructure improvements such as roads, rail and transit
- Any other Provincial or Municipal guidelines that are deemed to apply to a particular development proposal

Indigenous Reconciliation

Under the Principles Respecting the Government of Canada's Relationship with Indigenous Peoples, Canada has committed to advancing reconciliation through a renewed relationship grounded in the recognition of rights, respect, cooperation, and partnership as the foundation for transformative change. Canada is also committed to open and constructive relationships with Indigenous Peoples that are grounded in the principles of early and meaningful engagement, fulfilling the Crown's duty to consult and accommodate, and advancing priorities on reconciliation and nation-to-nation relationships.

The Government of Canada will continue to consult First Nations in order to inform land use options.

Conclusion

We will review the feedback, comments and responses received through the online questionnaire, through email or written submissions, received during the public consultation sessions, as well as the input from sector

and subject matter experts and will consider it in the context of decisions for the future uses of the Pickering Lands.

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