



**Discussion on the Huronia Regional Campus'  
Unused Land**

**Kitchen Table Conversation – PARTICIPANT’S GUIDE**

**March 2017**



# About the Huronia Regional Campus Discussion

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The Huronia Regional Campus comprises about 260 acres of government-owned and -managed land at the north of Lake Simcoe. It was the site of the Huronia Regional Centre from 1876 until it was closed in 2009. Since then, the land has been used for government programs and services that include:

- Ontario Provincial Police trainee residences and training facilities;
- a courthouse; and
- a public health lab

While these programs and services will continue on the site, a portion of the Huronia Regional Campus has been identified as no longer needed by the Government of Ontario. The Province is seeking feedback on what should be done with the approximately 175 acres of currently unused land.

## **Did You Know: How Ontario Sells Its Land**

Lands that are not required by the Province are circulated to other levels of government, school boards, and eligible not-for-profit corporations prior to disposition, to see whether there is an interest in acquiring the lands directly. If there is no broader public interest for the identified surplus lands, the surplus property could be sold on the open market.

# About this Kitchen Table Conversation Guide

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This **Kitchen Table Conversation – Participant’s Guide** has been designed to help you get the conversation going. It is one component of Infrastructure Ontario’s consultations on the future of the Huronia Regional Campus’ unused lands. With this guide you can hold informal conversations wherever is most convenient for you – at the family dinner table, at the coffee shop with colleagues, at a neighbourhood meeting or at another community gathering. It includes background information and discussion questions to spark conversation and find out what is most important to community members regarding the future of the HRC’s unused lands. It also includes informational resources that will help everyone have a well-informed conversation.

## **Privacy and Personal Information**

Your privacy is important to us. Do not include personal information (such as your address) in your written responses or any information that identifies a friend, family member or other person.

If you choose to provide personal information through this guidebook, the information will be handled according to our privacy statement:

<https://www.ontario.ca/page/privacy-statement>.

# History of the Huronia Regional Centre

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*This section provides a brief history of the Huronia Regional Centre. For more information visit the Ministry of Community and Social Services webpage at [www.mcsc.gov.on.ca/en/mcsc/programs/developmental/HRC\\_history.aspx](http://www.mcsc.gov.on.ca/en/mcsc/programs/developmental/HRC_history.aspx).*

The original building that grew to become the Huronia Regional Centre was built on 13 acres of what is now Orillia's Couchiching Beach Park opened in 1861 as one of the first provincial institutions to house people with a developmental disability — at that time known as the Convalescent Lunatic Asylum.

That institution closed in 1870 and re-opened six years later this time known as the Hospital for Idiots and Imbeciles.

## **The First Institution**

In 1877, under the direction of newly appointed Dr. Alexander Beaton, the facility opened a school for people with a developmental disability, a revolutionary concept at the time.

In 1885, Dr. Beaton spearheaded the expansion of the institution to a 151-acre site on the shores of Lake Simcoe. The site became self-contained with the addition of a water tower, boiler house and kitchen, and a small plant that created gas to light the buildings. What is now the Administration Building was added in 1891.

Dr. Beaton believed in the rights of people with a developmental disability and that included a name change to the Hospital for the Feebleminded.

## **Rapid Growth**

The institution grew rapidly from the turn of the century to 1926.

More land was purchased and several new buildings were added. The farm on the northwest side of the property included barns for a variety of animals.

During this time the facility was renamed The Ontario Hospital. A new director in 1927 expanded the facility's training programs and special education classes for residents. And from 1928 to 1945, the facility included a training school for nurses.

During the 1930s, the facility was again renamed, as the Ontario Hospital School, a name it kept for nearly 40 years.

## **Institutionalized Care**

In 1955, the infirmary was expanded and a new steam plant was constructed.

By 1968, the population had risen to nearly 3,000 residents. Through this period, provincial leaders and advocates in the community encouraged acceptance of people with developmental disabilities within the community and worked to reduce the population in provincial facilities as well as increase community supports. Resident numbers began to decline while staff numbers were rising, providing better supervision and quality of care.

### **The Final Years**

The final name change came in 1974 when the Huronia Regional Centre came under the direction of the Ministry of Community and Social Services. Some land was sold to Georgian College and the City of Orillia, and some of the oldest buildings were demolished.

On March 31, 2009, the government officially closed Huronia Regional Centre, the last remaining institution, keeping a promise to end the era of institutionalization for people with a developmental disability and welcoming former residents into communities throughout Ontario. Today, the site is managed on the government's behalf by Infrastructure Ontario.

### **Settlement Agreement and Apology**

In fall 2013, the Ontario government reached a settlement with former residents. The \$35 million settlement included provisions for a formal apology and settlement of claims, as well as efforts to honour the legacy of the Huronia Regional Centre. As Premier Kathleen Wynne said in her official apology to former residents of regional centres for people with developmental disabilities, "We will protect the memory of all those who have suffered, help tell their stories and ensure that the lessons of this time are not lost."

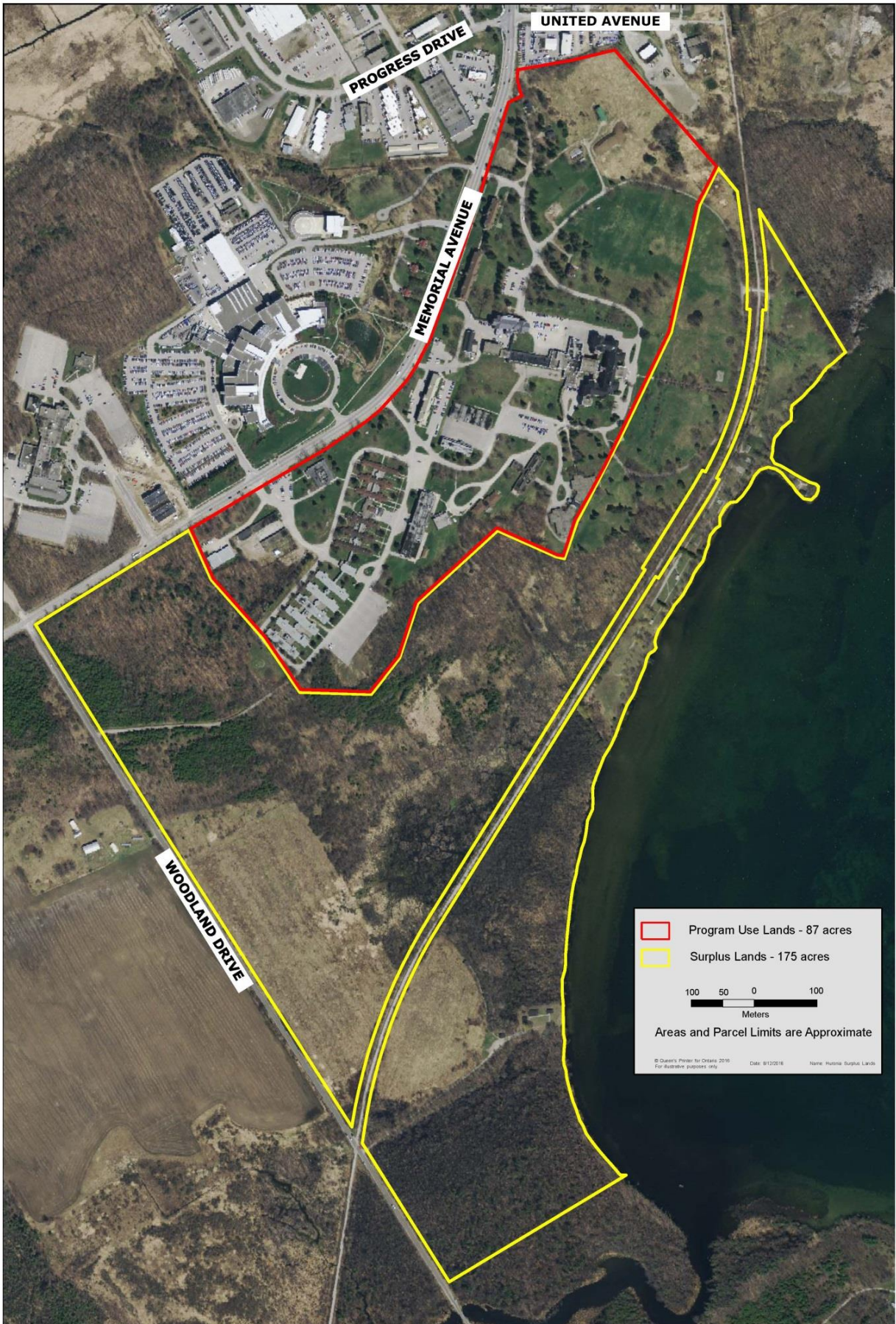
## Part 1: Taking a Closer Look at the HRC Lands

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The map on the following page provides an aerial view of the complete Huronia Regional Campus lands. It shows the boundaries of two distinct areas:

1. The unused government land (yellow outline): 175 acres of natural areas and waterfront roughly bounded by United Drive to the north, about 1.75 km of waterfront to the east, Woodland Drive to the south and Memorial Drive and the built-up government-used portion to the west.
2. The government-used land (red outline): 87 acres of built-up property roughly bounded by United Drive to the north, the unused government land to the east and south and Memorial Drive to the west.









4. What are the key issues facing the Huronia Regional Campus?

5. Is there anything else you'd like to share with us regarding your thoughts on the Huronia Regional Campus?

# Submitting Your Feedback & Next Steps

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## How to Submit Your Feedback

You may submit your written feedback by mail, email or fax before the deadline of **April 28, 2017**, to:

Lura Consulting  
505 Consumers Road, Suite 1005  
Toronto, ON M2J 4V8  
Fax: 416-536-3453  
Email: [HuroniaCampusUpdates@infrastructureontario.ca](mailto:HuroniaCampusUpdates@infrastructureontario.ca)

Alternatively, if you participated in a facilitated group conversation, you may give your written comments to your facilitator to be submitted as one package.

## Next Steps

The Government of Ontario will report back on what we heard from you in Spring 2017. Check the website ([www.Ontario.ca/HuroniaConsultation](http://www.Ontario.ca/HuroniaConsultation)) for updates and the summary of input, and for other news related to the Huronia Regional Campus.

Thank you for your input!