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CENTRAL ALBERTA
ECONOMIC PARTNERSHIP
Thriving Business...Vibrant Communities

SHOVEL READY VACANT INDUSTRIAL LAND INVENTORY

SUPPORT

Community and Regional
Economic Support Program

(CARES)



This project was made available through Community & Regional Economic Support (CARES) funding, in partnership with the Central Alberta Economic Partnership (CAEP).



The Central Alberta Economic Partnership (CAEP) Region is made up of 31 municipalities and one First Nations community with a population of just over 300,000. It encompasses 40,000 square kilometers of land between Calgary and Edmonton, from the eastern slopes of the Rocky Mountains in the west to the Canadian Badlands in the East. With a diverse economy comprised of industries ranging from agriculture, petrochemicals, and manufacturing, to professional and technical services and tourism, the region is primed for investment opportunities.

CAEP hired McSweeney and Associates to work with the CAEP members to compile the first ever 'shovel-ready' industrial land inventory. The information was gathered from staff responsible for economic development in each of the communities, over the month of September 2020. There was a very good response rate, with feedback from 30 of the 32 communities.¹



¹ Only the Town of Eckville and the Village of Big Valley did not respond, but as they are very small communities the assumption that is being taken is that they do not have any shovel ready industrial lands.

What is Shovel-ready Land and Why it is Important

Shovel-ready land is a vital component of a community's investment readiness efforts as investors looking to relocate, expand or start a new business, will need a location to house their business. This starts with land. If a community has shovel-ready land, it will make the community more attractive to an investor as it speeds up the development process and ultimately lowers an investor's level of risk, as all land-use requirements are already in place. If on the other hand, a community has no shovel-ready land it is more difficult to attract investment (businesses) to the community.

Shovel-ready industrial land is generally defined as follows:

#1 The site is available.

- Must be truly for sale, preferably with established terms and conditions in place.

#2 The site is fully serviced.

- In an ideal situation, all of the utilities (i.e. water, sewer, electric, natural gas, telecommunications, etc.) are already at the site and the systems have adequate capacities to meet potential demand;
- Or as an alternative, detailed plans developed with the service providers to extend and/or upgrade utilities including rights-of-way to be obtained before utilities can be extended.

#3 The site is developable.

- Should have all the necessary due diligence completed (i.e. environmental assessments, etc.);
- Should be free of easements;
- Industrial zoning, including permitted uses, in place;
- All studies and land development permits have been approved and in place with the only outstanding approvals for any on-site land modifications and building permits.

An Overview of the Shovel Ready' Vacant Land Inventory in CAEP

According to the 'Shovel Ready' Vacant Land Inventory and the responses provided by CAEP members, sixteen CAEP communities have 'shovel ready' lands available and 15 communities do not have any 'shovel ready' land. Although some of the information is not completely available for all of these properties, with the direction of CAEP staff, a decision was made to keep these lands in the inventory and highlight the missing elements.

Overall, land costs in CAEP range from \$5,000 per acre in the Town of Bowden to a property listed for \$400,000 per acre in the Town of Blackfalds.

Lands are generally zoned Light Industrial, Heavy Industrial, Industrial, Business Industrial, with one community having Hamlet Industrial.

There is approximately 1256.65 acres of 'Industrial' land within the CAEP communities deemed 'shovel ready'.

CAEP Member	Vacant Industrial Shovel Ready Lands	Land available (acres)
Lacombe (County)	44	143.74
Red Deer (City)	19	59.44
Red Deer (County)	17	38.15
Thorsby (Town)	16	28.43
Blackfalds (Town)	10	74.99
Caroline (Village)	10	31.24
Olds (Town)	8	38.17
Bowden (Town)	4	336.94
Clearwater (County)	4	14.69
Trochu (Town)	4	1.5
JEDI (Millet and Wetaskiwin County)	3	441.52
Sylvan Lake (Town)	2	14.4
Beiseker (Village)	1	3.68
Innisfail (Town)	1	1.56
Sundre (Town)	1	1.2
Wetaskiwin (City)	1	27
Bentley (Town)	0	0
Big Valley (Village)	0	0
Carstairs (Town)	0	0
Clive (Village)	0	0
Cremona (Village)	0	0
Delburne (Village)	0	0
Didsbury (Town)	0	0
Donalda (Village)	0	0
Eckville (Town)	0	0
Halkirk (Village)	0	0
Kneehill (County)	0	0
Montana First Nations	0	0
Penhold (Town)	0	0
Rocky Mountain House (Town)	0	0
Three Hills (Town)	0	0
TOTAL	145	1256.65

A total of 145 properties have been identified as 'shovel ready' within the CAEP region. Lacombe County, Red Deer County, City of Red Deer, Town of Thorsby, Town of Blackfalds, Town of Caroline, JEDI (Town of Millet and County of Wetaskiwin), Clearwater County and City of Wetaskiwin have the majority of the 'shovel-ready' lands and those lands are mostly within their industrial parks. The following information provides a description of the lands available in each of the Industrial Parks by community:

Lacombe County

- The 'shovel ready' properties in Lacombe County are located in the Aspelund Industrial Park, Iron Rail Industrial Park, Burbank Industrial Park, and the Hamlet of Mirror Industrial Park.
 - The Aspelund Industrial Park is located on the west side of the QEII Highway at the Aspelund Road interchange, on both the north and south side of Aspelund Road. This industrial park is an extension of the Blackfalds industrial area on the east side of the QEII. MDP designations in the Aspelund Industrial Park are Business Industrial and prices range from \$223,000 to \$303,000 per acre. The 13 properties range from 5 to 17 acres parcels, that are fully serviced with natural gas, electricity, water, sewer and fibre.
 - The Iron Rail Industrial Park is located off Highway 12 (50th Avenue) in the urban centre of Lacombe. This agro-industrial park offers natural gas, electricity and wireless internet. These lots allow developers to choose the water and wastewater that best suits their needs. The lands are designated Business Industrial in the MDP. There are 9 properties that range from 4 to 8 acre parcels, and are priced from \$120,000 to \$125,000 per acre. This industrial park has rail access.
 - There are three properties located in the Burbank Industrial Park ranging in size from 2 to 9 acres. Designated Business Industrial, these properties are serviced with natural gas, electricity and wireless internet. Located on the north and south side of Highway 597 at Highway Street, south of Blackfalds, the land prices range from \$49,000 to \$198,000 per acre. These lots allow developers to choose the water and wastewater that best suits their needs.
 - The Industrial Park in the Hamlet of Mirror is designated Hamlet Industrial in the MDP. Located at Highway 50 and Highway 27, the 17 properties range in price from \$9,000 to \$135,000 and are serviced with electricity, natural gas and 25/5 MB for connectivity. Water and sewer services are available but the individual land developer/investor would be responsible for extending services to the property.

City of Red Deer

- The 'shovel ready' properties in the City of Red Deer are located in the Queens Business Park, Chiles Industrial Park and the Burnt Lake Industrial Park.
 - The Queen's Business Park, located at 75 Avenue and Queens Drive, has 15 properties for sale. Customizable lots range from 1.71 to 3.44 acres in size. They are fully serviced with natural gas, electricity, municipal water and sewer as well as internet access. Pricing is available through the Red Deer Economic Development Office.
 - Chiles Industrial Park has one 2.37 acre property available for \$599,000 (\$252,742 per acre). Designated Industrial District in their MDP, the property is serviced with natural gas and electricity.
 - Burnt Lake Industrial Park located at QEII and Highway 11, has 3 properties available ranging from \$233,00 to \$330,00 per acre. With excellent highway

exposure these properties are designated Business Service Industrial, AD Industrial and Light Industrial.

Red Deer County

- Red Deer County has properties located in the McKenzie Business Park, Energy Business Park, Petrolia Industrial Park and Clearview Industrial Park.
 - The McKenzie Business Park is located south of the City of Red Deer at 40 Avenue and McKenzie Road, a four minute drive east of the QEII. There are 14 properties for sale ranging in price from \$202,000 to \$350,000 per acre and range in size from 1.5 acres to 3.2 acres. These properties are designated, MI - Medium Industrial and are fully serviced with natural gas, electricity, water, sewer, and internet.
 - Energy Business Park and Petrolia Business Park both have one fully serviced property and are designated Light Industrial.
 - The Clearview Industrial Park, located south of the City of Red Deer, has one 3.99 acre property priced at \$289,275 per acre. It is fully serviced and is designated MI - Medium Industrial.

Town of Thorsby

- Town of Thorsby has properties located in the Thorsby Industrial Park.
 - The Thorsby Industrial Park is located along Highway 39. Sixteen properties are available ranging in size from .99 acres to 2.55 acres. They are all designated M-Industrial and have electricity and municipal water and fibre up to the Industrial Park entrance. Prices range from \$51,00 to \$77,200 per acre.

Town of Blackfalds

- Blackfalds has properties in the Blackfalds Industrial Way.
 - Four properties are located in Blackfalds Industrial Way at the north of Highway 597 and Highway Street. Ranging in size from 2.03 acres to 13.5 acres and are \$275,000 per acre. Natural gas, electricity, water and sewer are available up to the property line.
 - The other 6 properties are located throughout the town.

Village of Caroline

- Accessing Highway 22, Caroline has 10 'shovel ready' vacant industrial properties in their industrial park on 45 Street. All the properties are approximately 3 acres in size and all are designated Industrial. Prices range from \$70,767 per acre to \$80,139 per acre and have natural gas and electricity. Water and sewer is required to be installed by the investor/developer.

Town of Olds

- Olds has properties in the Southeast Industrial Area - Olds Concrete. These four properties are located in the Southeast Industrial Area - Olds Concrete. Ranging in size from 2.57 to 3.86 acres, the properties are priced at \$130,000 per acre. They are

designated Industrial and are serviced with natural gas. Electricity, water, and sewer will be connected in 2021.

JEDI (Town of Millet and County of Wetaskiwin)

- The Millet Industrial Park, located in the Town of Millet, has close to 300 acres of zoned lands for light industrial. Located on Secondary Highway 616 it is easy access to QEII. Serviced with natural gas, electricity and water, the properties are \$285,000 per acre and up.
- The 141 acre Kicking Horse Industrial Park, in the County of Wetaskiwin, has 47 lots ranging from 1 acre up to 12 acres, priced at \$250,000 per acre. Located at QEII and Highway 616, these properties are partially serviced and zoned Highway Commercial and Industrial.

City of Wetaskiwin

- There are 27 acres of fully serviced lands located in the Wetaskiwin South East Industrial Park priced at \$265,000 per acre and designated either Light or Heavy Industrial.

Clearwater County

- Three properties are located in the Nordegg Industrial Close. All three properties are approximately four acres, priced around the \$30,000 per acre and designated Light Industrial.

Town of Bowden

- The Town of Bowden has 2 pieces of property that have 100 and 145 acres respectively. These properties are fully serviced with natural gas, electricity, municipal water and sewer and are priced at \$10,000 per acre.
- The remaining property has 60 acres of vacant land, and is valued at \$5,000 per acre.

Towns of Trochu, Sylvan Lake, Innisfail, Sundre and the Village of Beiseker

The remaining five communities make up only 9 properties covering a total of 22.34 acres and ranging in size from 1.5 acres to 14.4 acres. The prices range from \$50,000 per acre in Trochu to the \$312,500 per acre in Sundre.

Recommendations for Improving the CAEP 'Shovel Ready' Vacant Land Inventory

There are varying degrees of understanding with regards to vacant industrial lands within the economic development offices of the CAEP member communities. Some staff appear to be very knowledgeable, but others lacked a clear understanding of their industrial land inventory and appeared less prepared to respond to investment enquiries. It is understandable that the level of understanding and preparedness does differ among CAEP member communities, and it is realized that all of the communities have different capacities and resources (human and financial) to undertake economic development activities, including maintaining industrial land inventories.

There are a number of recommendations that the members could consider, if they aren't already, that would make them more investor friendly from a 'shovel-ready land' perspective:

- **Make it easy for investors**
 - Have a better understanding of the nuances of industrial lands in many of the communities.
 - Have solid up-to-date information on hand that can be provided to the investors – lowers the risk for the investors and the community looks like they are professional and where someone may want to invest.
 - Be ready to answer investment enquiries within 24 hours. If the information is not available there needs to be a process in place to gather the information quickly and efficiently.

- **Have a current and detailed Industrial Land Inventory available.**
 - Ensure that the inventory is always current and has detailed information on each of the properties that are available for sale. And as one step further, have a list of industrial buildings for sale and/or lease.

- **Ensure that the land is priced**
 - Be up front and list the price. 'Price negotiable', 'market price' or need to 'call for the price' are not acceptable.

- **Regional cooperation and consistency**
 - Have more consistency across the municipalities as to the information that they collect in order for CAEP and its partner communities to better understand what land investment opportunities are available in the region and present these opportunities in a cohesive manner.
 - Understand that regional investment is key and that all members should be working together to make sure that the investment stays in the CAEP region.