Report to Infrastructure and Corporate Services Committee

To: **Chair and Members**
Infrastructure and Corporate Services Committee

From: **Anna Lisa Barbon, Deputy City Manager, Finance Supports**

Cheryl Smith, Deputy City Manager, Neighbourhood and Community-Wide Services

Subject: **London Emergency Services Campus**

Date: **July 16, 2025**

Recommendation

That, on the recommendation of the Deputy City Managers, Finance Supports and Neighbourhood and Community-Wide Services, with the concurrence of the Deputy City Managers, Environment and Infrastructure and Housing and Community Growth, on the advice of the Director, Realty Services, and on the opinion of the Director, Planning and Development, with respect to the future site of the proposed London Emergency Services Campus, the following actions **BE TAKEN**:

a) The proposed Emergency Services Campus be located on city owned land at 3243 Manning Drive.

It being noted that the funding for this facility is included in the capital plan in the adopted 2024-2027 Multi-Year Budget.

Executive Summary

The purpose of this report is to seek direction from Municipal Council for the city owned lands located at 3243 Manning Drive to be considered for the London Emergency Services Campus.

London is one of Canada's fastest-growing cities, and with this growth comes increased demand for public safety services. The new London Emergency Services Campus will ensure we are ready to meet those needs.

The City of London, the London Fire Department (LFD) and the London Police Service (LPS) are collaborating on the development of the new London Emergency Services Campus. The future campus will support the efficient delivery of emergency management and public safety services as the city grows.

A series of social, demographic, and operational trends have driven new demands for a shared campus facility that supports both emergency management protection services and the training of firefighters and police officers.

There is a demonstrated need for a broader range of training programming, more complex/advanced training approaches, and more realistic training environments that can adequately prepare protective services personnel for the events they will face in the field. Both the London Police Service and the London Fire Department's current facilities are inadequate to support day-to-day training operations required for our growing city.

This new campus will be designed to meet current operational needs and expand training accreditation requirements, address training safety concerns, prepare for future threats, and address increasing community demands for public safety and protective services.

A third-party consultant was contracted to provide public safety expertise and create a feasibility study complete with blocking plans, preliminary project construction budgets, and

parameters to assist with site selection. This exciting and complex project will be carried out in multiple phases and is expected to span several years.

A comprehensive search has been undertaken for a site that could accommodate the proposed public service use and training facility. Through a filtering process and site analysis, it was determined that there are no reasonable locations within the City of London's Urban Growth Boundary that could accommodate the proposed Emergency Services Campus. As such, it was necessary to evaluate lands outside of the Urban Growth Boundary (UGB) and within the agricultural area for alternative locations to situate the campus.

The recommended preferred site is located at 3243 Manning Drive. The site is owned by the City of London and the title to the lands would remain with the City.

Linkage to the Corporate Strategic Plan

The London Emergency Services Campus report is aligned with the following strategic areas of focus, outcomes and expected results from the City of London Strategic Plan 2023-2027:

Wellbeing and Safety: London has safe, vibrant, and healthy neighbourhoods and communities.

- Londoners feel safe across the city, in the core, and in their neighbourhoods and communities.
- Improved emergency services response time and reporting.

Climate Action and Sustainable Growth: London's infrastructure and systems are built, maintained, and operated to meet the long-term needs of the community.

- Infrastructure is built, maintained, and secured to support future growth and protect the environment.

Well-Run City: Londoners experience good stewardship, exceptional and valued service.

- London's finances are maintained in a transparent, sustainable, and well-planned manner, incorporating intergenerational equity, affordability, and environmental, social, and governance considerations.

Climate Emergency

On April 23, 2019, Council declared a Climate Emergency. A Climate Emergency Action Plan has been developed that provides a city-wide approach to addressing three main goals of mitigation, adaptation, and equity. The Climate Emergency Action Plan identifies opportunities to build, maintain and operate assets with consideration for energy efficiency, environmental sustainability and climate resilience.

Analysis

1.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

1.1 Previous Reports Related to this Matter

- March 1, 2024, Business Case #P-57 – London Police Service Facilities Masterplan and Protective Services Training Campus

2.0 DISCUSSION AND CONSIDERATIONS

2.1 Why We Need a New Emergency Services Campus

The City of London, the London Fire Department (LFD) and the London Police Service (LPS) are collaborating for the development of a new Emergency Services Campus. This new campus will support the delivery of modern, integrated emergency services—including

training, communications, and education—for the benefit of residents across London and the broader region.

A series of social, demographic and operational trends have driven new demands for training firefighters and police officers. There is a demonstrated need for a broader range of training programming, more complex/advanced training approaches and more realistic training environments that can adequately prepare protective services personnel for the events they will face in the field.

The current training facilities available to the LFD and the LPS are outdated, undersized, deteriorating, often unavailable, and unable to meet the critical needs of today and future training standards.

To evaluate and address this need further, the City of London, the LFD and the LPS hired an expert facilities consultant in 2023 to prepare a Feasibility Study which reviewed:

- The current training environment compared to modern standards;
- Optimal site needs for a new facility;
- Master planning options;
- Blocking plans and room descriptions; and,
- Probable project costs.

The Feasibility Study recommended a new training campus that will include the following training resources: Indoor Training Centre, Outdoor Training Centre and Ancillary uses. See Appendix A – Development Phasing, for a more detailed list of the potential resources to be phased in over the next few years.

The City of London adopted 2024-2027 Multi-Year Budget included Business Case #P-57 - London Police Service Facilities Masterplan and Protective Services Training Campus.

2.2 Site Requirements

The Feasibility Study considered several design options for the emergency services campus. It is also noteworthy that the site is planned to allow an area suitable to accommodate a fire station, should it be required to serve the surrounding area in the mid to long-term future.

The Feasibility Study identified a minimum land area requirement of 20 ha (50 acres) to accommodate the campus. As noted, this is a minimum site area, and it would be prudent to select a site with additional land area to accommodate setbacks, landscaped berms and vegetative features as described in the proposed mitigative measures outlined later in this report. This site allows for the securing of additional land area.

Some key site requirements for the training campus that will affect site selection include:

- Rectangular parcel shape.
- Flat topography.
- Not located within a floodplain or ecological zone.
- Two vehicle access points.
- Access to utilities and services – water servicing, two points of power, data and telecommunications.
- The site should be located to avoid conflicts created by regular noise and smoke emissions.

These site requirements factor into the screening that was performed to determine an appropriate location for the campus.

2.3 Identifying A Location

The Feasibility Study identified the facilities that would be required within a new emergency services campus. The campus would require "*state of the art classrooms but also prioritize experiential learning focusing on scenario-based training."* The Study also identified the need for approximately 20 ha (~50 acres) of land to accommodate the proposed campus.

This prompted the City of London and protective services representatives to begin a search process for candidate sites. A rigorous approach was taken to find an adequate site within the City of London's Urban Growth Boundary, based on a series of important site and locational criteria.

2.3.1 Availability and Cost of Land

The Feasibility Study identified the potential for this facility to be located within the Urban Growth Boundary (UGB). Initial discussions with Civic Administration from Housing and Community Growth also identified a preference for a site within, or in close proximity to the UGB. However, 20-hectare (50 acre) sites are not readily available within the UGB, including suitable sites where anticipated nuisances can be effectively mitigated to protect nearby sensitive land uses, and such a location may include prohibitive cost implications.

Many large undeveloped sites within the UGB are either owned by land developers with intentions for property or are adjacent lands with plans for residential development that would be impacted by the proposed campus facility. Additionally, privately-owned industrial lands have recently become more costly, and any City-owned industrial lands are reserved for economic development opportunities by way of Council resolution. In addition, certain "clean" industrial operations such as food and medical manufacturing facilities may not be supportive of this facility as a neighbouring land use, or for ensuring land use compatibility as a Major Facility (3.5.1 PPS) to support the long-term operational and economic viability of other Major Facilities.

Through a filtering process and site analysis undertaken by Civic Administration, it was determined that there are no reasonable locations within the City of London's Urban Growth Boundary that could accommodate the proposed Emergency Services Campus. As such, it was necessary to evaluate lands outside of the Urban Growth Boundary and within the agricultural area for alternative locations to situate the Campus.

The City team identified two candidate sites outside of the Urban Growth Boundary that could meet the site requirements of the proposed emergency services campus. Both candidate sites are city owned lands located within the buffer area of the W12A Land fill site. However, like most of the lands outside of the City's UGB, these two sites are located on prime agricultural lands. This prompted the need to evaluate these sites to ensure that they comply with provincial requirements relating to non-agricultural land uses in prime agricultural areas.

The city owned lands for consideration are (see Appendix B–Location Maps, Figure 1 and 2):

West Candidate Site – 5725-5861 White Oak Road – 101.5 acres
East Candidate Site – 3243 Manning Drive – 129.4 acres

2.3.2 Provincial Planning Statement

A planning analysis and justification study was completed by City Planning Solutions that documents this process in detail. It shows how the requirements of the Provincial Planning Statement, 2024 were met, how minimum distance separation was addressed, how agricultural impact was assessed and recommends how identified impacts are to be mitigated. An accompanying Agricultural Impact Assessment was prepared by DBH Soils Services Inc.

The proposed Emergency Services Campus is a **non-agricultural use** and would not qualify as one of these permitted agricultural uses. However, Section 4.3.5 of the PPS does allow for non-agricultural uses in prime agricultural lands provided certain criteria are met. The policy reads as follows:

4.3.5 Non-Agricultural Uses in Prime Agricultural Areas

*1. Planning authorities **may only permit non-agricultural uses in prime agricultural areas** [emphasis added] for:*
a) extraction of minerals, petroleum resources and mineral aggregate resources; or
b) limited non-residential uses, provided that all of the following are demonstrated:

1. the land does not comprise a specialty crop area;
2. the proposed use complies with the minimum distance separation formulae;
3. there is an identified need within the planning horizon identified in the official plan as provided for in policy 2.1.3 for additional land to accommodate the proposed use; and
4. ***alternative locations have been evaluated, and***
i. ***there are no reasonable alternative locations which avoid prime agricultural areas*** *[emphasis added]; and*
ii. there are no reasonable alternative locations in prime agricultural areas with lower priority agricultural lands.

2. Impacts from any new or expanding non-agricultural uses on the agricultural system are to be avoided, or where avoidance is not possible, minimized and mitigated as determined through an agricultural impact assessment or equivalent analysis, based on provincial guidance.

This policy provides an opportunity for the City of London to locate the Emergency Services Campus on prime agricultural lands – as long as the above criteria and requirements are clearly met.

The planning analysis and justification study found that most of the parcels that met the minimum size requirement were of the same soil class as the two candidate sites, and thus did not represent a reasonable alternative site location from the perspective of policy 4.3.5.1.(4)(ii) (above).

An initial list of 290 lower soil classification parcels were reviewed and initially identified as candidate sites for the campus. Of this list, 182 were removed for being less than 50 acres in size and an additional 31 were removed for being within 300m of residential land uses (noting that over half of the parcels less than 50 acres are also within 300m of residential). When applying the remaining filter criteria, 15 parcels were identified that could reasonably be considered as an alternative location for the proposed Facility.

The refined list of 15 sites were further assessed and found the following which further restricted the available candidate sites:

- Concerns relating to their close proximity to Highway 401 and Highway 402.
    - Smoke emissions from various training exercises – fire suppression training, public order unit exercises, etc., could present a visibility hazard to the travelling public.
- There are constraints from Lower Thames Valley Conservation flood regulations.
- The proximity to large livestock operations and would represent a major loss to agricultural investment and that there are currently six major agricultural buildings on this site.

Further, the remaining properties experience one or more of the following characteristics that would negatively affect their viability to accommodate the proposed facility:

- While fragments of lower priority agricultural lands exist, these areas are located near or within ecological or hazard areas and are small in size (majority of the site is within the same soil classification).
- Located in proximity to Rural Neighbourhood Place Types or clusters of rural estate dwellings located in the Farmland Place Type.
- Developable portions of the site outside of ecological areas are comprised of irregular shapes and proportions contrary to the rectangular shape required for the facility.
- Lack of available servicing.

This analysis clearly shows that there are no reasonable alternative locations within the agricultural area that have lower priority agricultural lands than the two candidate sites, while meeting the essential site requirements of the proposed Facility.

The City Planning Solutions report concludes that development of either city owned candidate site for an Emergency Services Campus would be consistent with the Provincial Planning Statement.

In addition, staff are of the view that the land use compatibility policies outlined in Section 3.5.1 of the PPS are applicable to the determination of the Campus location. This policy states:

> **3.5.1** *Major facilities and sensitive land uses shall be planned and developed to avoid, or if avoidance is not possible, minimize and mitigate any potential adverse effects from odour, noise, and other contaminants; minimize risks to public health and safety; and ensure the long-term operational and economic viability of major facilities, in accordance with provincial guidelines, standards, and procedures.*

Furthermore, the PPS defines **Major Facilities** as follows:

> *"Major facilities" means facilities which may require separation from sensitive land uses,* ***including but not limited to*** *[emphasis added] airports, manufacturing uses, transportation infrastructure and corridors, rail facilities, marine facilities, sewage treatment facilities, waste management systems, oil and gas pipelines, industries, energy generation facilities and transmission systems, and resource extraction activities.*

As previously noted, certain training exercises associated with the Campus — such as fire suppression training, public order unit drills, and simulated training scenarios, may generate smoke emissions that may reduce visibility for vehicles on nearby roads and affect surrounding properties. The intent of the PPS policy is to proactively plan and develop such facilities in a way that avoids, or where unavoidable, mitigates impacts like odour, noise, and other operational effects. The identified locations of the candidate sites are consistent with the PPS.

2.4 Preferred Site Location

The Steering Committee for the London Emergency Services Campus comprised of senior leaders from LFD, LPS, Facilities, Realty Services, Neighbourhood and Community-Wide Services and Housing and Community Growth have supported a phased-approach to building over the next several years, due to the magnitude of the investment required.

A site comparison was undertaken which included the following site considerations:

- Official Plan and Zoning
- Archaeology Potential
- Conservation Authority Regulation
- Proximity to Highway 401 and MTO Controls
- Servicing capability and access to servicing infrastructure
- Dominant wind directions and odour impacts
- Ecological sensitive areas on site
- Potential for future fire station location

The Steering Committee is recommending the **East Candidate Site – 3243 Manning Drive**. This site could accommodate the proposed 50 acres (20 ha) of land required. The site is owned by the City of London and the title to the lands would remain with the City.

The City acquired the property for buffering of the City's W12A landfill site and related economic and waste management matters (Waste Management and Resource Recovery Area). The site is not anticipated to be needed for future waste management operations; it was acquired as part of the ongoing land buffer strategy at W12A that exists to reduce the risk of conflict between the normal operations of an active landfill and potentially sensitive land uses being introduced in the future.

The Steering Committee is aware that the proposed location is within close proximity to an active landfill known as the City of London W12A Landfill site. This location has recently received an approval to expand the landfill for another 25 years. The waste disposal footprint of the landfill site will not change as the approval is for a vertical expansion. The landfill is an important piece of municipal infrastructure to ensure that the residents and businesses of London have access to waste disposal within the municipality.

Although the expansion of the landfill site will include additional capital investments to minimize and reduce off site impacts such as noise, dust and odours, an operating landfill site can have community impacts from time to time. It is important to recognize that the preferred location is southeast of the landfill and the dominant wind direction is southwest to northeast.

Average Monthly Dominant Wind Direction from 2023 to 2024 for the W12A Landfill, 3502 Manning Drive, London Ontario[1]

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
SW	SW	SW	SSW	SSE	SW	S	SSW	S	WSW	WSW	SE

Furthermore, the W12A Landfill site and surrounding City-owned lands may be subject to additional waste management and recovery activities in the future including a potential wastewater biosolids management facility that is discussed in a separate report on this agenda.

The subject property is situated in the southern rural sector of the City of London within the Tempo Planning District. More specifically, it is located on the corner of Manning Drive and Wellington Road South, east of White Oak Road. The subject site has 2,937.86 feet of frontage along Manning Drive, 1,733.42 feet along Wellington Road South and an overall site area of approximately 129 acres. According to The London Plan, the subject property is designated Farmland with a portion designated as Environmental Review; and is zoned Holding Agricultural Special Provision (h-6, h-9 AG2(20)) with a portion zoned as Environmental Review (ER). The Holding provisions relate to stormwater servicing and archaeological requirements, which can be addressed through the Site Plan review process. The special provision would allow a greenhouse farm as an additional permitted use; however, this use falls outside the intended scope and purpose of this report.

Approximately 124.88 acres of the subject property comprise arable farmland and is leased for cash crops, while the remaining 2.32 acres located in the southcentral sector of the site reflects non-buildable open space. The entirety of the subject property is outside the *Urban Growth Boundary (UGB)* limit of the City of London. The property formerly contained a farmstead and various agricultural farm buildings that have been removed through a tender process as these buildings were at the end of their economic life.

3.0 Financial Impact/Considerations

3.1 Source of Financing

The funding required to address this proposed land allocation and future design, and construction of the Emergency Services Campus is available in the adopted 2024-2027 Multi-Year Budget.

[1] The Weather Company Product and Technology. (2025). *London W12A Landfill – 3503 Manning Dr. – IONTARIO754.* Weather Underground. https://www.wunderground.com/dashboard/pws/IONTARIO754/table/2023-03-9/2023-03-9/monthly

Conclusion

The City of London, the London Fire Department and the London Police Service are collaborating for the development of the new London Emergency Services Campus.

A feasibility study identifies a minimum land area requirement of 20 ha (50 acres) to accommodate the Campus. As noted, this is a minimum site area, and it would be prudent to select a site with additional land area to accommodate setbacks, berms and vegetative features as described in the proposed mitigative measures.

A comprehensive search has been undertaken for a site that could accommodate the proposed Campus and through a filtering process and site analysis undertaken, it was determined that there are no reasonable locations within the City of London's Urban Growth Boundary that could accommodate the proposed London Emergency Services Campus. As such, it was necessary to evaluate lands outside of the Urban Growth Boundary and within the agricultural area for alternative locations to situate the facility.

The preferred site location recommended is 3243 Manning Drive. The site is owned by the City of London and the title to the lands would remain with the City.

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Recommended by:	**Anna Lisa Barbon, CPA, CGA, Deputy City Manager, Finance Supports**
Recommended by:	**Cheryl Smith, Deputy City Manager, Neighbourhood and Community-Wide Services**

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Appendix A: Development Phasing

The development of the Emergency Services Campus is expected to follow a phased approach—starting with the most urgent training needs identified by the City of London, the London Fire Department and the London Police Service. Exact phasing will be determined as the project advances and will depend on funding availability, design considerations, and potential involvement from other levels of government.

See below for proposed details and timing:

Phase 1 (2025-27)	**Phase 2 (2028-31)**
London Fire Department's Main Dispatch 911 Centre	Public Fire Safety Village offering community members of all ages, a hands-on, engaging experience to build awareness and preparedness skills
Primary Integrated Emergency Operations Centre	Driving Track
New Fire Station to enhance emergency response in the southeast industrial corridor	Fleet and Property Storage
Specialized areas for Provincial HAZMAT response unit	Fire Mechanical Bay
Main Training Building (classrooms, drill hall)	
Purpose-built, state-of-the-art training infrastructure, including scenario simulation and indoor and outdoor firing ranges	
Clean-burn Training Tower	
K9 Building and Outdoor Area	

Appendix B: Location Maps

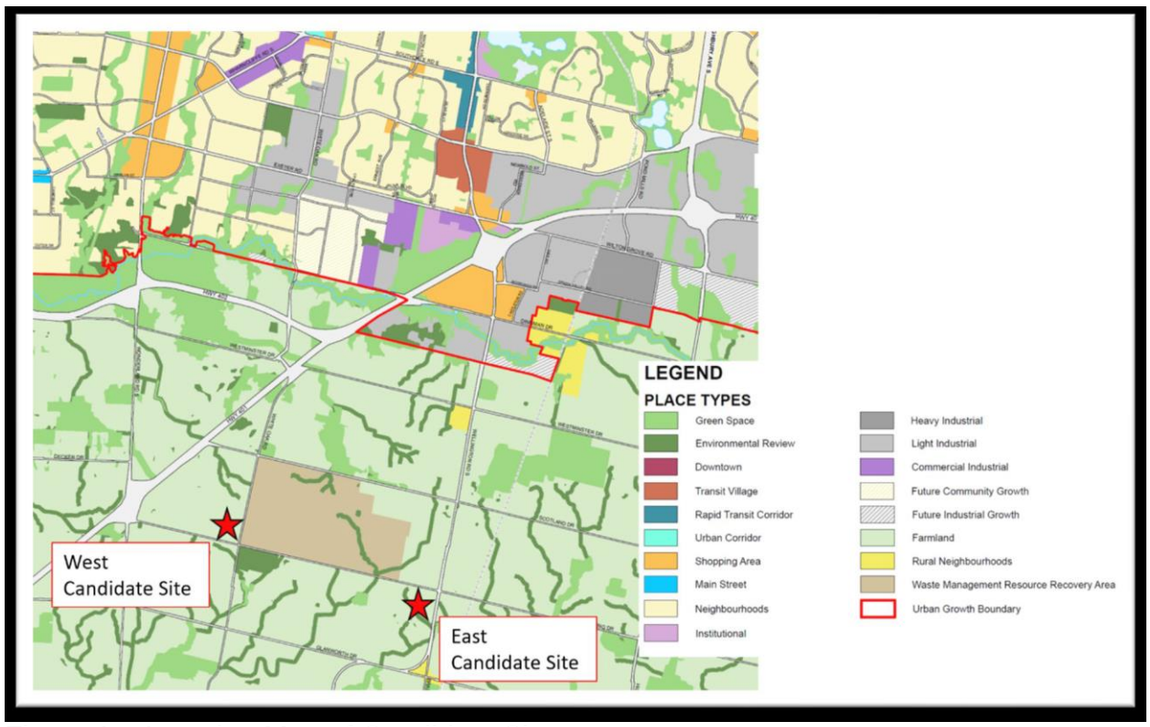

Figure 1 – Location Map of Candidate Sites

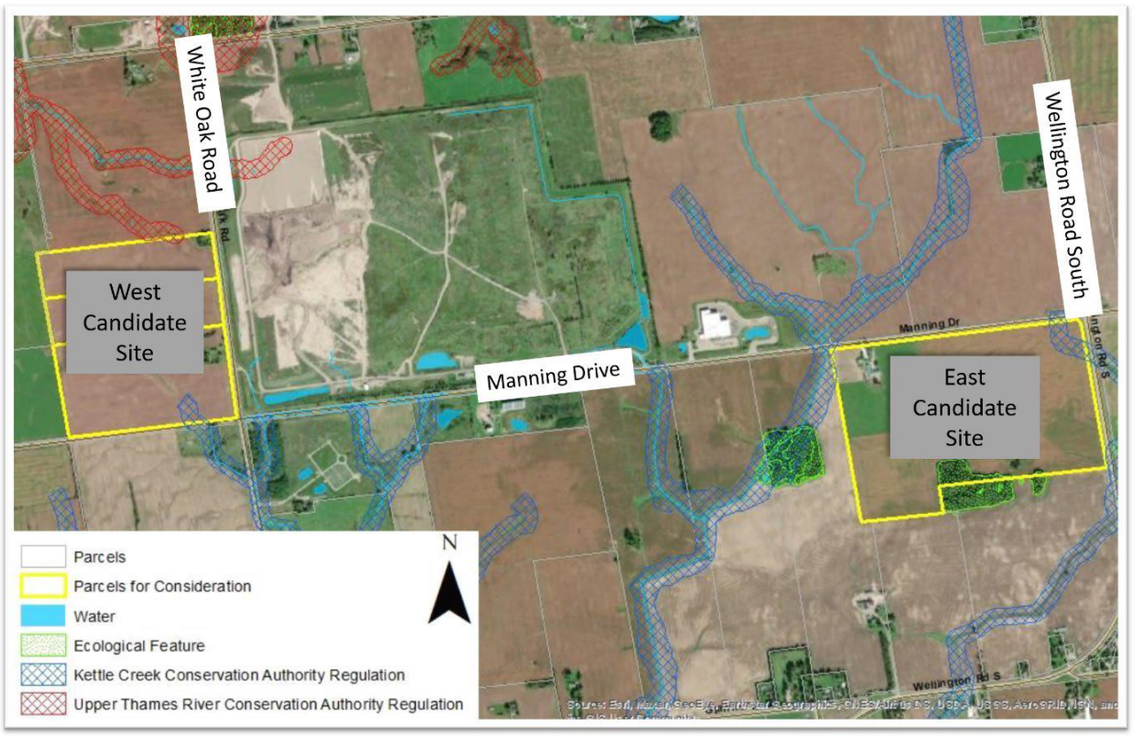

Figure 2 - Location of Two Candidate Sites Showing Property Boundaries