



Norfolk County Office of the Mayor

May 6, 2025

Ministry of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade

Hon. Victor Fedeli

219 Main St. E

North Bay, Ont. P1B 1B2

Subject: Expression of Interest in Discontinued CN Rail Corridor Lands – Courtland
Area mile marker 87.27 to 89.7

Dear Minister Fedeli,

On behalf of Norfolk County Council, I am writing to formally express the County's interest in acquiring a portion of the CN Rail corridor that is currently progressing through the discontinuance process in the Courtland area. Specifically, Norfolk County is interested in the segment located East of Highway 59, extending toward Fernlea Side Road, mile marker 87.27 to 89.7

This letter reflects a recent shift in municipal direction. Although Council had previously indicated no interest in acquiring these lands (Resolution CIC-057c, March 2024), circumstances have since evolved significantly. In mid-2024, Council adopted a new Official Plan Amendment identifying this area as a key growth node for industrial employment and residential development. The proximity of the rail corridor to these newly designated lands has elevated its strategic value, both in terms of infrastructure potential and regional economic development.

The unused CN rail corridor presents a unique and time-sensitive opportunity to secure a linear tract of land that can serve multiple critical functions:

1. **Infrastructure and Utility Corridor:** The intact right-of-way can be repurposed as a utility conduit for essential municipal services, including water, wastewater, natural gas, hydro, and broadband. This would support the timely servicing of the future Industrial Park and surrounding residential growth areas. Concentrating on these services along a central corridor will streamline expansion, reduce costs, and improve maintenance and scalability.
2. **Transportation and Mobility Link:** The corridor has the potential to accommodate transportation-related infrastructure such as service roads, logistics routes, and emergency access. In the future, it may also support alternative transportation options,



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including multi-use trails or local transit services, helping improve overall connectivity and resilience within the community.

3. Economic Development Catalyst: Public ownership of this corridor aligns with Norfolk's broader economic development strategy by creating an attractive, well-serviced environment for industrial investment. The corridor provides direct access to proposed industrial employment lands, thereby enhancing investor confidence and encouraging job creation. By securing this asset, the County is taking proactive steps to foster long-term industrial growth and economic stability.

4. Community and Environmental Benefit: In addition to its industrial function, the corridor could also accommodate active transportation trails, promoting healthy living and recreational opportunities. Environmentally, reusing this existing corridor helps avoid disruption to greenfield sites and supports Norfolk's commitment to sustainable development.

At present, it is our understanding that the section East of Talbot Street (Highway 59) has entered the discontinuance process, in accordance with Transport Canada's guidelines. Although this segment has not yet been formally offered to public authorities, we anticipate that Norfolk County may soon have an opportunity to engage in discussions regarding acquisition.

We request that CN Rail recognize Norfolk County as an interested public authority in this process. We would appreciate notification when the corridor or any portion of it becomes available for acquisition under Federal regulations. We emphasize that this expression of interest does not commit Norfolk County to a purchase at this stage but is intended to preserve our ability to act when formal offers are extended.

The County appreciates CN Rail's continued cooperation and its commitment to working with Municipalities during rail corridor transitions. We look forward to further dialogue and would be pleased to provide any additional information required to support this expression of interest.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Amy Martin".



Norfolk County **Office of the Mayor**

Mayor Amy Martin
Norfolk County Council