

ECONOMIC INTEL. UNIT CASE STUDY ON THE RADAR

The Challenge

Defence Research and Development Canada wanted to construct an experimental Radar Station and needed a place to do it. The site could be located anywhere along the Atlantic coastline of Nova Scotia, provided it was at least 30 km from Halifax, had at least 5 hectares of land with 500 m of straight coastline, was flat and had unobstructed views of the horizon. The site also needed to be accessible year-round by a semi-trailer truck and have electrical power, telephone and high-speed internet service. Since the client was open to the idea of leasing land rather than buying it, the search was not limited to land available for sale. Defence Research and Development Canada turned to Turner Drake's Economic Intelligence Unit (EIU) to scour the 400 km of potential coastline for an ideal location.

Turner Drake's Approach

With 400 km of intricately shaped coastline to search, the first step was to narrow down the study area by eliminating stretches of coastline with too many islands and peninsulas. The EIU lined up the right geographic datasets, fired up their Geographic Information System (GIS) and got to work. Since coastal location was the pre-eminent requirement, Turner Drake acquired the PID boundary files from the Province and selected from the 23,825 parcels only those located along the coastline. From these, parcels 5 hectares or greater were selected and smaller parcels were reviewed before being discarded just in case they could be combined with neighbouring land to make a prime location. Satellite imagery and a Digital Elevation Model (DEM) were used to search for sites with unobstructed visibility and straight coastlines. A slope grid was created from the DEM to eliminate any with too steep a pitch. Road network layers were used as a preliminary check for accessibility.

Since there is nothing like seeing it in person, a Turner Drake team drove from one end of the mainland to the other, tramping across the frosty ground to make sure the coastline was as straight as it appeared, looking for islands or development that didn't show up in satellite images, discovering a few roads that didn't quite live up to expectations and checking for power lines. Their EIU called the major telephone and internet service providers to see where high-speed internet was available ... and introduced the representatives to several new community names in the process! Finally, a member of Turner Drake's Valuation Division utilised our Compuval™ geo-coded transactional database to research sales of comparable properties in the various regions in order to provide a value range for each selected site.

Winning Results

Turner Drake provided Defence Research Development Canada with a Site Selection Study complete with maps, DEMs, slope grids, satellite imagery and details on the ten sites which met the criteria for the Radar Station ... as well as notes on the best and worst of the bunch to help them in their decision making process.

