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Halifax Regional Council
August 9, 2005

TO: Mayor Kelly and Members of Halifax Regional Council

SUBMITTED BY:


George McLellan, Chief Administrative Officer


Mike Labrecque, P.Eng., Director, Transportation & Public Works Services

DATE: July 29, 2005

SUBJECT: Permitting Process for Aliant Telecommunications Cabinets in HRM Right of Ways

ORIGIN

- October 24, 2000 Report to HRM Council "Procedures Re: Installation of Communications Cabinets by Aliant Telecom Inc."
- Added Item - June 14, 2005 Motion of HRM Council regarding Aliant Utility Boxes
- July 5, 2005 presentation by Aliant to HRM Council

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that HRM Council approve the permitting process for the placement of Aliant telecommunications cabinets in HRM right of ways as described in Attachment A of this report.

BACKGROUND

The Streets By-Law (S-300) requires utilities to apply for Utility Permits for the installation of telecommunications cabinets in HRM right of ways, both pad mounted and on poles.

Aliant has been engaged since 2000 in installation of infrastructure for high speed or broadband service throughout the municipality. This is complimentary to HRM's positioning as a "Smart City" and in response to increased consumer and business demand for high-speed entertainment and telecommunications services. The new infrastructure supports digital television, as well as high speed internet services. The new service:

- provides consumer choice through increased competition.
- responds to growing demand for high-speed connectivity to support *e*-business, *e*-commerce and *e*-government initiatives.
- provides significant infrastructure investment to create a more "connected" community.
- employs over 220 people during the implementation and ongoing operations of the network and the related services that will utilize it.

Since the Report to Council in October 2000 outlining the Aliant roll-out, the technology and size of the cabinets has evolved considerably. Aliant has been working with vendors to reduce the size of the cabinets. A Fiber-to-the Home trial has commenced in Royal Hemlocks and, as Fiber-to-the-Home technology becomes more prevalent, the number of easements required for telecommunications cabinets will decrease.

HRM residents have raised some concerns to Council and staff with respect to the aesthetic impact of the placement of telecommunication cabinets in HRM right of ways, including graffiti. Aliant and HRM have met to discuss ways to minimize aesthetic impact, and the utility is cooperating with HRM staff in this respect. It should be noted, however, that technology and practices exist in some other areas of Canada that preclude installation of telecommunications cabinets, or any above ground utility infrastructure in the right of way. The improved aesthetics come with an increased cost to the utility, which eventually flows through to residents.

HRM's interim permitting process (in addition to the normal permitting requirements) to date has been:

- Cabinets should be located outside the ROW wherever possible (private easements).
- If the boxes are to be located in the ROW, they are to be located next to the existing Aliant above ground structures.
- Where new locations in the ROW are requested, a detailed explanation shall be provided justifying the need for the location and describing how its visual impact will be minimized.
- Aliant must provide confirmation that the abutting resident has been notified and does not object to the cabinet.

DISCUSSION

Following the July 5, 2005 presentation by Aliant to HRM Council, HRM staff developed a new permitting process for Aliant telecommunications cabinets in HRM right of ways (Attachment A). This process was developed in response to concerns raised by HRM Council with respect to aesthetics, graffiti, and communications. The process has been discussed with Aliant.

Aliant had raised some concerns with respect to the timeliness of permit processing, as it impacts the timing of their roll-out. HRM Right of Way Services has confirmed that if a new permitting process is approved, a permit shall be issued within three (3) business days of receipt of a complete file and permit application from Aliant.

It should be noted that residents may still have aesthetic concerns with respect to cabinets on private easements *adjacent* to HRM right of ways.

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

None at this time. However, if HRM Council sets a direction that requires Right of Way Services staff to visit each proposed telecommunications cabinet site and facilitate/negotiate solutions between the area Councillor, resident, and Aliant, an additional FTE will be required within Right of Way Services.

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT POLICIES / BUSINESS PLAN

This report complies with the Municipality's Multi-Year Financial Strategy, the approved Operating, Capital and Reserve budgets, policies and procedures regarding withdrawals from the utilization of Capital and Operating reserves, as well as any relevant legislation.

ALTERNATIVES

HRM Council could refuse to permit Aliant telecommunications boxes in HRM right of ways.

HRM Council could suggest revisions to the proposed permitting process in Attachment A.


ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A - Proposed Permitting Process for Aliant Telecommunication Cabinets in HRM Right of Ways

Attachment B - Excerpt from October 24, 2000 Information Report to Council Procedures Regarding the Installation of Telecommunications Cabinets within HRM

A copy of this report can be obtained online at <http://www.halifax.ca/council/agendasc/cagenda.html> then choose the appropriate meeting date, or by contacting the Office of the Municipal Clerk at 490-4210, or Fax 490-4208.

Report Prepared by:

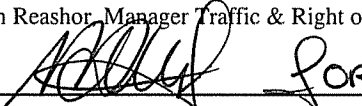


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 FOR

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Proposed Permitting Process Aliant Telecommunications Cabinets in HRM Right of Ways

APPLICATION AND SCOPE

- These procedures do not apply to communications cabinets which are proposed to be located outside HRM right of ways on private easements.
- These procedures do apply for both pad and pole mounted communications cabinets.
- Service requirements and specifications for the communications cabinets which are subject to these procedures are appended to these procedures.

B: APPROVAL PROCESS

1. Aliant shall provide Right of Way Services with an explanation justifying the need to place the cabinet in the HRM right of way. If justified, the cabinet should be placed next to existing Aliant infrastructure.
2. Four to six weeks prior to commencing an installation of communications cabinets in an HRM District, Aliant shall provide the area Councillor with information on the timing, number, and approximate location of the cabinets.
3. Aliant shall provide a letter to the abutting resident most affected by the installation outlining the proposed cabinet placement and proposed landscaping plan. The letter shall provide the resident with an opportunity to provide comments. Endorsement from this resident is required in order for the process to proceed.
4. When it is determined that a communications cabinet in the HRM right of way is required by Aliant, Aliant Real Estate Services will provide written notification to HRM Right of Way Management Services. The request to HRM will include all pertinent details of the proposed location. This package shall contain the following:
 - Area to be serviced
 - Reason why the site within an HRM right of way is required, versus use of a private easement
 - Preferred site plan identified with the Property ID number (with two other possible options)
 - Size and type of cabinet required
 - Restoration Plan (Landscaping)
 - Method of installation of cabinet
 - Time frames for service provision
 - Contractor List
 - Letter or email from the resident with property abutting the proposed cabinet site to HRM Right of Way Management (copied to the Area Councillor) indicating their acceptance of the cabinet location, as well as any landscaping/aesthetic

improvements agreed to by Aliant and the abutting resident.

5. In the event that the abutting resident does not consent to the installation of the communications cabinet under any conditions, Aliant and HRM Right of Way Services shall attempt to mediate a solution. Failing a satisfactory outcome, HRM Right of Way Services may authorize placement of a communications cabinet in the location deemed to have the least negative impact on the community.
6. In consultation with the Manager of Right of Way Services, Aliant Real Estate Services will use their best efforts to locate the communication cabinet in an area considered to be the least obtrusive location, keeping in mind the existing and future uses of the surrounding neighbourhood.
7. Depending on the style of cabinet, and access requirements, the final size and layout will be determined on a site-specific basis. This layout will be identified on the site plan enclosed with the request.
8. All work that is contemplated will be completed in a workmanlike manner, in accordance with all Federal, Provincial, Municipal or any applicable regulation to the complete exoneration of Halifax Regional Municipality. Any ancillary work, including but not limited to, street openings , placement of poles, etc. will be in accordance with existing practices and procedures currently in place.
9. The request to the HRM Manager of Right of Way Services will be dated and sent to:

Halifax Regional Municipality
Right of Way Services
Transportation & Public Works Services
PO Box 1749
Halifax, NS
B3J 3A5
fax: 902-490-4858

Right of Way Services will review for completeness all information presented by Aliant Real Estate Services. Should additional questions or material information be required, HRM will immediately notify Aliant within 48 hours.

10. Following receipt of a complete application, (application must contain all necessary information as required by HRM Right of Way Services), HRM Right of Way Services will notify Aliant Real Estate Services within three (3) business days that the Halifax Regional Municipality's permission to commence is confirmed.

C: SITE AESTHETICS AND MAINTENANCE

11. Site preparation, cabinet installation and landscaping will typically have a duration of 10 working days.

12. During the planning phase for any new cabinet, Aliant will work with HRM staff to ensure that appropriate and mutually agreed upon site selection and landscaping is applied so that the cabinet will be non-obtrusive in the community.
13. Site selection will take advantage of existing structures or features so that the cabinet will blend into the existing area.
14. The landscaping plan will be included with Aliant's request for approval submitted to the Manager of Right of Way Services.
15. This planning phase may be expedited through agreement by HRM staff and Aliant to landscaping models that can be applied to various locations/zones in the municipality (i.e. single family dwelling, commercial, park and institutional, general residential, etc).
16. Landscaping will consist of restoration of the area surrounding the cabinet through re-sodding, adding shrubs or trees, and/or installing fencing or murals as appropriate.
17. Aliant will maintain each site to its original design specifications through regular inspections. Typical maintenance will include grass cutting, snow removal, tree and shrub trimming, and graffiti removal.
18. Aliant will develop a process relating to the reporting of graffiti and graffiti removal. Aliant will also participate in HRM's Community Response Initiative with respect to graffiti.

APPENDIX "A"
**PROCEDURES REGARDING THE INSTALLATION
OF TELECOMMUNICATIONS CABINETS WITHIN HRM**

A: APPLICATION AND SCOPE

1. These procedures do not apply to communications cabinets which are proposed to be located within any public street or right-of-way which require the approval of the Municipal Engineer.
2. These procedures do not apply to communications cabinets which exceed 20 square metres (215 square feet) in area which are subject to the Building Code.
3. Communications cabinets which are installed in accordance with these procedures will not require municipal development permits.
4. Service requirements and specifications for the communications cabinets which are subject to these procedures are appended to these procedures.

B: APPROVAL PROCESS

5. When it is determined that a communications cabinet is required by Aliant, Aliant Real Estate Services will provide written notification to the appropriate Development Officer for the sub-region where the cabinet is required. The request to HRM will include all pertinent details of the proposed location. This package shall contain the following:
 - Area to be serviced
 - Preferred site plan identified with the Property ID number (with two other possible options)
 - Size and type of cabinet required
 - Restoration Plan (Landscaping)
 - Method of installation of cabinet
 - Time frames for service provision
 - Contractor List
6. In consultation with the Development Officer, Aliant Real Estate Services will use their best efforts to locate the communication cabinet in an area considered to be the least obtrusive location, keeping in mind the existing and future uses of the surrounding neighbourhood.
7. Preferred sites will have dimensions of 30 feet by 30 feet, but depending on the style of cabinet, and access requirements, the final size and layout will be determined on a site-specific basis. This layout will be identified on the site plan enclosed with the request.
8. All work that is contemplated will be completed in a workmanlike manner, in accordance with all Federal, Provincial, Municipal or any applicable regulation to the complete

exoneration of Halifax Regional Municipality. Any ancillary work, including but not limited to, street openings , placement of poles, etc. will be in accordance with existing practices and procedures currently in place.

9. The request to the HRM Development Officer will be dated and couriered to the appropriate location. The Development Officer will review for completeness all information presented by Aliant Real Estate Services. Should additional questions or material information be required HRM will immediately notify Aliant within 48 hours.
10. The Development Officer will notify Aliant Real Estate Services within ten (10) business days that the Halifax Regional Municipality's permission to commence is confirmed.

C: SITE AESTHETICS AND MAINTENANCE

11. Site preparation, cabinet installation and landscaping will typically have a duration of 10 working days.
12. During the planning phase for any new cabinet, Aliant will work with HRM staff to ensure that appropriate and mutually agreed upon site selection and landscaping is applied so that the cabinet will be non-obtrusive in the community.
13. Site selection will take advantage of existing structures or features so that the cabinet will blend into the existing area.
14. The landscaping plan will be included with Aliant's request for approval submitted to the Development Officer.
15. This planning phase may be expedited through agreement by HRM staff and Aliant to landscaping models that can be applied to various Zones in the municipality (i.e. single family dwelling, commercial, park and institutional, general residential, etc).
16. Landscaping will consist of restoration of the area surrounding the cabinet through re-sodding, adding shrubs or trees, and/or installing fencing as appropriate.
17. Aliant will maintain each site to its original design specifications through regular inspections. Typical maintenance will include grass cutting, snow removal, tree and shrub trimming, and graffiti removal.

APPENDIX "B"
Residential Broadband Service Node (RBSN or Cabinet)
Service Requirements and Specifications

Service Requirements

The deployment of broadband technology provides for the integration of telephone, Internet access, and digital TV on a single residential access. Using Subscriber Digital Loop (DSL) technology, the available bandwidth to the home over existing copper wire will be increased from 56kbps to 10mbps. This technology will be prevalent for the next 2-4 years. The existing copper loop will be shortened to 2000 meters with the deployment of Residential Broadband Service Node (RBSN) to provide the digital bandwidth required. With the exception of some Business locations and Multi Dwelling Units (MDU) which have higher bandwidth requirements, residential applications will utilize the RBSN fiber-copper solution. Businesses and MDUs with higher bandwidth requirements will be provisioned with fiber cable as necessary.

The equipment required in the RBSNs includes fiber electronics, copper electronics, power and backup power, alarms, and splitters. The RBSN cabinet design includes environmental equipment for power, alarms, heating, and cooling. The cabinets will also house copper and fiber cable interfacing requirements. The deployment of the technology is determined by the proximity to existing Central Offices and / or Jumper Wire Interfaces (JWIs) and the 2000-meter copper loop restrictions.

Aliant will make every effort to minimize the number RBSNs and to locate the RBSNs on existing easements. Fiber to the residential marketplace will be the next phase in the evolution of broadband technology when commercially viable.

Specifications

The physical specifications of the technology that will be deployed through 2000-2001 are as follows:

1. **Metal Cabinet:**
 - 72 inches (height), 60 inches (width), 80 inches (length)
 - Light grey in color and treated with anti-graffiti paint
 - Mounted on concrete pad or manhole
 - Equipment is pre-installed which minimizes site installation time
 - Requires a 10m x 10m easement
 - Supports High Speed Internet and Digital TV

2. **Fiberglass Cabinet:**
 - 68 inches (height), 8 ft and 6 inches (width), 13 ft and 6 inches (length)
 - Ivory color
 - Partially buried in ground
 - Equipment is pre-installed which minimizes site installation time
 - Requires a 10m x 10m easement

- Supports High Speed Internet, Digital TV, voice and data services

- 3. Concrete Cabinet:
 - 68 inches (height), 8 ft and 6 inches (width), 13 ft and 6 inches (length)
 - Light grey color
 - Partially buried in ground
 - Equipment is pre-installed which minimizes site installation time
 - Requires a 10m x 10m easement
 - Supports High Speed Internet, Digital TV, voice and data services

- 4. Series 800 Cabinet:
 - 69 inches (height), 30 inches (width), 82 inches (length)
 - Ivory color
 - Partially buried in ground
 - Equipment is pre-installed which minimizes site installation time
 - Requires a 5m x 5m easement
 - Supports High Speed Internet, voice and data services

APPENDIX "C"
Pictorial Representation and Specifications for Typical Cabinet

