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Halifax, Nova Scotia
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Item No. 2
Halifax Regional Council
September 14, 2010

TO: Mayor Kelly and Members of Halifax Regional Council

Original Signed by Acting Director

SUBMITTED BY: _____
Ken Reashor, P.Eng., Acting Director, Transportation and Public Works

DATE: August 30, 2010

SUBJECT: **Proposed Transmission Line Project - Cole Harbour to Eastern
Passage**

INFORMATION REPORT

ORIGIN

June 8, 2010 meeting of Halifax Regional Council, Item 13.5.

“MOVED by Councillor Nicoll, seconded by Councillor Barkhouse that Halifax Regional Council request a staff report on the Cole Harbour - Eastern Passage Transmission Project to include:

1. Details on the options Nova Scotia Power Inc. is proposing, the implications of those options, and how Nova Scotia Power Inc. is mitigating the impacts on the community and residents.
2. Explore other alternatives, such as undergrounding or any alternative routes, with Nova Scotia Power Inc.
3. Request that the Energy and Underground Services Advisory Committee make a recommendation at a future meeting on a preferred option (which might or might not be a Nova Scotia Power Inc. option).

MOTION PUT AND PASSED”

BACKGROUND

In October 2008, NSPI met with HRM staff to provide an update on the status of the “Dartmouth Loop”, concluding that a 138 kv sub-station fed from Cole Harbour would be necessary within a five year period. This expansion would improve reliability for the entire Dartmouth load area as well as provide for future regional system reliability improvement. Discussions between the HRM and Nova Scotia Power continued through 2009 with a focus on how/where a possible transmission line would impact HRM owned property and provincial owned parkland and community character.

NSPI held a public meeting at Cole Harbour Place on April 22, 2010. At that time the potential routing option(s) was presented (see Attachment “A”).

In response to concerns expressed by residents, including a petition signed by 247 Cole Harbour residents in support of “No Transmission Lines in Our Neighbourhood (Underground only, if no other alternative is identified). Regional Council passed a motion on June 8, 2010 requesting a staff report on the Cole Harbour - Eastern Passage Transmission Project.

On June 17, 2010, NSPI contacted all those who had participated in the project presentation held at Cole Harbour Place in April (Attachment “B”). The utility indicated that the feedback from the community was clear and that residents wanted to see:

“..more route options and continue with an active program of public input.”

As a result, NSPI indicated that they wish to directly involve members of the public through a community consultation committee. This committee will:

“..help to develop potential routes and to evaluate the options. We will be seeking volunteers for the committee to represent the various communities and stakeholder groups involved.”

In addition, NSPI reaffirmed that the project is not on a fixed schedule and that they will take the time needed to undertake a routing process which will fully engage the community.

DISCUSSION

The options which Nova Scotia Power had been advocating (Attachment “A”), commenced at a sub-station on Highway 7 in a southwardly direction to Cole Harbour, cutting across the Cole Harbour view plain at Ritcey Crescent subdivision, continuing along Bissett Lake to the Trans Canada walking trail which takes the line into Eastern Passage. Throughout discussions with the Halifax Regional Municipality and the public-at-large, this is the route that the utility had presented as “potential routing options”. This proposed line had not been finalized, either through purchase of land or negotiation of easement agreements for the transmission line right of way.

However, on June 17th, Nova Scotia Power indicated in their letter to stakeholders:

“ Nova Scotia Power is grateful to have heard from you and other residents, both at our information open house at Cole Harbour Place and subsequently through e-mails, letters and phone calls. We appreciate your efforts to help us fully understand your concerns and suggestions.

Residents have made it clear that they would like to see more route options and continue with an active program of public input. We agree and welcome what we are hearing as a benefit of reaching out and engaging the community early in the process.”

NSPI intends to engage the community through a volunteer “community consultation committee” to help develop potential routes and evaluate options. NSPI would like this committee to represent various communities and stakeholder groups.

As a result, the concerns expressed at Regional Council, and the direction provided staff through the related motion for providing impacts and possible mitigation of proposed route details and engaging Nova Scotia Power to explore alternate routes, have been, in part, addressed. The utility will now initiate a new dialogue with stakeholders. All options will be reviewed from various aspects, and a recommended route will be based on a stakeholder consensus. HRM staff have met with NSPI to better understand the change in approach respecting the justification and siting of a new transmission line in the Dartmouth/Cole Harbour/Eastern Passage area of HRM. NSPI indicate that the need for such system expansion is necessary and this has to be better articulated to all stakeholders. In addition, the utility considers that, within reason, all possible options will be reviewed.

HRM and NSPI have agreed to meet monthly to discuss progress with this process. HRM considers this to be an effective way for the municipality to monitor and provide feedback to the process. HRM staff have offered assistance respecting development plans and growth expectations for the focus area, and indicated that the Municipality is prepared to share its experience associated with effective community engagement strategies, if desired. HRM also suggested that a values mapping of the area could provide an excellent resource for identifying transmission line option impacts on the area. In this regard, the Municipality could contribute to the development of such a database, but the utility should consider engaging a consultant to fully develop such a map. NSPI is anticipating that by mid to late September, a community consultation committee will be in place to begin a process of justifying, and for identifying, prioritizing and recommending a route for a transmission system expansion. The size of the committee will depend on the response and the cross section of interested parties and groups. In addition, terms of reference for evaluating options, and a time frame for recommending an acceptable option will be the first actions for the committee, once it is established.

In its June 8, 2010 motion, Regional Council requested that the Energy and Underground Services Advisory Committee make a recommendation on the preferred transmission line option. With this new community based process in place, the EUGS Advisory Committee will have to wait a number of months before it will be able to review the committee's recommendation and make its recommendation to Council.

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

Budget implications are limited to allocation of resources to assist with the evaluation of possible transmission line.

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT POLICIES/BUSINESS PLAN

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

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The process which is being proposed by Nova Scotia Power will involve members of the public through a community consultation committee. This will enable the communities of both Cole Harbour and Eastern Passage to actively participate in the evaluation of options for a transmission line route between the two communities.

ATTACHMENTS

1. NSPI Potential Routing Options
2. NSPI Stakeholders Letter

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: Angus Doyle, Manager, Utilities Coordination, 490-5019

Report Approved by: _____

Taso Koutroulakis, P.Eng., A/Manager, Traffic & Right of Way, 490-4816

Original Signed

Cole Harbour and Eastern Passage Transmission Line Project

The Cole Harbour and Eastern Passage areas have been great growth communities for Halifax Regional Municipality. In order to ensure adequate electricity supply and better reliability for these areas Nova Scotia Power is building a new 11-kilometre, 138 kV transmission line.

Why is this transmission line being built?

The existing electricity supply for Dartmouth / Cole Harbour / Eastern Passage is reaching capacity. It's an area that has experienced tremendous growth over the past 30 years. Adding an additional transmission line will increase the volume of supply and reliability of service for more than 25,000 customers.

What is the timeline for this project?

The project is still in early stages, tentatively we are looking at beginning land preparation in the Spring of 2011. In late Fall, power poles will be installed followed by transmission lines. The project also involves construction of a new substation in the Shearwater area, due to be completed in late 2012.

More detailed project activity will be available as the project approaches.

What impact will this project have on the economy?

This is a \$20 million project. A large portion of that money will be spent right here in Nova Scotia on contractors and materials. This project will create jobs and stimulate the economy.

Some specialized materials such as conductors, transformers and towers will be sourced from outside of the province.

Are there any health risks associated with living near a transmission line?

In 2005, Health Canada stated that it "does not consider guidelines necessary because scientific evidence is not strong enough to conclude that typical exposures cause health problems."

For more information visit

<http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hl-vs/iyh-vsv/environ/magnet-eng.php>

Links

NS Power

www.nspower.ca/CHEP

Halifax Regional Municipality

www.halifax.ca

Contact

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Project Manager

902-428-5234

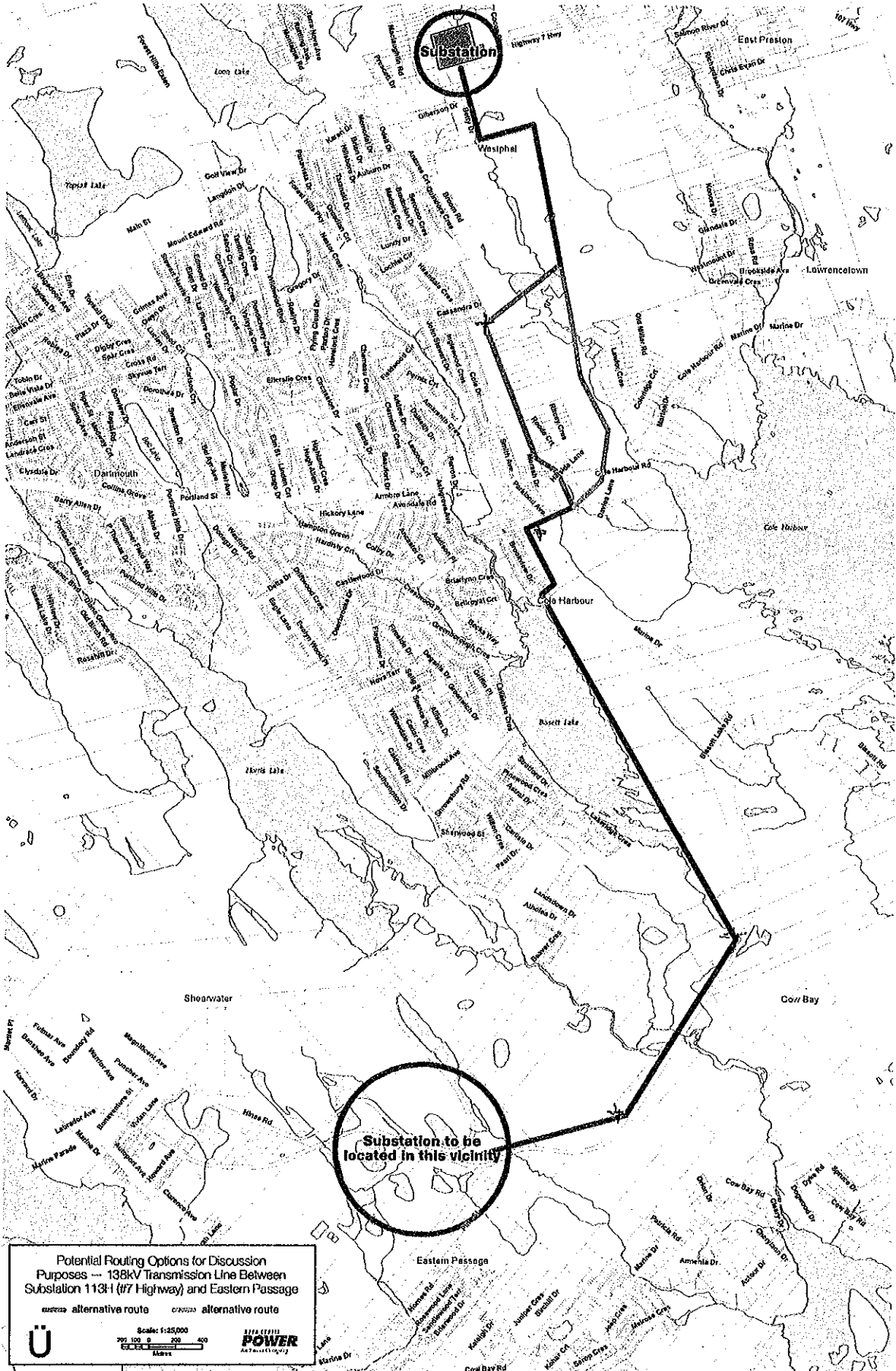
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Potential Routing Options



Attachment 2

June 17, 2010

Dear Cole Harbour resident:

Thank you for sharing your thoughts, concerns and suggestions related to the need for new transmission capacity to serve people in the communities of Cole Harbour and Eastern Passage.

Nova Scotia Power is grateful to have heard from you and other residents, both at our information open house at Cole Harbour Place and subsequently through emails, letters and phone calls. We appreciate your efforts to help us fully understand your concerns and suggestions.

Residents have made it clear that they would like to see more route options and continue with an active programme of public input. We agree and welcome what we are hearing as a benefit of reaching out and engaging the community early in the process.

Nova Scotia Power would like to directly involve members of the public through a community consultation committee. This committee will help to develop potential routes and to evaluate the options. We will be seeking volunteers for the committee to represent the various communities and stakeholder groups involved.

I would like to re-affirm that the project is not on a fixed schedule, no materials have been ordered and we will take all the time needed to conduct a fully interactive consultation and routing process.

As we move forward, updates will be provided to you by email and through our project website, www.nspower.ca/chep.

I want to personally thank you for your interest and involvement in this project, and I hope you will continue to provide us with your ideas and insight.

Sincerely,

Duncan Morum,
Manager, Facilities, Lands & Rights
Nova Scotia Power
Duncan.morum@nspower.ca