

## 4.0 Public and Government Consultation

### 4.1 Introduction

Hydro One identified and consulted with potentially affected property owners and stakeholders who may have had an interest in the proposed project. This section describes Hydro One's consultation process and the input received to date. Hydro One consulted with property in the study area throughout the Class EA process to ensure their concerns regarding the proposed transmission facilities were addressed. Hydro One also committed to keeping municipal and county officials, as well as staff of relevant provincial government ministries and agencies, informed of project status.

### 4.2 Objectives of the Public Consultation Process

The consultation process was designed to inform potentially affected property owners, stakeholders and the general public about the project, identify any issues or areas of concern, and develop project plans that address those issues, where appropriate.

### 4.3 Government Notification and Consultation

The various government and agency stakeholders that can provide valuable input were identified during the early planning stage of the Project. A list of stakeholders and their contact details are provided in **Appendix A1**. The following efforts were made to notify the stakeholders about the project and consult with them:

- Notice of Commencement Letters was sent on December 13, 2007 to relevant provincial ministries, agencies, county and local municipalities and Conservation Authorities. The letter provided a brief description and introduction of the undertaking and the study area. A copy of the notification letter is provided in **Appendix A2**.

- Initial notification letters were sent on January 28, 2008 to the City of Woodstock and Township of Norwich, and the County of Oxford and MPP for Oxford were also notified.
- A presentation was made on February 7, 2008 to the City of Woodstock Council. The same presentation was discussed on February 7 with the Mayor and Clerk – Administrator, Township of Norwich. A copy of the presentation is provided in **Appendix B**.
- Consultation was arranged by way of personal visits and/or phone and e-mail conversations with interested agencies to get their feedback, comments and concerns about the Project, to compile baseline data and to discuss constraints and mitigation measures. A summary of the consultation with these agencies is provided in **Appendix D**.
- PIC 1 - invitation letters dated February 11, 2008 were sent to all contacts identified in the list of stakeholders. A copy of the letter is provided in **Appendix A3**. Hydro One also provided a notification letter regarding the proposed undertaking to the Member of Provincial Parliament for the riding of the County Oxford, Mr. Ernie Hardeman, on February 11, 2008. In this notification letter, Hydro One also extended an invitation to Mr. Hardeman to attend the first PIC.
- PIC 2 - invitation letters dated January 26, 2009 were sent to all contacts identified in the list of stakeholders. A copy of the letter is provided in **Appendix A4**. On January 29, 2009, Hydro One provided invitation letter to Mr. Hardeman regarding the second PIC, exploring the Class EA process and the OEB approval process.

#### **4.4 Public Notification and Consultation**

As noted, two Public Information Centres (PICs) were held for this project. The local community, potentially-affected property owners, key interest groups and agencies were

notified about the project and the PICs by way of newspaper advertisements, direct mail outs and Canada Post Unaddressed Admail.

#### **4.4.1 Public Information Centre #1**

The first PIC was held on Thursday, February 21, 2008 from 4 p.m. to 8 p.m. at the Quality Hotel and Suites in Woodstock. Newspaper advertisements were placed in the following local newspapers to inform the public about the specific details of the PIC:

- *Norwich Gazette* on February 13 and February 20, 2008
- *Oxford Review* on February 15, 2008
- *Woodstock Sentinel Review* on February 13 and February 20, 2008

The PIC # 1 invitation ad was also directly sent to approximately 400 property owners within the transformer station study area and within 120 m of the existing transmission line that would need to be upgraded to supply the new station. Lists for the individually-addressed property-owner mailing were obtained from the City of Woodstock and Township of Norwich. In addition, a Canada Post Unaddressed Ad Mail was prepared (which included the PIC # 1 invitation ad) and delivered to approximately 4,200 residents, farms, and businesses within 1 km of the existing transmission line. This ensured comprehensive notification, and captured tenants who live in the area who are not one municipal property owner lists.

The newspaper advertisement announced the commencement of the Class EA study and invited interested parties to attend the PIC. It provided details about the proposed undertaking including a map of the study area and also provided a Hydro One contact name, telephone and email information, as well as a link to the Hydro One web site where more information regarding the project could be obtained. A copy of the newspaper advertisement is attached in **Appendix E1**.

In total, 35 individuals attended the first PIC. The majority of attendees were from the study area. Many of the visitors at the PIC talked at length with Hydro One representatives, providing their views and sharing local knowledge with the project team. Representatives of

Woodstock Hydro also attended the PIC to support the need for the project and speak with area residents.

The PIC provided property owners and interested parties with the opportunity to review the project plans, provide input on Hydro One's planning process and discuss their concerns with Hydro One representatives. After signing in at the registration desk, visitors were provided with a copy of the display panels and a comment form. Visitors were typically accompanied by a member of Hydro One Project team to review the panels and identify their properties on study area maps. Pamphlets on various subjects such as electric and magnetic fields (EMFs), energy conservation, and Hydro One transmission infrastructure projects across Ontario, were also available to take away. Copies of the panels displayed at PIC#1 are provided in **Appendix E2**. A sample of the sign-in sheet is provided in **Appendix E3**.

#### ***Public Comments***

From PIC #1, 18 comment forms were received, out of which three written comments were included. A sample of the comment form used is provided in **Appendix E4**. In general, the comments were related to safety issues, construction impacts, landowner issues, locations of transmission towers and TS site, and local environment protection. The other comments were related to keeping participants informed of the project status.

A summary of the issues recorded on the comment forms and those noted by staff in their conversations with members of the public are summarized in the consolidated public comments in **Appendix C**. It was observed that the queries raised by the participants were promptly answered by the Hydro One staff and all efforts were made by the staff to explain the details of the project.

#### **4.4.2      *Public Information Centre #2***

The second PIC was held from 4:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. on Thursday, February 5, 2009 at the Quality Hotel and Suites in Woodstock. The main purpose of PIC #2 was to present and

seek input on the preferred sited for the proposed Commerce Way TS, and to outline the next steps in the Class EA process and the OEB approval process.

Newspaper advertisements were placed in the following local newspapers to invite the public to the PIC:

- *Normich Gazette* on January 28 and February 4, 2009;
- *Woodstock Sentinel Review* on January 29 and February 3, 2009; and
- *Oxford Review* on January 30, 2009.

The PIC #2 invitation advertisements were also mailed directly to all property owners within the TS study area and those within 120 m from the existing transmission line using the lists provided by the local municipalities. In addition, a Canada Post Unaddressed Ad Mail was prepared (which including the PIC #2 invitation advertisement) and delivered to residents (which included houses and apartments), farms, and businesses within approximately 1 km of the existing transmission line that Hydro One is proposing to upgrade as part of this undertaking.

The advertisement announced the preferred TS site, invited interested parties to attend the PIC and provided Hydro One's contact information. A copy of the newspaper advertisement is attached in **Appendix F1**. Invitation letters to attend the PIC #2 were also sent out to all agencies identified in **Appendix A1**. A sample of the invitation letter is provided in **Appendix A4**.

In total, 13 individuals attended the second PIC. All attendees received a hardcopy of the display panels and a comment form upon arrival. Display panels were used to explain the proposed Commerce Way TS project, including the following: need for the project; map of the proposed transmission facility; project description; proposed structure types; TS site identification process and criteria; evaluation of alternative TS sites; description of the preferred TS site; environmental mitigation measures and the class EA process. Copies of the panels displayed at PIC#2 are provided in **Appendix F2**. A sample of comment form is provided in **Appendix F4**.

The participants were assisted by the Hydro One Project Team and representatives of Woodstock Hydro in reviewing the display panels. The Hydro One Project Team described the study area, the project components, the preferred TS site and the rationale for its selection, and structure types of transmission towers. Environmental and social constraints within the study area and alternative TS sites were also discussed.

Large scale maps of the study area and various proposed layouts of the Commerce Way TS were on display. Brochures on a variety of subjects, including EMFs and energy consumption, were also made available. A sign-in sheet was maintained to record participant attendance, a sample copy is provided in **Appendix F3**.

### **Public Comments**

Three written comments forms were received at the end of the PIC. In general, the comments related to property boundaries, decision making process, EMF impacts on surrounding properties, landscaping plans for the station site, property easement and future building plans, and proximity of road and ROW.

Several other participants provided comments to the Hydro One team at the PIC, but did not complete comment sheets. A summary of the issues that were raised by these individuals follows:

- Concerns regarding the potential effect of a TS at this location on the value and development potential of surrounding properties.
- One participant had questions regarding an existing Hydro One easement.
- Landscaping plans for the preferred TS site, as it is located along Parkinson Road and at one of the entranceways to the Commerce Way business park.
- Preference for use of steel poles instead of lattice steel towers for the upgraded transmission line.
- Inquires were made regarding tower types, tower location and the construction process.
- Concerns regarding EMFs.

- A few participants had questions about the evaluation process that led to the selection of the preferred site.
- The majority of the participants indicated their support for the need for the proposed facilities to foster future development in the Woodstock area.

The Hydro One team actively engaged with the participants and provided clarifications to concerns raised by the public. A summary of all the issues recorded on the comment forms and those noted by staff in their conversations with members of the public is presented in **Appendix C**.

#### **4.5 Interest Group Notification and Consultation**

Hydro One provided project information to several interest groups in the region such as the Woodstock Field Naturalists' Club, Oxford County Federation of Agriculture, Oxford County Federation of Agriculture, Canadian Auto Workers, Stewardship Oxford, Carolinian Canada, and Friends of Pittock. The Notice of Commencement Letters regarding the proposed undertakings was sent to these interest groups on December 13, 2007. A copy of the notification letter is provided in **Appendix A6**. Invitation letters to both PICs were also sent to these interest groups on February 11, 2008 and January 26, 2009, respectively. No specific concerns were raised by the interest groups.

#### **4.6 First Nations Engagement and Consultation**

The objective of First Nations engagement and consultation was to provide First Nations and Métis with an opportunity to have meaningful input into the Project and for Hydro One to address pertinent First Nations concerns wherever feasible through a process that is fair and reasonable with respect to the Project.

The MAA and the Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) were contacted and requested to identify any First Nation groups that could potentially be interested in the

Project. The project details and the study area were provided to these agencies. A copy of the letter is provided in **Appendix A7**. A summary of the consultation with these agencies is provided in a consolidated consultation summary enclosed in **Appendix D**. The following are the comments made by INAC and MAA:

- MAA advised in the letter dated April 17, 2008, that “*the Project appears not to be located in an area where First Nations may have existing or asserted rights that could be impacted by the project*”.
- INAC in a letter received on May 07, 2008, confirmed that there are two active litigation cases in the vicinity of the study area involving the Chippewas of the Kettle and Stoney Point, and the Walpole Island First Nation, Bkejwanong Territory.
- INAC confirmed in the email on March 12, 2008, in that the following First Nations have submitted specific claims in the area of the project:
  - Chippewas of the Thames First Nation;
  - Oneida Nation of the Thames;
  - Munsee-Delaware Nation; and
  - Mississaugas of the New Credit First Nation.
- In this email, INAC also indicated that *Six Nations of the Grand River* is in the general vicinity of the project.

Consultation with the above First Nations Groups was initiated by Hydro One. These First Nations Groups received Hydro One’s Notification letters on May 5 and May 21, 2008, which provided a brief introduction of the project and a description of the study area. A copy of the letter is provided in **Appendix A8**. Hydro One has also sent invitation letters to the PIC #2 to the First Nations on January 26, 2009.

Telephone contacts with the above mentioned First Nations were made in May and June 2008. No specific concerns were raised at the time by the First Nation groups.

Six Nations Council responded in a letter dated May 29, 2008, that:

*“Six Nations’ cultural, sustenance and other rights are recognized by the Province of Ontario by way of the 1701 Treaty of Ft. Albany. Six Nations’ rights and interests in relation to lands six miles either side of the Grand River (the Grand River Tract) was also confirmed by way of treaty, through the Haldimand Proclamation of October 25, 1784. this study area is within the 1710 Treaty Territory”.*

Six Nations Council also mentioned in this letter that *“as this time we have no further comments with regards to this project”.*

#### **4.7 Project Website**

To further facilitate public access to information relating to the Project and the opportunity to provide feedback, a project web page was created on Hydro One’s website at: <http://www.hydroonenetworks.com/newprojects>.

The web page provides an overview of the project, timelines, Class EA process, OEB approval process, and documents information presented at the PICs. It also provides contact information for those who have questions about the project. The web page was updated as new information became available. A copy of the web page is provided in **Appendix A5**.

#### **4.8 Review and Comments Period for the Draft ESR**

Hydro One indicated at the PICs that a Draft ESR would be available for a 30-day public review and comment period. Public and stakeholder comments are welcomed and encouraged. Hydro One will consider all issues identified during the review period and will make best efforts to resolve these issues prior to filing the final ESR with the Ministry of the Environment. All issues or concerns raised during the review period will be documented and summarized in the Final ESR.

If an individual is dissatisfied with the process or with Hydro One’s project recommendation, he or she may make a written request within the 30-day review period to

the Minister of the Environment to bump-up the project to an individual EA. Instructions on how to fully participate in the Class EA process are provided in Hydro One's Notice of Completion newspaper advertisement published in local newspapers, and sent to all individuals who attended either of the public information centres.