

**Commerce Way TS and
Associated Transmission Line Upgrades**

DRAFT
Class Environmental Assessment
Environmental Study Report

Commerce Way TS and Associated Transmission Line Upgrades

DRAFT Class Environmental Assessment Environmental Study Report

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Report No.: 09-001
Hydro One Networks Inc.
Environmental Services and Approvals
483 Bay Street, North Tower, 12th Floor
Toronto, ON, M5G 2P5

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Executive Summary

Introduction and Proposed Undertaking

Hydro One Networks Inc (Hydro One) is proposing to construct the new Commerce Way Transformer Station (TS) in east Woodstock and to rebuild the existing 115 kilovolt (kV) transmission line from Woodstock TS to Toyota Junction. These new facilities are required to address the growing electricity needs in the Woodstock area and would serve existing and future customers of Woodstock Hydro and Hydro One.

Hydro One is proposing to rebuild the existing 115 kV single-circuit transmission line in east Woodstock as a double-circuit line between the existing Woodstock TS and Toyota Junction. Hydro One would continue to operate the line as a 115 kV facility, but the line will be designed to be operated at 230 kV in the future (i.e. if higher voltage supply is required). The existing lattice tower would be replaced with steel poles in the residential area, and with narrow-base lattice towers in non-residential area.

This project would be carried out in two phases. The initial phase involves the construction of new Commerce Way TS, and the upgrade of the line section between Woodstock TS and the New Commerce Way TS. The second phase (potential future construction), if required in the future, involves the upgrade of the line section between the new Commerce Way TS and Toyota Junction, in the Township of Norwich.

The upgraded transmission line upgrade and the new TS fall within the definition of the projects covered by the *Class Environmental Assessment for Minor Transmission Facilities* (Class EA) which is approved under the *Ontario Environmental Assessment Act (EA Act)*.

This Draft Environmental Study Report (ESR) has been prepared in compliance with the requirements of the *EA Act* and it describes the Class EA process that has been carried out for this project. This proposed project also requires a “Leave to Construct” approval from

the Ontario Energy Board (OEB), in accordance with Section 92 of the Ontario Energy Board Act.

Project Need and Schedule

The existing Woodstock TS located on South Street is reaching its capacity. Forecast electricity demand in the area resulting from the Toyota Woodstock plant and “spin-off” industries will result in overloading at Woodstock TS. A technical evaluation concluded that a new transformer station is required on the east side of the City of Woodstock to maintain a reliable supply of electricity to address existing and future needs. The proposed facilities will ensure the availability of an electricity supply to customers in the Woodstock area, will increase transmission capacity to meet growing consumer demand, and will maintain the quality of supply (i.e. adequate post-contingency voltage levels).

The need for the project is supported by Woodstock Hydro and the Independent Electricity System Operator (IESO).

Contingent upon the successful completion of the EA process and the OEB approval process, construction would start by the spring of 2010. The line upgrade and the new TS (the phase one of the proposed undertaking) are scheduled to be in-service by the end of 2011.

Identification and Assessment of Transformer Station Sites and Associated Transmission Line Upgrades

At the outset of the study, the technical specifications and system requirements for the new electrical facilities were determined, and criteria and guidelines established to assist in identifying alternative transformer station sites. The boundaries of the study area were established after taking into consideration the environmental, socio-economic, and technical constraints. The study area identified for this project lies within the City of Woodstock and the Township of Norwich.

Preferred Transformer Station Site

Biophysical, socio-economic and technical criteria were established, and the alternative sites were evaluated using these criteria. After analysis, Site G was selected as the preferred transformer station site because there would be minimal natural and social environmental impacts and construction on the site would be technically feasible. The location of the proposed TS site is within Commerce Way Business Park in the east end of Woodstock.

This Draft ESR describes potential short term environmental effects and proposed mitigation measures related to the construction of the new Commerce Way TS on the preferred site and the associated transmission line upgrade. No long term environmental effects were identified.

Public and Agency Consultation

Hydro One has conducted extensive public and government agency consultations since December 2007 to inform stakeholders about the project and to identify and mitigate potential concerns. Provincial ministries, agencies, county and local municipalities, Conservation Authorities, and First Nations were consulted by way of meetings, and written or telephone communication. Hydro One also made a presentation to the City of Woodstock Council prior to notifying the public of the Class EA and holding the first public information centre. Township of Norwich, County officials, and the local Member of Provincial Parliament for Oxford have also been kept up-to-date on the project.

Two Public Information Centres (PICs) were held for this project in February 2008 and February 2009. The local community and key interest groups were notified about the project and the PICs by way of newspaper advertisements and direct mail outs.

A dedicated project contact was assigned and a toll-free inquiry line was available for those who wished to call to obtain further information on the project or offer their comments. A project webpage was also created on Hydro One's website to keep the public and stakeholders informed about the status of the project.

Ministry of the Environment Review

After the second PIC, Hydro One prepared this Draft ESR and is making it available for public review and comment for 30 calendar days, from March 12 to April 13, 2009. During the review period, comments and issues from stakeholders and the public regarding the proposed project will be received and addressed. The issues raised by the public and Hydro One's responses will be documented and summarized in the Final ESR. Any request to elevate or "bump-up" this Class EA to an Individual EA and Hydro One's response will also be included in the Final ESR.

Hydro One will fully comply with the requirements of the Class EA process in completing the ESR for the proposed Commerce Way TS and associated transmission line upgrades project. Hydro One will proceed with the undertaking as outlined in the Final ESR incorporating input from the public, municipalities, and agencies. Hydro One will seek all regulatory approvals, licenses, and permits required for the project.

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