

Commerce Way TS and Associated Transmission Line Upgrades

Class Environmental Assessment Environmental Study Report

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Hydro One Networks Inc.
Environmental Services and Approvals
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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 built residential areas, and with narrow-base lattice towers in non-residential areas.

This project would be carried out in two phases. The initial phase involves the construction of the 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 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 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 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 Class EA process and the OEB approval process, construction would start by the spring of 2010. The line upgrade and the new TS (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 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.

30-day Public Review and Comment Period

A Draft ESR was made 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 regarding the proposed project were addressed, responded to, and documented in this Report. No requests to elevate this Class EA to an Individual EA were received.

Through the filing of this ESR with the MOE, Hydro One has complied with the EA Act for the Commerce Way TS and Associated Transmission Line Upgrades project. Hydro One will proceed with the undertaking outlined in the report. Hydro One will seek any required approvals, licenses, and permits, as necessary.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>Page No.</u>
Executive Summary	ES - 1
1.0 Introduction	1
1.1 Purpose of the Undertaking.....	1
1.2 Description of the Undertaking.....	3
1.2.1 Introduction to Power Generation and Transformation Stations.....	3
1.2.2 The Proposed Undertaking	4
1.2.3 In-Service Date	6
1.3 Approval Process and Regulatory Requirements.....	9
1.3.1 Ontario Environmental Assessment Act.....	9
1.3.2 Ontario Energy Board Act Approval.....	11
1.3.3 Other Permits, Licenses and Approvals	11
2.0 Class EA Process.....	13
2.1 Study Area Identification.....	13
2.2 Initial Stakeholder and Public Notification and Ongoing Consultation.....	14
2.3 Environmental Inventory	16
2.4 Identification and Evaluation of Alternatives Sites	16
2.5 Environmental Study Report and Final Notification	17
3.0 Description of the Existing Environment	18
3.1 Study Area.....	18
3.2 Natural Environment.....	21
3.2.1 Terrestrial Features	21
3.2.2 Physiography, Bedrock, and Surface Geology.....	21
3.2.3 Soils and Agriculture.....	22
3.2.4 Hydrology and Groundwater	22
3.2.5 Forests and Vegetation.....	27
3.2.6 Wildlife.....	28

3.2.7	Environmentally Significant Areas	30
3.3	Socio-economic Environment.....	32
3.3.1	Description of Existing Land Uses	32
3.3.2	Zoning By-law Descriptions.....	33
3.3.3	Utilities and Development Policies	36
3.3.4	Location of Public Use Facilities, Utilities and Infrastructure.....	36
3.3.5	New or Expanded Transmission Corridors	36
3.3.6	Future Development Plans.....	37
3.3.7	Population and Demographics.....	37
3.3.8	First Nation Communities and Métis.....	38
3.3.9	Employment and Economy	38
3.3.10	Resource Use	39
3.3.11	Archaeological / Heritage Resources.....	39
3.4	Aquatic Features	39
3.4.1	Wetlands/Streams.....	39
3.4.2	Fish and Fish Habitat	41
3.5	Species of Concern	48
4.0	Public and Government Consultation.....	50
4.1	Introduction.....	50
4.2	Objectives of the Public Consultation Process	50
4.3	Government Notification and Consultation.....	50
4.4	Public Notification and Consultation	52
4.4.1	Public Information Centre #1	52
4.4.2	Public Information Centre #2	54
4.5	Interest Group Notification and Consultation.....	56
4.6	First Nations Engagement and Consultation	56
4.7	Project Website	58
4.8	Review and Comment Period for the Draft Environmental Study Report ...	58
5.0	TS Site Selection and Evaluation	62
5.1	General	62
5.2	Establishment of TS Site Selection Criteria	62

5.3	Description of Alternative TS Sites.....	63
5.4	TS Site Selection Evaluation Criteria	67
5.4.1	Natural Environment Analysis.....	67
5.4.2	Socio-economic Environment Analysis.....	67
5.4.3	Cost Analysis.....	68
5.4.4	Technical Analysis.....	68
5.5	TS Site Selection Evaluation	68
5.6	TS Site Ranking and Preferred Site	76
5.7	Preferred TS Site.....	76
6.0	Project Description.....	82
6.1	Design Phase	87
6.2	Construction Phase.....	87
6.2.1	Transmission Line Construction.....	88
6.2.2	Transformer Station Construction	89
6.3	Maintenance and Operation Phase	89
6.4	Project Schedule.....	90
7.0	Potential Environmental Effects and Mitigation Measures	91
7.1	Biological and Natural Environment.....	92
7.1.1	Streams and Wetlands	92
7.1.2	Fish and Fish Habitat	93
7.1.3	Vegetation, Forest Resources and Wildlife	94
7.2	Socio-Economic Environment.....	95
7.2.1	Property Owner Concerns.....	95
7.2.2	Agriculture and Soils.....	96
7.2.3	Air Quality and Noise.....	97
7.2.4	Appearance of the Landscape/Aesthetics.....	98
7.2.5	Public Safety.....	99
7.2.6	Heritage Resources	100
7.2.7	Recreational Resources.....	100
7.2.8	Planning Policies	101
7.2.9	Electric and Magnetic Fields (EMFs).....	101

8.0 Monitoring Program 111

9.0 Conclusions 113

10.0 References 115

LIST OF APPENDICES

Appendix A: Notification Letters to Stakeholders, Consultation List and Website

Appendix A1: List of Stakeholders

Appendix A2: Notice of Commencement Letter

Appendix A3: Notice of Public Information Centre #1

Appendix A4: Notice of Public Information Centre #2

Appendix A5: Copy of Hydro One Project Webpage

Appendix A6: Notification Letter to Environmental Interest Groups

Appendix A7: Notification Letter for First Nation Agencies

Appendix A8: Notification Letter to First Nation Chiefs

Appendix B: Presentation to City of Woodstock Council

Appendix C: Summary of Public Comments

Appendix D: Agency Consultation Comments Documentation

Appendix E: First Public Information Centre

Appendix E1: Newspaper Advertisement for First Public Information Centre

Appendix E2: Display Panels at First Public Information Centre

Appendix E3: Sample of Sign-In Sheets for First Public Information Centre

Appendix E4: Sample of Comment Forms for First Public Information Centre

Appendix F: Second Public Information Centre

Appendix F1: Newspaper Advertisement for Second Public Information Centre

Appendix F2: Display Panels at Second Public Information Centre

Appendix F3: Sample of Sign-In Sheets for Second Public Information Centre

Appendix F4: Sample of Comment Forms for Second Public Information Centre

Appendix G: Maps of the Project Study Area

Appendix G1: Map of the Project Study Area

Appendix G2: Zoom-in Maps of the Transmission Right-of-Way

Appendix H: Health Canada's Fact Sheet

Appendix I: Newspaper Advertisement and Letters for the Notice of Completion of the Draft ESR

Appendix I1: Newspaper Advertisement for the Notice of Completion

Appendix I2: Notice of Completion Letter

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1-1:	Potential Notifications, Permits and Approvals	12
Table 3-1:	Characteristics of Soil Types in the Study Area	26
Table 3-2:	Annotated List of Environmentally Significant Areas for the Study Area and Surrounding, City of Woodstock, County of Oxford, Ontario (County of Oxford 2006b, NHIC 2008).....	31
Table 3-3:	Annotated List of Fish in the Study Area, Woodstock, Ontario, 2008 (UTRCA, MNR, ROM)	43
Table 3-4:	Annotated List of Freshwater Mussels in the Study Area, Woodstock, Ontario, 2008.....	46
Table 3-5:	Annotated List of Species of Concern (SC, VUL, THR, END) and Sensitive Species (S1, S2, S3) for the Study Area and Surrounding, City of Woodstock, County of Oxford, Ontario.....	49
Table 5-1:	Evaluation of Criteria for the Alternative Transformer Station Criteria	70
Table 5-2:	Evaluation of Alternative Transformer Station Sites.....	74
Table 5-3:	Advantages and Disadvantages of Alternative Transformer Station Sites	75
Table 5-4:	Alternate Transformer Station Sites Ranking	81
Table 6-1:	Estimated Project Schedule	90
Table 7-1:	Mitigation Measures for Undertaking the Proposed Upgrade of the Existing Transmission Line (Short Term Effects)	103
Table 7-2:	Mitigation Measures for Undertaking the Proposed Upgrade of the Existing Transmission Line (Long Term)	108
Table 7-3:	Mitigation Measures for Undertaking the Proposed Transformer Station (Short Term).....	109
Table 7-4:	Mitigation Measures for Undertaking the Proposed Transformer Station (Long Term)	110

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1-1:	Project Location Map	2
Figure 1-2:	Role of Transmission Line and Transformer Station in Power Delivery to Customers.....	4
Figure 1-3	Project Study Area.....	6
Figure 1-4	Map of Proposed Facilities	7
Figure 1-5:	Transmission Tower Types	8
Figure 1-6:	Typical Transformer Station.....	9
Figure 2-1:	Class Environmental Assessment Study Process	15
Figure 3-1:	Commerce Way TS and Associated Transmission Line Upgrades – Natural Environment Features	19
Figure 3-2	Commerce Way TS and Associated Transmission Line Upgrades - Social Environment Features	20
Figure 3-3:	Commerce Way TS and Associated Transmission Line Upgrades - Soil Map.....	25
Figure 3-4	City of Woodstock – Land Use Plan.....	34
Figure 3-5	Township of Norwich – Land Use Plan.....	35
Figure 3-6	Commerce Way TS and Associated Transmission Line Upgrades – Unemployment Rates	47
Figure 5-1:	Alternative TS Sites.....	64
Figure 5-2:	Preferred TS Location	77
Figure 5-3:	Comparisons of the Existing Condition and Post-development Simulation, Viewing from Two Camera Positions.....	78
Figure 6-1:	Proposed TS Layout	84
Figure 6-2:	Cross section of Proposed Structure.....	85
Figure 6-3	Comparison of the existing towers and the proposed steel poles	86
Figure 7-1	Commerce Way TS - 3-D Model of the Basic Layout and Landscape Concept.....	99