

Wireless Communication Facility – Trans Oak Estates (Ward 7)**Report Purpose**

To request authorization from Council to send a letter of support to Industry Canada for a proposed Wireless Communication Facility (Internet/VoIP Tower).

Recommendation

That Administration send a Letter of Support to Industry Canada for a proposed Wireless Communication Facility consisting of a 36.58 m freestanding lattice telecommunications tower to be located on NE 5-51-20-W4 (Lot 5, Block 1, Plan 7921529; Trans Oak Estates) at 133, 51042 Range Road 204.

Council History

November 2013 – Council approved a Councillor Budget Request co-sponsored by Councillor Riddell and Mayor Carr to have Information Technology Services make recommendations to improve the accessibility to high-speed internet for rural residents.

July 2014 – Information Technology Services presented the Rural Internet Accessibility recommendations to Council. The recommendations presented to Council in July 2014 were:

1. Strathcona County fund local towers to bridge between infrastructure towers and hard-to-reach residents.
2. Provide free internet in rural community facilities.
3. Promote digital literacy and a knowledge workforce in rural Strathcona County.

December 2014 – Council approved the Rural Internet Accessibility Project as part of the 2015 budget, with three years of funding.

March 2015 – Council adopted Land Use Bylaw 6-2015 with an effective date of May 11, 2015.

Strategic Plan Priority Areas

Economy: Stimulate economic growth by spurring rural business development and development training. Support workforce education and training by improving access to remote education and training, and supporting student research and learning. Help to diversify agricultural businesses and technologies by encouraging new business models and future technologies.

Governance: Increase public involvement and communicate with community by providing new channels of communicating with residents, and enabling them to make use of new tools (e.g. County Connect, ePermits). Build strong relationships with civic organizations by helping them become more sustainable and deliver new programs and services.

Social: Build strong neighbourhoods/communities by improving the delivery of programs and services around a community facility. Staying in touch with family builds community and belonging. Increase the safety of our residents and their property by improving remote monitoring and the ability to reach out over the Internet. Promote a healthy and active community by developing interests and allowing residents to find out more about local and regional facilities and programs.

Culture: Promote a vibrant, creative community by improving residents' on-line interests, researching and learning about community and heritage.

Environment: Improve the efficiency of resource usage by reducing travel. Environmental policies have been taken into consideration in the review of this proposed development.

Other Impacts

Policy: n/a

Legislative/Legal: Wireless communication facilities are under the federal jurisdiction of Industry Canada. The Industry Canada process requires a proponent to consult with the municipal land-use authority regarding local requirements. The local consultation process, pursuant to Land Use Bylaw 6-2015, Section 6.20, results in a letter of support or non-support to Industry Canada on the proposed Wireless Communication Facility (Internet/VoIP Tower).

Interdepartmental: The proposal has been circulated to internal County departments and external agencies.

Summary

In order to provide continuous wireless (internet and VoIP) coverage to customers in the surrounding area of rural Strathcona County, the service provider (MCSNet) proposes to erect a 36.58 m freestanding lattice telecommunication tower on NE 5-51-20-W4 (Lot 5, Block 1, Plan 7921529; Trans Oak Estates). The applicant, when feasible, tries to locate a proposed telecommunication facility near existing vegetation to mitigate the visual impact of the tower. Twenty-five notices were sent to adjacent/affected property owners and two letters/emails of concern were received as a result.

Due to the nature of the phone calls and emails received regarding the proposed tower, an Open House to discuss these concerns was held on December 20, 2016. The attendees of the Open House voiced the same concerns as provided in the phone calls and email/letters.

The concerns raised with regard to the proposed tower included the following:

- Negative impacts on property values
- Negative health impacts
- Visual impacts and not a suitable location

Despite the noted concerns, provided that the tower on the site is constructed based on the proposed plans and information, the communication facility will have satisfactorily met the criteria and guidelines of the Land Use Bylaw 6-2015.

In addition, the service provider has indicated that the tower will be placed as far back as possible on the subject property; this should mitigate the visual concerns stated.

Communication Plan

Letter

Enclosures

- 1 Location Map
- 2 Site Plan
- 3 Tower Elevation Plans