

Wireless Communication Facility – Industry Canada (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 SW 21-51-22-W4 (Lot 7, Plan 3603RS).

Council History

March 10, 2015 – Council adopted Land Use Bylaw 6-2015 with an effective date of May 11, 2015.

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

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 help 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.

November 2013 – Council approved a Councillor Budget Request to have ITS make recommendations to improve the accessibility to high-speed internet for rural residents.

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 to become more sustainable and to deliver new programs and services.

Social: The proposed Wireless Communication Facility (Internet/ VoIP Tower) will assist in building strong neighbourhoods/communities by supporting the diverse needs of the residents.

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 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 SW 21 51 22 W4 (Lot 7, Plan 3603RS). The applicant, when feasible, tries to locate a proposed telecommunication facility near existing vegetation to mitigate the visual impact of the tower. Thirty-three notices were sent to adjacent/ affected property owners and five emails/letters and numerous phone calls were received from nearby property owners as a result.

Due to the nature of the phone calls and emails received regarding the proposed tower, an additional letter was sent out to the entire subdivision and nearby properties announcing an open house to discuss these concerns, which was held on October 19, 2017. The attendees (three property owners) of the open house voiced the same concerns as provided in the phone calls and emails.

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

- Tower is located too close to the road
- Visual impacts (eyesore)
- Negative impacts on property values
- Negative health impacts
- Where have you investigated for alternate locations, have all non-residential (farmer's fields) areas been approached
- Is there room on existing towers
- How will you keep children off the tower

It should also be noted that there were three property owners who attended the open house that are in support of the proposed internet tower.

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.

Communication Plan

Letter

Enclosures

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