

**Priorities Committee Meeting\_Mar12\_2019**

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**REPORT FOR INFORMATION****Electronic Meter Reading Technology in Rural Strathcona County****Report Purpose**

To advise of current viable and available options for electronic rural water meter reading.

**Our Prioritized Strategic Goals**

Goal 2 - Manage, invest and plan for sustainable municipal infrastructure

**Report**

Water meters are read utilizing three different methods of collection; how the meter read is collected depends on where the property is located and the type of meter. Of the approximately 27,000 meter accounts, 7,300 (27%) are read monthly via FlexNet tower radio signal. Every other month, 17,000 (64%) are read by contracted meter readers and the remaining 2,154 (8%) are read by drive-by radio reading.

Utilities contacted shallow utility service providers. Rural monthly consumption data is collected using airplanes and/or helicopters. The equipment used in the planes is not compatible with Strathcona County's current meter reading software. It is not financially feasible for Strathcona County to utilize this method.

The Strathcona Public Service Yard (SPSY) has a radio tower with a FlexNet data receiver that provides electronic water meter readings. An opportunity presented itself in 2016 to work with Rogers/Telus on a new tower in the southeast urban area of Sherwood Park in the Strathcona Athletic Park at the southeast reservoir. Utilities partnered with Rogers/Telus to secure a spot within the tower to place another FlexNet data receiver; the equipment is currently on order and should be installed before the end of Q2 2019. With the addition of the Strathcona Athletic Park tower in Strathcona County, it is estimated that approximately 80% of all municipally serviced areas will be capable of being read via FlexNet tower based radio reading technology. Utilities goal is to utilize radio read technology for all urban water meter readings; this goal is reflected in Utilities budget plan for neighbourhood meter replacements.

It is increasingly important to have the ability to process data faster and in real time in order to detect water leaks and so that daily data use information can be viewed to address customer concerns of high consumption reads. FlexNet ensures the consistent and accurate delivery of customer usage data and the ability to request data on demand. The FlexNet communication network securely and reliably transmits data on the industry's only private, storm-hardened network.

**Council and Committee History**

December 6, 2018 Council directed Administration to provide a report by the end of the first quarter of 2019 on the feasibility of moving to remote electronic meter reading technology for water meters in the rural area of Strathcona County.

**Other Impacts**

**Policy:** n/a

**Legislative/Legal:** n/a

**Interdepartmental:** n/a

**Master Plan/Framework:** n/a

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Lead Department: Utilities

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**Enclosure**

1 FlexNet tower locations