

March 18, 2022

MEMO TO: Mayor and Members of Council

COPY TO: Executive Leadership Team
Paolo Masaro, Executive Director IES
David Dexter, Director Financial Services and Treasurer
Bob Levesque, Director Infrastructure Delivery
Gus Galanis, Director Development Planning
Stephen Huycke, Director Legislative Services/City Clerk

FROM: Kelvin Kwan, Commissioner Planning and Infrastructure Department

SUBJECT: **Alectra Utility Corporation (AUC) letter Dated March 17th 2022 and Richmond Hill City Council Motion (meeting on February 23, 2022)**

Reference for SRPI.22.038 – Alectra Utilities Corporation Hydro Power Supply for Site Plan Application D06-19010 (Urbacon Properties Limited) 10 Sofia Court

BACKGROUND

The Alectra Utility Corporation (AUC) project along the west side of Leslie Street supports site plan application D06-19010 Urbacon Properties Limited (Urbacon) located at 10 Sofia Court as well as a number of data center buildings within the Barker Business Park that require a significant draw and supply of power.

Staff are in receipt of AUC's letter dated March 17th 2022 and provide the following:

- Contracts have been executed between Urbacon and AUC to provide power as an obligation of their distribution license as well as their right under the Electricity Act.
- According to AUC, the Urbacon data centres require significant draw and supply of power. The ultimate buildout represents a 130MW, which equates to approximately 52,000 homes. As a comparison, currently all of Richmond Hill draws 300MW during the summer peak.
- The municipality having jurisdiction over the road allowance manages utility coordination and approvals. Originally the average pole lengths were 86' and the design was approved by York Region as well as the TRCA.
- AUC previously participated in two resident meetings hosted by Members of Council in June and August of 2021 to facilitate a solution to address the residents' concerns. AUC has paused construction twice since the summer of 2021.

- AUC provided a presentation to provide project overview and to receive feedback from residents and committed to evaluate different options summarized in [SRPI.22.038](#). The option that consolidates the existing City streetlights on the hydro poles as result of utilizing shorter poles was selected (referred to as option 4 in staff report SRPI.22.038).
- Design for the consolidation of City streetlights (option 4) and details of the coordination agreement between the City and AUC are substantially completed.
- It is not uncommon to have 2 and 4 circuit hydro pole lines on a regional road from the main networks from which power flows throughout communities and adjacent to residential subdivisions.
- Urbacon met all of AUC's technical and financial requirements for their development.

SRPI.22.038 was added as part of the February 9, 2022 Council Meeting and subsequently deferred to February 23, 2022 Council Meeting resulting from community opposition to the project.

At its meeting on February 23, 2022, Richmond Hill City Council ("City Council") passed the following Motion:

- That staff report SRPI.22.038 be received for information purposes;*
- That Alectra Utilities Corporation (AUC) be advised of Council's preferred option (Option 5) with respect to the proposed hydro distribution pole line to service the Barker Business Park;*
- That Corporate and Financial Services be directed to report back to Council on how Council's preferred option (Option 5) could be funded;*
- That Council request Richmond Hill MPPs and the Region of York to engage with the residents with respect to this matter;*
- That the City undertake to reach out to residents and the Region of York to help to consider the mitigation of the visual aspect of the hydro poles by planting trees along the Region of York's right-of-way and to request Alectra to pay for the planting of the trees.*

The memo herein serves to inform Mayor and Council to the status of the items listed in the approved motion:

- No Action required.
- AUC was advised through the Legislative Services/City Clerk's office.
- Of the two options identified by AUC, only option 4 has additional costs required (estimate of \$250,000). AUC has indicated that they will fund the additional costs for relocating of municipally owned streetlights, thus the City will not be required to fund any additional costs for option 4.
- Richmond Hill MPPs and the Region of York were advised through the Legislative Services/City Clerk's office.
- Preliminary investigation in regards to planting trees along the project area:

- Only certain types of trees with maximum mature height and spread are considered near powerlines or electrical equipment as recommended by Electrical Safety Authority thus limiting the intended purpose of tree planting.
- Based on proposed hydro distribution poles location, and the above noted guidelines, there may not be sufficient space to plant trees within the Region of York's right-of-way to mitigate the visual aspect of the hydro poles.
- There are already trees planted within Region of York's right-of-way within the project limits.
- Space is also limited due to existing underground and above-ground utilities and infrastructure which may preclude tree planting.
- City does not have any jurisdiction over Region of York's right-of-way and their tree planting program and the Region of York may accommodate homeowner or public request through their infill plantings program.

Key Messages

- AUC does not require municipal approval to proceed with this project and are not obligated to modify their design.
- Further delays in construction will prevent power from being supplied to data center 3, which already has full site plan approval and which is planned to open this summer.