



Report to Council

To: Mayor and Council Members
From: Chris Challenger, Economic Development Officer
Date: September 19th, 2022
Subject: Rogers Lease Agreement – Alternate Location

Recommendation

This report is being provided for Councils information.

Background

In 2021, the Eastern Ontario Regional Network (EORN) and Rogers Communications entered into an agreement (the cell gap project) to provide cell coverage to underserved communities throughout Eastern Ontario. The cell gap project aims to provide 99% cell coverage to all of Eastern Ontario. This is a \$300M project, and is a 50/50 cost share between the Provincial/Federal Governments, and Rogers.

After reviewing properties in the area, Rogers authorized agent (Spectra Point) approached the Township requesting to lease a portion of municipal lands on the west side of Jack Lake for the construction of a new cell tower. The lands do not have a municipal address, but are located at the north east corner of the intersection of Jack Lake Road and Fire Route 51. At the September 6th meeting of Council, Council provided approval in principle on the location of the tower, subject to the CRINS consultation process.

Analysis

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On September 18th 2022, a private landowner came forward to the Township expressing interest to work with Rogers on hosting a cell tower on the west side of Jack Lake. Spectra Point has been provided with the landowners contact information. The Cell Gap Project is an agreement between EORN and Rogers Communications Inc, and the Municipality is not a party to the agreement. The responsibility to find a willing landowner to host a cell tower is the sole responsibility of Rogers. Concerns have been raised with the proposed location of a cell tower on municipal lands due to the proximity to cottages on Jack Lake. The alternate location on private property is approximately 500m further to the west than the proposed location on municipal land.

Rogers has a set of four main criteria they use to determine whether or not a site will be feasible for the installation of a cell tower.

1. The site must be at a location and height which satisfies radio engineering and coverage requirements.
2. The location must be acceptable to the local land use authority, conservation authority and federal government.
3. The location must be viable from a construction and engineering perspective. This includes road access and proximity to hydro.
4. Rogers must be able to obtain a lease within governance and recurring cost criteria

The Municipality will not be involved with negotiations or discussions between Rogers' agent and a private landowner. Spectra Point will explore whether or not the site will be suitable, and if a potential agreement with the landowner can be reached. The alternate location has the potential to host a larger 90M guyed wire tower that could provide additional coverage for Jack Lake. Staff have spoken with Spectra Point, and they've acknowledged that they will investigate the suitability of the site with the potential landowner.

Financial Implications

Note from Ambrose I understand Spectra Point and private landowner are in communications and likely many potential cell sites to consider --also the private land will accommodate a 90 meter tower versus 60 meter on twp site.... but be much further from lake and existing cottages which most likely will contribute to improved cell services