

COMMUNICATION 132017

Received From: Dave Young, Project Manager
Addressed To: Council
Date: February 2, 2021
Topic: Central Bridge Replacement – Utility Relocations

BACKGROUND

Currently, Enbridge, Bell and Rogers have significant infrastructure placed within the Central Bridge structure that will need to be abandoned and/or relocated in advance of the bridge replacement in 2022. Staff, the Town's consultant, and representatives of the utility companies have been working on strategies for some time now on how to address the needs of the utilities without impacting the Town's plans for the replacement of the bridge. Bell has presented the Town with an option for an alternate approach to determine the Town's responsibilities for costs relating to utility relocations other than those found in the Telecommunication Act.

DISCUSSION

Enbridge has determined that they can provide service to the community without this connection for the duration of the project but will need to have the river crossing reinitiated after the bridge is reconstructed. Enbridge has installed valves on both ends of the bridge and will simply be able to take the existing gas main on the bridge out of service and abandon it as part of the bridge demolition process. Their plans for installation of a new gas main on the bridge have been considered as part of the design process.

Bell and Rogers have critical telecommunication infrastructure within the current structure that will need to be temporarily relocated to ensure continuity of service for the duration of the project. This temporary relocation plan will need to be implemented prior to the Town commencing work on the bridge. Bell is taking the lead role with developing relocation plans on behalf of all telecommunication parties. The relocation plan will see the installation of poles on both sides of the river, west of the Central Bridge and an aerial cable installed crossing the river. Cables will be installed underground from these poles to the existing cables on both sides of the bridge and connected to provide ongoing service during the construction project. During the bridge reconstruction, new cables will be installed on the bridge structure and prior to the completion of the bridge replacement, these cables will be spliced into the existing cables at the bridge approaches. Once the new cables on the bridge are integrated into the network, the temporary system will be taken out of service and poles and aerial cables will be removed.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There is different governing legislature that provides the legal framework for gas distributors and the telecommunication industry with respect to occupying the municipal corridor including placement on bridge structures.

The Town's agreement with Enbridge is captured within the Franchise Agreement which was endorsed by both parties in 2019. Due to the approach that Enbridge is able to take on this project (no temporary relocation required), there will be no costs allocated to the Town from Enbridge.

There will be considerable costs incurred relating to the telecommunications infrastructure, primarily since a temporary relocation is required. Bell has provided two (2) different scenarios as to how these costs could be distributed:

1. The traditional cost sharing approach would see the Town bear all costs associated with the temporary relocation and then the permanent placement of their infrastructure within the new bridge would be distributed to the Town at approximately 35% of the total cost of the works. The cost to the Town based on this approach would be approximately \$350,000. This is the approach that is currently practised in Town and is contained within legal framework. The need for temporary relocation is an unusual requirement and has not been encountered in any prior relocation request.
2. An alternative approach would be for the Town and Bell to enter into a Municipal Access Agreement (MAA). This agreement would be in place for a 10-year term and would not just govern the approach to the Central Bridge project but would provide the framework for all interactions between the Town and Bell over the term. The total cost to the Town for the Central Bridge Project as a result of implementing the MAA would be approximately \$220,000; a cost savings of approximately \$130,000 over Option 1.

The 2021 budget includes a budget of \$300,000 relating to the costs of this work.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

THAT Council pass a by-law to authorize the Mayor and Clerk to enter into a Municipal Access Agreement (MAA) with Bell Canada which will provide the framework for the Town's interactions with Bell relating to their infrastructure within the municipal right-of-way.